

1.0 Percent Justification Form 2023–24 Training

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You have joined the 2023–24 training for completing the one percent justification form. This training will be hosted by Molly Britt an education consultant for testing students with disabilities from the Office of Accountability and Testing and Matthew Martinez, education consultant for students with significant cognitive disabilities from the Office of Exceptional Children. This recorded training will be available for future viewing on the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's website as well as on the Exceptional Children website. Today, we will walk you through the process for completing the one percent justification form for the 2023–2024 school year.

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The US Department of Education requires a justification for addressing the questions within the form; therefore, there must be thoughtful consideration and information provided when answering these questions for the public-school unit. Just as a reminder, all questions require a response, and questions should not be left blank. This form must be completed when a public-school unit anticipates exceeding the one percent participation in a given grade or subject area for the current school year. When reviewing assessment data from the 2022–23 school year, if the public-school unit exceeded one percent students assessed using the NCEXTEND1, then you should anticipate submitting for this year. If you submit a form and are under the one percent mandate, those will not be publicly available. Only those PSU's that exceed one percent must be publicly available. This form is designed to be completed in a collaborative manner with the superintendent or school director, the Exceptional Children Director or coordinator, and the public-school unit test coordinator.

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Outlined on this slide is the top portion of the first page of the justification form. We will begin by discussing the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act known as ESSA. The ESSA requires each public-school unit to complete and submit a justification when it anticipates exceeding one percent of students assessed in a subject area with the NCEXTEND1 alternate assessment. Justifications from each public-school unit will be reviewed by the NCDPI and follow-up actions will be determined based on the information provided in this form. Staff from the Exceptional Children and Accountability Department 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. 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**. For example: A statement such as “We have one student with Down Syndrome in grade 4” would be considered personally identifiable information. Section one, labeled contact information must be completed. Enter contact information for the primary public school unit staff member responsible for overseeing the form's completion.

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Section two: analyzing contributing factors. The first question that must be addressed is, was there thoughtful consideration for placing a student on the NCEXTEND1 through the use of eligibility criteria and the flowchart? The *North Carolina Alternate Assessment Decision Making Flow Chart* found on the exceptional children webpage is designed to help facilitate IEP team decisions about placing a student on the *Extended Content Standards*. The second question in this section asks how exceptional children case managers have been informed and trained on the Alternate Assessment Eligibility Worksheet and Assurance document included in ECATS. The third question is asking about students participating on the NCEXTEND1 whose primary eligibility area is Specific Learning Disability, Orthopedic Impairment, or Speech Language Impairment? Please do not reveal any personally identifiable information such as student disability diagnosis, gender, and/or grade level. Lastly, a justification statement such as "The student was placed on the ECS prior to attending our school is not a valid response and your form will be returned. Once a student is enrolled within your PSU, thoughtful consideration must be provided across the entire IEP to ensure the appropriateness of the placement.

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The next two questions in this section are as follows: does the public school unit provide a targeted program, such as a public separate school, that may contribute to a higher enrollment of students with significant cognitive disabilities? Similarly, does the public school unit have a small overall student population that increased the likelihood of exceeding the one percent? Both questions warrant an explanation to justify exceeding the one percent. This may be an appropriate place to discuss enrollment versus students participating on the NCEXTEND1.

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Section three: Assurances. The first question asks what data sources are used to determine eligibility for students participating on the Extended Content Standards that align with the alternate assessment? There should be a variety of sources, data, and information collected to inform the IEP team and assist in making appropriate decisions for students. The next question digs a little deeper in asking to describe the 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*. When receiving a student transfer, whether in or out of state, it is the school's duty to ensure the student is appropriately placed. IEP teams must evaluate student progress at a minimum of annually to ensure students are participating on the correct course of study, monitor placement, and ensure adjustments are made when appropriate to promote student progress. When students are transitioning from one set of standards to the other, what steps and safeguards does the public school unit have in place to assist the student with the transition? The last question on this slide aims to ensure that IEP teams are evaluating student progress on an annual basis or before, when necessary. Students should have the ability to receive the appropriate instruction based on their individual needs.

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The first question on this slide is asking how parents or guardians are directly informed annually about the implications of the *Extended Content Standards* in relation to not earning a high school diploma. The next question wants public school units to describe their process for auditing Exceptional Children IEP records for students on the *Extended Content Standards* and participating on the alternate assessment. Public school unit leadership team members should be conducting internal audits of student IEP folders to ensure students are appropriately placed as well as the accuracy of the various parts of the record(s).

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This leads us into addressing disproportionality within public school units, as mandated through ESSA. The NCDPI is asking public school units to use the subgroup percentage data provided through the secure shell to analyze and complete the excel document that is provided alongside the justification form. Your public school unit test coordinator is the only person who has access to the secure shell. This person will be able to provide the data needed to complete the disproportionality excel document. Once we review how to use the data and the excel document, we will return to discuss the questions about disproportionality in more detail.

