

## 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.

<b>3-Digit LEA/Charter Code: 950</b>	<b>District/Charter Name: Watauga County Schools</b>
<b>Contact Name: Mike Marcela</b>	<b>Contact Title: Exceptional Children Program Director</b>
<b>Contact Phone No.: 828-264-7190</b>	<b>Contact E-Mail: marcelam@wataugaschools.org</b>

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.

Watauga County Schools will implement a three step approach to ensure that IEP teams are adhering to required eligibility criteria when making decisions regarding the NC Extend 1 assessment.

1. The Exceptional Children's Department will share the written guidance and eligibility criteria for participation in the NC EXTEND 1 Alternate Assessment with all Principals, Assistant Principals and Exceptional Children Program teachers through internal memorandum, internal newsletters, additional correspondence and as part of meetings with staff.
2. The Exceptional Children's Department will provide direct training on all aspects of the eligibility criteria for participation in the NC EXTEND 1 Alternate Assessment and ESSA guidelines with all Principals, Assistant Principals and Exceptional Children Program teachers.
3. The Exceptional Children Department will monitor placements on the NC EXTEND 1 Alternate Assessment by IEP teams on a quarterly basis to ensure students place on the assessment meet the eligibility requirements. If there is a placement(s) that is deemed to be questionable, the Exceptional Children Program Director will conference with the EC student's case manager to determine the reason(s) for the student being placed on the assessment. Inappropriate placements will result in a recommendation for the IEP team to revisit their initial decision.

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:

Watauga County Schools will further disaggregate our data regarding students placed on the NC Extend 1 Alternate Assessment. We would like to determine percentages for gender, race and ethnicity of all students in self-contained classrooms in which the Extensions of the Standard Course of Study are taught. We will then compare the percentages for gender, race and ethnicity to determine how they compare with that of the general education population and population of students identified as having a disability in our district.

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- Plans for how disproportionality will be addressed:

If after analysis of the data there appears to exist disproportionality among a specific group of students at a grade level or overall, we will further investigate our procedures which help determine placement of students in a self-contained program for students who require the Extensions of the Standard Course of Study. We will also further investigate the instructional foundation of the individual class(es) in question to determine appropriate levels of rigor and the instructional decision-making practices of the individual teacher(s) and/or IEP team to ensure that appropriate factors are being considered in curriculum decisions and IEP team decisions.

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.

- a. Watauga County Schools has a total of eight self-contained programs. We have four cross-categorical programs at Hardin Park Elementary School along with one class for students with significant cognitive disabilities and two classes for children with Autism. We also have one class for students with significant cognitive disabilities at Watauga High School. There are thirteen students out of the four cross categorical classes who have been assessed using the NC EXTEND 1 alternate assessment. Of these thirteen students, as many as six of the students will be removed from the alternate assessment for this spring's and/or Spring 2019 End of Grade assessments. When considering the relatively small population of students in our district taking alternate assessments, these changes may result in a significant reduction in our percentage of students taking alternate assessments.
- b. All teachers involved in administering the alternate assessments meet the requirements for test administrators and have received test administration training prior to administering the alternate assessment.
- c. Watauga County Schools does not have any students who are receiving services under the "regular" or "resource" levels of the special education continuum of services.
- d. Our rates are highest for students in third grade taking the reading and math assessments. In discussions with teachers of these students, they stated one of the main considerations in placing children on the Alternate Assessment in third grade, in addition to adhering to the eligibility criteria for placement on the test, is their student's lack of experience with taking standardized assessments prior to third grade and the lack of an Alternate Assessment for the Beginning of Grade (BOG) test in fall of the school year. Their concern was the student's emotional (and in some cases, physical) reaction to taking a standardized test. During the school year, teachers have provided students with experience and practice in taking standardized quarterly assessments and similar assessments. They are more confident now in the student's emotional and physical abilities to take a standardized assessment and as stated above, are planning on changing several student's method of standardized testing to be indicated on their IEP.


**Signatures**

Superintendent/Charter School Director



Date 5-3-18

Exceptional Children Director



Date 5-1-18

LEA/Charter Test Coordinator



Date 1 May 2018

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](mailto: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.