

# Rhode Island

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ESSA waiver request for 2025-26 regarding the 1% threshold on assessing students using the alternate assessment



**RIDE** Rhode Island  
Department  
of Education

## Rhode Island: Initial Waiver Request

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**Requirement 1: Fulfill the requirements in section 8401 of the ESEA regarding public comment.**

- a. The State provided the public and any interested local education agency (LEA) in the State with notice and reasonable opportunity to comment and provide input on the entire waiver request (including the plan and timeline).
- b. The State submitted the comments and input to the Department with a description of how the State had addressed the comments and input it received.

RIDE posted its waiver request on the RIDE website December 8 – December 26, 2025. Notices to request comments were sent through various listservs including the Fieldmemo to Superintendents, District and School Testing Coordinators, Special Education Directors, Alternate Assessment Teachers, Participants in 1% self-paced modules and family advocacy organizations.

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**Requirement 2: Submit the waiver request at least 90 days before the beginning of the State’s testing window.**

Rhode Island’s assessment window for the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) alternate assessment is from March 30 - May 29, 2026.

Ninety days prior to the start of Rhode Island’s testing window (December 31, 2025), the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) will submit a waiver request to the United States Department of Education for English language arts (ELA) and mathematics.

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**Requirement 3: Provide the data described in steps a, b, and c below.**

- a. Number and percentage of students in each required student group (race/ethnicity, economic disadvantage status, English learner status) who took the AA-AAAS during SY 2024-25 in each subject for which the State is seeking a waiver).
- b. Overall assessment participation rates for all students and students with disabilities during SY 2024-25.
- c. AA-AAAS participation rates for SYs 2017-18 through 2024-25 (including estimates for SY 2025-26, if available) in each subject for which the State is seeking a waiver.

**Requirement 3a: Number and percentage of students in each required student group (race/ethnicity, economic disadvantage status, English learner status) who took the AA-AAAS during SY 2024-25 in each subject for which the State is seeking a waiver).**

Tables 1, 2, and 3 provide the number and percentage of students tested in each content area at the state level and in each subgroup for both general and alternate assessments administered in the 2024-25 school year. See Appendix 3 for the number and percent of students tested in Mathematics and ELA by subgroup from SY 2017 to SY 2025.

**Table 1: Number and percent of students who took the alternate assessment overall and by subgroup, mathematics, grades 3-8, and 11 for 2024-25.**

Percent of students who took the alternate assessment overall and by subgroup, mathematics, 2024-25			
Subgroup	Total number of students assessed, grades 3-8, 11 (RICAS, SAT, DLM)	Total number of students assessed, grades 3-8, 11 alternate assessment (DLM)	% of students assessed, grades 3-8, 11, alternate assessment (DLM)
<b>All Students (STATE)</b>	<b>69,884</b>	<b>867</b>	<b>1.24%</b>
Female	34,091	281	0.82%
Male	35,782	586	1.64%
Students with Disabilities	12,729	867	6.81%
Low Income	40,613	563	1.39%
Migrant	81	1	1.23%
English Language Learners	10,793	171	1.58%
American Indian	510	5	0.98%
Asian	2,344	42	1.79%
Black or African American	6,561	102	1.55%
Hispanic or Latino	22,020	275	1.25%
Pacific Islander	124	1	0.81%
White	34,661	378	1.09%
Two or More Races	3,664	64	1.75%

**Table 2: Percent of students who took the alternate assessment overall and by subgroup, English language arts, grades 3-8, and 11 for 2024-25.**

Percent of students who took the alternate assessment overall and by subgroup, English Language Arts, 2024-25			
Subgroup	Total number of students assessed, grades 3-8, 11 (RICAS, SAT, DLM)	Total number of students assessed, grades 3-8, 11 alternate assessment (DLM)	% of students assessed, grades 3-8, 11, alternate assessment (DLM)
<b>All Students (STATE)</b>	<b>69,019</b>	<b>861</b>	<b>1.25%</b>
Female	33,673	281	0.83%
Male	35,335	580	1.64%
Students with Disabilities	12,744	861	6.76%
Low Income	39,891	557	1.40%
Migrant	76	1	1.32%
English Language Learners	9,835	165	1.68%
American Indian	513	5	0.97%
Asian	2,279	42	1.84%
Black or African American	6,419	101	1.57%
Hispanic or Latino	21,417	270	1.26%
Pacific Islander	119	1	0.84%
White	34,608	378	1.09%
Two or More Races	3,664	64	1.75%

**Table 3: Percent of students who took the alternate assessment overall and by subgroup, Science, grades 5, 8, and 11 for 2024-25.**