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When you open the disproportionality excel file you will see the sheet titled, 2022–23 data, reading grades 3–8 (combined). This is the first tab within the spreadsheet. As you look at the bottom of your screen, you will see another tab labeled, Mathematics Grades 3–8. In reviewing the image on the slide, you will see the subgroups going across the top. On the left side of the screen, you will see in the first box, the percent of NCEXTEND1 participants, and directly underneath that is the percent of general participants.

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On the screen you can see some of North Carolina's state-wide data for reading grades 3–8 (combined) that we pulled from the secure shell. This is the data we will use to enter into the excel document. The information we are about to cover is only one subgroup example. When looking at the secure shell data file, there is a percentage for each of the nine subgroups for the NCEXTEND1 participation and the general participation.

Some things to note when looking at the data, in column B this should be filtered for "All38" and column C should be filtered for "rd" which stands for reading. We will not use column D, E, or F. Now looking at column G, you will see the title, Male pct X1 which stands for Male percent NCEXTEND1. This is the percentage of male students who participated on the NCEXTEND1 in your public-school unit. In column H, you will see the title, Male pct ALL, which stands for Male percent All students. This is the percentage of male students who participated on the general assessment in your public-school unit. The two percentages, 67.4% for Male NCEXTEND1 participants and 51.1% for Male general participants, will be entered into the spreadsheet for comparison. Now

that we are familiar with the data file and the excel sheet, we will take a look at the next slide that has this information completed in the sheet.

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Circled in red you will see the data we just discussed and entered into the spreadsheet. As you enter your data in the correct columns, in this case for the male subgroup for the percent of NCEXTEND1 participants and the percent of general participants, you will notice that there is a percentage that will generate at the bottom of your table. This is the percentage difference. The percentage in this box will either turn green or red indicating a positive difference or a negative difference between the percentage of participants in a given subgroup, for the NCEXTEND1 participants versus the general participants.

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The data on the screen is North Carolina's state data from the 2022–23 school year, for the reading grades 3–8 combined. Outlined in the red box is the percentage difference for all of the previously mentioned subgroup categories. We have included notes on the slide as well as within the excel document to assist in understanding the possible over or under identification of different subgroups that participate in the NCEXTEND1 alternate assessment. In the box labeled notes, you will see the following:

- Number one: the green and red percentages in row 6, the goal is to have those percentages be as close to zero percent as possible.
- Number two: Red percentages may indicate over identification of students participating on the alternate assessment compared to the students participating on the general assessment.
- Number three: Green percentages may indicate under identification of students participating on the alternate assessment compared to the students participating on the general assessment.

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As we look at this information, you will notice the table at the top is the same as the previous slide, but we now want to look at the guiding questions. The guiding questions are designed to facilitate public school unit discussions around any possible disproportionality that may be present. The guiding questions are as follows:

- Number one: In reviewing the data, which subgroups in your public-school unit have the largest discrepancy between participants on the general assessment and the alternate assessment?
- Number two: When looking at subgroup discrepancies, what hypotheses can be formed?
- Number three: What problem-solving actions will the public-school unit take to address the identified hypotheses?

These guiding questions are found in the Assurances section of the one percent justification form. As a reminder each question must be completed when submitting the form.

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This slide illustrates the mathematics grades 3–8 combined data for the 2022–23 school year. The mathematics tab is at the bottom left of the screen, next to the reading tab. As you see, the layout is the same for mathematics as we showed you for reading. Again, the percentages needed to complete the mathematics sheet are found in the secure shell.

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Just like reading, please review your mathematics data and use the notes and guiding questions at the bottom of the table to assist with completing the disproportionality questions on the one percent justification form.

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After completing the disproportionality excel document for reading and mathematics, please provide thoughtful and specific answers to these three questions, without providing any personally identifiable information about specific students. The NCDPI does not require you to submit your data from the secure shell or the disproportionality excel document at this time.

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The last section of the justification form asks: what resources and technical assistance can the NCDPI provide to assist public school units to ensure students are being instructed and assessed appropriately? When reviewing previous justification forms, it was helpful to see which areas public school units were requesting assistance, training, and/or clarification.

The required signatures are the superintendent or school director, exceptional children director or coordinator and the public-school unit test coordinator. As a reminder, the form is a fillable Word document that must be electronically completed, scanned and emailed to alternateassessment@dpi.nc.gov by the due date indicated on the signature page of the form.

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Here are a few justification form reminders and possible reasons why forms may be returned for resubmission:

- First if personally identifiable information is contained within the form. For example, “We have one 4th grade student with Down Syndrome.”
- If a statement such as “The student was on the Extended Content Standards when they enrolled in our public school unit”
- If any answers are left blank
- If there are any missing signatures
- If the fillable template is not completed electronically, or the template is completed on a previous year’s form.

As a reminder, the NCDPI does not require you to submit your data from the secure shell or the disproportionality excel document when submitting your justification form.

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As a reminder, we will post this training video and the transcript on the exceptional children website under significant cognitive disabilities under extended support tools and on the one percent participation webpage on the NCDPI website. Please send instructional based questions to Matthew.Martinez@dpi.nc.gov and any accommodations, NCEXTEND1 testing, and/or justification form questions to Molly.Britt@dpi.nc.gov. We appreciate your time today. Thank you for listening!