

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: 750	District/Charter Name: Polk County Schools
Contact Name: Mike Melton	Contact Title: EC Director
Contact Phone No.: 828-894-3051	Contact E-Mail: mmelton@polkschools.org
<p>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 <i>Testing Students with Disabilities</i> publication when determining student eligibility for participation in the alternate assessment.</p> <p style="text-align: center; margin-top: 20px;">See attached</p>	
<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of how any disproportionality among race, gender, or socioeconomic status groups is defined: <p style="text-align: center; margin-top: 20px;">See attached</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans for how disproportionality will be addressed: 	
<p>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.</p> <p style="text-align: center; margin-top: 20px;">See attached</p>	

2. All teachers and Central Office personnel are provided with a copy of *Testing Students with Disabilities* Publication. There is evidence that the District Test Coordinator is given time annually in one of our regularly scheduled EC teacher's meetings to provide in-service about the testing program for Exceptional Children and alternate assessment. All test administrators and monitors are trained by the Test Coordinator in the building. All principals have been apprised of the alternate assessment guidelines for 2018. All administrators in Polk County Schools will be provided LEA training by DPI EC Division in June, 2018.

Accommodations and modifications are reviewed and must have been provided to the child on a regular basis for instruction in the classroom setting prior to use at testing time. At Annual Review, the IEP committee reviews the use of accommodations and test scores to ascertain continued modifications/accommodations or changes to modifications/accommodations based on input from IEP committee members and most recent test results. The committee also reviews continued participation in alternate assessment based on most recent state test scores and other factors such as academic levels and participation in adapted/general curriculum. We address state tests one subject area at a time to ensure that individual decisions are made for specific tests. All decisions are made by IEP teams and based on the individual needs of the student. All students are provided opportunities for practice sample questions.

Training will be provided to teachers on all adaptive scales used by the district by September 30, 2018. All areas of eligibility will be reviewed with particular attention to Intellectual Disabilities. The criteria set forth in the *Testing Students with Disabilities* will also be reviewed and a Q&A session will be conducted with a focus on alternate assessment.

3. Racial and ethnic groups, as well as gender of those taking the alternate assessment is consistent with our district demographics. Over the past 5 years, we have not been identified as disproportionate nor have we been on a warning list. All socioeconomic levels are represented by those students who are taking alternate assessments and represent the socioeconomic demographic of the district as a whole.

We continue to pay close attention to overrepresentation of any race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic level. We do not have a plan at this time, because we have not identified these areas as problematic.

4. Since mid-January 2018, we have had 4 transfers of students into Polk County from other counties who are identified as students with Intellectual Disabilities. In a district our size, as we have seen with graduation rates, each and every child makes a difference in our percentages. We have reviewed each child's file who is taking the alternate assessment and will have a district office representative at future IEP meetings for students who take alternate assessment and who may be in question.

The following students have been moved from alternate assessment to a regular assessment by the IEP teams over the last 2 years:

Student #	Alternate Assessment (Grade level)	Regular Assessment (Grade level)
1	6 th	7 th
2	7 th	8 th
3	8 th	9 th
4	8 th	9 th
5	4 th	5 th

There is no evidence that school locations have any bearing on IEP decisions with regard to alternate assessment. Specifically, we have only one Middle School and one High School and the elementary students are spread between two schools where special classes are located. Concentrations appear heavier at the Middle School where at least two students' testing programs have been changed from alternate to regular testing consistent with their increased participation in regular education instruction, state test scores and other factors. In the table above, you will notice that most changes from alternate to regular occur at the Middle School level. The Compliance Facilitator from Central Office was present for 82% of those meetings this year. We are reducing the numbers of students on alternate assessment as we develop tailored programs to gradually increase participation in general education. These decisions were based on the unique needs of our students who may have transferred to us in special classes and were not deemed ready for change by their IEP committee at the last meeting. There are other students who have been in Polk County long term but whose IEP committees determined that a gradual transition to regular classes was more appropriate given their history.

Our goal is to provide students with the most appropriate program and support, taking into account their unique needs with input from those who know the student best.

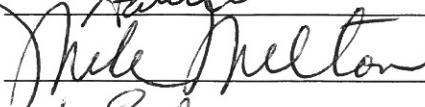
Signatures

Superintendent/Charter School Director



Date 5/4/2018

Exceptional Children Director



Date 5/4/2018

LEA/Charter Test Coordinator



Date 5/4/18

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.

Note: See page 3 for additional information that can be included but is not required.