

**1.0 Percent Participation
Justification Form 2017–18**

The *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* requires each district and charter school to complete and submit a justification when it anticipates exceeding 1.0 percent of students assessed in a subject area with the NCEXTEND1 alternate assessment. Justifications from each district and charter school will be reviewed by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI), and follow up actions will be determined based on the information found in the justification document. Staff from the Exceptional Children and Accountability Divisions in each district and charter school should collaborate to provide the following information on the justification document. Responses to numbers 1–4 are required; it is optional to include additional information (see page 3). This justification document will be publicly posted. As such, the document **must not contain any personally identifiable information**. If necessary, additional pages may be attached to this form.

1. Enter contact information for the primary district/charter school staff member responsible for overseeing the completion of the justification form.

3-Digit LEA/Charter Code: 230	District/Charter Name: Cleveland County Schools
Contact Name: Dr. Nellie P. Aspel	Contact Title: EC Director
Contact Phone No.: 704-476-8000	Contact Email: naspel@clevelandcountyschools.org

2. Enter a description of how the district/charter school will assure that Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams are adhering to the eligibility criteria as outlined in the *Testing Students with Disabilities* publication when determining student eligibility for participation in the alternate assessment.

During the summer of 2017, EC folders of all exceptional children following the Extended Content Standards (ECS) and being assessed on the NC Extend 1 were audited. Recommendations were provided to IEP teams to gather additional data prior to the student's next annual review in order to facilitate discussion and strengthen decision-making. As a result of a more rigorous review of current, relevant and appropriate data, 16 students were moved from the ECS to the Future Ready Core Curriculum thus changing their assessment from Extend 1 to Regular Assessment with modifications. Four other students are in the process of being considered for a change in curriculum/assessment. The X1 numbers for each school (all tested grade levels and subject areas) was reviewed with and without district-wide self-contained programs. The results revealed that for schools without the district wide separate programs, there were 3 schools in Reading and Math 3-8 over 1% and 4 schools in Science 5 and 8 over 1%.

An Extended Content Standards workgroup was established in the fall of 2017 composed of special education staff and administrative representatives. The work group has developed the following guidance documents:

- **Parent Information Sheet** (Designed to provide parents the information needed to ensure meaningful parent involvement in the IEP team decision-making process)
- **Parent Statement of Understanding** (Designed to ensure that parents understand the IEP team's decision for a student to be instructed on the ECS and assessed using the Extend 1).
- **Guidance Questions** (Designed to provide IEP team members with questions that can facilitate rigorous review of data and discussion).

IEP team members will receive ongoing information related to Extend 1 eligibility criteria through the following channels:

- EC Lead Staff will receive additional training in the fall of 2018 at an EC Lead Staff meeting.
- All folders of students being considered for placement on the ECS will receive an internal audit at the district level for the purpose of making recommendations regarding the need to gather additional

current and relevant data for consideration by the IEP team.

- EC Compliance Managers will be notified prior to any student being placed on the ECS for the purpose of ensuring that all IEP team members have the most up-to-date information needed to make a data-based decision.
- School Administrators who serve as LEA Representatives will receive training on May 8, 2018. A PPT has been developed for the training which will be conducted by the Testing Coordinator, EC Director, Lead School Psychologist and MTSS Liaison/School Psychologist.
- All EC staff will receive further clarification and information through weekly EC Tips and at EC Mini-Zone meetings.
- Information will be posted in the EC Google Docs.

3. Enter a description of how any disproportionality among race, gender, or socioeconomic status groups is defined and plans for how that disproportionality will be addressed.

- **Description of how any disproportionality among race, gender, or socioeconomic status groups is defined:** According to the data for Cleveland County Schools, gender and race are two areas where we show some disproportionality. We have a much higher percentage of males than females for the 3-8 reading and math (22.2% higher) Extend1 as well as the 5/8 science Extend1 (42.8% higher). This discrepancy is aligned with research showing that Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is more commonly diagnosed in males, with a ratio of about 1 female for every 4 males diagnosed. Research also shows that the female-to-male ratio of children and adolescents with ID varies from four to 10 females with ID for every 10 males with the condition. As for race, our black students have a higher percentage of students on Extend1 than the percentage of black students on the regular EOG as compared to our other races. The percentage of black students on Extend1 is 4.4% higher than black students on the regular EOG while the highest percentage for our other races is only 0.7% (white). Regarding disability area the breakdown is reflected on the chart below:

3-8 combined	ec code	RG	X1	Grand Total	% X1
	AU	84	26	110	23.6
	DD	4		4	0.0
	DF	1		1	0.0
	ED	61	2	63	3.2
	HI	15		15	0.0
	IDMI	43	16	59	27.1
	IDMO	1	25	26	96.2
	IDSE		4	4	100.0
	LD	439		439	0.0
	MU	5	18	23	78.3
	OH	201	2	203	1.0
	OI	6		6	0.0
	SI	235		235	0.0
	TB	8	2	10	20.0
	VI	1		1	0.0
	Grand Total	1104	95	1199	7.9

- **Plans for how disproportionality will be addressed:** At this time, although clearly any degree of disproportionality is always a concern, the administration in CCS believes that students placed on the ECS have been appropriately identified and meet the criteria of being significantly cognitively disabled. Our process for ensuring that students meet criteria for eligibility and ensuring parents are

meaningfully involved in the decision-making process is sound. Therefore we believe at this point that gender, race or area of disability should not be a deficit issue for Cleveland County Schools.

4. Enter additional justification of variables not covered but deemed essential to understanding why the district/charter school has a higher rate of alternate assessment participation.

- **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.**

School test coordinators are thoroughly trained on the administration of the Extend1 test as well as the test administrator qualifications for the Extend1 test. School test coordinators take that information back to their schools and in turn train all personnel involved with the Extend1 test and Extend1 students on such information. Training sign-in sheets would serve as documentation.

- **Evidence that all students have appropriate access to accessibility features on statewide tests.**

School test coordinators are thoroughly trained on the accessibility features in the Testing Students with Disabilities Handbook. School test coordinators take that information back to their schools as train all personnel on the accessibility features. Training sign-in sheets would serve as documentation.

Signatures

Superintendent



Date 04/20/2018

Exceptional Children Director

Jelle P. Ape

Date 04/20/2018

LEA/Charter Test Coordinator



Date 4/20/18

The completed justification form must be signed by the superintendent/charter school director, exceptional children's director, and testing coordinator. The form must be scanned and emailed to alternateassessment@dpi.nc.gov by May 4, 2018.

The NCDPI will notify districts/charter schools in writing if further information is needed and will include next steps. For questions, please contact your Exceptional Children Director or Regional Accountability Coordinator.