



Alternate Assessments

MYTH: The MAP-A and DLM are synonymous.

FACT: The MAP-A consists of the alternate assessments available to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in place of the assessments included in the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP). The DLM (Dynamic Learning Maps) assessment is the specific test that Missouri has chosen to serve as the alternate assessment available for those students with the most significant cognitive disabilities for the Grade-level assessments in grades 3-8 and the End of Course (EOC) assessments at the high school level. The MAP-A is the type of assessment the student will participate in for their state-wide testing accountability; the DLM is the particular test that will be administered to students eligible to take the MAP-A.

MYTH: Only 1% of students in the state or in a public agency can have their proficient or advanced scores reported for accountability purposes.

FACT: New federal accountability rules in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) allow for no more than 1% participation state-wide of all accountable students in a tested population in the Alternate Assessment. For district and state accountability, all accountable students, including all students with disabilities, are expected to participate in state-wide assessments. Under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act, the 1% was determined based on the number of proficient/advance scores; however, this changed when Congress replaced NCLB with the ESSA.

MYTH: Only 1% of students in a public agency can participate in the alternate assessment.

FACT: Again, the new federal accountability rules in the ESSA allow for no more than 1% of all accountable students in a tested population in a content area to participate in the Alternate Assessment state-wide. In practice, this means that only 1% of the total number of students in grades 3-8 and high school students taking the EOC exams can participate in the MAP-A state-wide. An analysis of MAP-A participation trend data shows some public agencies have >1% participation rate while other public agencies have <1% participation rate. Public agencies with >1% participation rate in the MAP-A will be required to provide a justification to DESE for the higher percentage. Public agencies need to be aware of their MAP-A participation rate and provide quality guidance to IEP teams for making appropriate decisions in regards to eligibility for participation in the MAP-A.

MYTH: School districts that exceed the 1% participation rate will have scores changed to level not determined (LND) for accountability purposes.

FACT: The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is developing procedures to be followed when a public agency and/or the State exceeds the 1% participation rate. This process will involve a justification for exceeding the 1% participation rate and that will align with MAP-A eligibility criteria.

Myth: Determinations of eligibility to participate in the MAP-A are made by the public agency.

FACT: Determinations of eligibility to participate in the MAP-A are made by the individual student's individualized education program (IEP) team based upon the MAP-A eligibility criteria established by DESE. Participation is not determined to fill an arbitrary accountability quota. Only students who meet all of the following eligibility criteria are eligible to take the alternate assessment: 1) the student must demonstrate the most significant cognitive disabilities and limited adaptive skills, 2) the most significant cognitive disability impacts the student's access to the curriculum and requires specialized instruction, typically in all content areas, 3) the most significant cognitive disability impacts the student's post-school outcomes, and 4) the student's difficulty in the general education curriculum is due primarily to the impact of the student's most significant cognitive disability. DESE has developed a number of resources to assist IEP teams to make quality eligibility determination decisions under "Alternate Assessments" at <https://dese.mo.gov/special-education/compliance/general-guidance>