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.

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| **3-Digit Public School Unit Code:** Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **Contact Name:** Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **Contact Phone No.:** Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **Public School Unit Name:** Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **Contact Title:** Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **Contact E-Mail:** Click or tap here to enter text. |

 **Section 1: Contact Information**

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

**Section 2: Analyzing Contributing Factors**

Did the Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams utilize the alternate assessment [eligibility criteria](https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/testing-and-school-accountability/state-tests/alternate-assessments) and the [North Carolina Alternate Assessment Decision Making Flow Chart](https://ec.ncpublicschools.gov/disability-resources/significant-cognitive-disabilities/north-carolina-alternate-assessment-final-decision.pdf) to make alternate assessment participation decisions?

[ ]  Yes [ ]  No

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| 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). |
| Click or tap here to enter text. |

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| 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 [ ]  NoIf 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. |

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| Does the public school unit provide a targeted program that may contribute to a higher enrollment of students with significant cognitive disabilities? [ ]  Yes [ ]  NoIf yes, explain your answer below: |
| Click or tap here to enter text. |

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| Does the public school unit have a small overall student population that increased the likelihood of exceeding the 1.0 percent threshold? [ ]  Yes [ ]  NoIf yes, explain your answer below: |
| Click or tap here to enter text. |

**Section 3: Assurances**

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| 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: |
| Click or tap here to enter text. |

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| 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: |
| Click or tap here to enter text. |

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| 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: |
| Click or tap here to enter text. |

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| 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: |
| Click or tap here to enter text. |

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| 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: |
| Click or tap here to enter text. |

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| 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?Click or tap here to enter text.2. When looking at subgroup discrepancies, what hypotheses can be formed?Click or tap here to enter text.3. What problem-solving actions will the public school unit take to address the identified hypotheses?  |
| Click or tap here to enter text. |

**Section 4: Resources and Technical Assistance**

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| 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?  |
| Click or tap here to enter text. |

**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.