Percent of students who took the alternate assessment overall and by subgroup, Science, 2024-25			
Subgroup	Total number of students assessed, grades 3-8, 11 (RICAS, SAT, DLM)	Total number of students assessed, grades 3-8, 11 alternate assessment (DLM)	% of students assessed, grades 3-8, 11, alternate assessment (DLM)
<b>All Students (STATE)</b>	<b>30,063</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>1.08%</b>
Female	14,587	117	0.80%
Male	15,470	208	1.34%
Students with Disabilities	5,032	325	6.46%
Low Income	17,195	207	1.20%
Migrant	38	0	0%
English Language Learners	4,506	51	1.13%
American Indian	223	1	0.45%
Asian	1,013	12	1.18%
Black or African American	2,990	44	1.47%
Hispanic or Latino	9,375	103	1.10%
Pacific Islander	60	0	0%
White	14,946	144	0.96%
Two or More Races	1,456	21	1.44%

**Requirement 3b: Overall assessment participation rates for all students and students with disabilities during SY 2024-25.**

Table 4 shows the overall participation rates for each assessment for 2017-18 through 2024-25. Rhode Island is seeking waivers for ELA and math. We are not seeking a waiver for science as we did not attain 95% participation for students with disabilities. However, science assessment participation data is included based on requests from reviewers in the past.

Prior to the pandemic, the number of students tested in Rhode Island schools exceeded 75,000 and the number of students with disabilities exceeded 12,000. During the pandemic, enrollment and the number of students tested dropped significantly. However, since 2021-22, the total number of students tested across all state assessments has slowly increased but is still not at pre-pandemic levels. Last year we tested approximately 71,000 students, a nearly 5,000 student difference from 2017-18. In science, the trend is the same, with the total number of students tested nearly 2,000 fewer than in 2017-18.

In contrast to the slow increase of our overall population, the total number of students with disabilities *exceeded pre-pandemic* levels by 2022-23 and has only increased each year since. From 2022-23 to last year, the RI population of students with disabilities increased by 9.4%. The percentage increase in our overall student population in the same timeframe is 0.5%. So, while our overall enrollment remains below pre-pandemic levels, the number of students with disabilities has increased and surpassed pre-pandemic levels and is increasing at a faster rate than our overall student population.

LEAs and schools continue to struggle with attendance, and this has affected participation rates across all state assessments. Two years ago, the Commissioner began a campaign to draw attention to the importance of attending school and gave the LEAs tools to track chronic absenteeism. Most notably, this campaign improved participation in the state science assessment from 93.0% to 94.5% in 2024-25. We expect to see continued improvement in this area.

The FY26 CRP requires that LEAs have a concrete, written plan that includes all their students with disabilities in the state assessments. We know that regular attendance at school continues to be an issue for many of our schools – with extra urgency at the high school level. We believe that requiring LEAs to have a plan to include all students with disabilities in the state assessments will support the Commissioner’s statewide initiative on attendance.

Over the last few assessment cycles, we noticed that many schools delayed the start of their state assessment administrations because they believed that an extra week or two of instruction would make a difference in their students’ performance. Because of this, many schools ran out of time to complete testing.

Delaying the start of testing affected participation in all our state assessments, but the most impacted was the science assessment. It is the last test to be administered, and most schools wait until the last week of the state testing window to begin testing.

As part of our strategy to improve participation across all tests, over the last two years, we published a primary testing window and a make-up testing window. This requires districts and schools to begin testing earlier and leaves time for make-up testing. This improved participation rates across the tests, but the largest impact was on the science test where participation increased by 1.5% from 93% to 94.5% students with disabilities participating and overall participation across assessments reaching more than 97% statewide. We anticipate that this year (2025-26) we will finally reach 95.0% in the state science test for students with disabilities.

**Table 4:** State participation rates for all students and for students with disabilities (2017-18 - 2024-25)

Content Area	Total Number of students	Number of students assessed	% Participation: all students	Number of students with disabilities	Number of students with disabilities assessed	% Participation: students with disabilities
<b>MATH</b>						
<b>2017-18</b>	76,570	75,171	98.2%	12,067	11,490	95.2%
<b>2018-19</b>	75,343	73,981	98.2%	11,807	11,375	96.3%
<b>2019-20</b>	<i>All state assessments were canceled.</i>					
<b>2020-21</b>	73,676	64,575	87.7%	11,965	10,045	84.0%
<b>2021-22</b>	72,304	70,112	97.0%	11,874	11,185	94.2%
<b>2022-23</b>	71,156	69,601	97.8%	12,207	11,644	95.4%
<b>2023-24</b>	71,241	69,969	98.2%	12,922	12,400	96.0%
<b>2024-25</b>	<b>71,118</b>	<b>69,019</b>	<b>97.1%</b>	<b>13,197</b>	<b>12,744</b>	<b>96.6%</b>
<b>ELA</b>						
<b>2017-18</b>	75,882	74,377	98.0%	12,031	11,436	95.1%
<b>2018-19</b>	76,062	74,669	98.2%	11,800	11,369	96.4%
<b>2019-20</b>	<i>All state assessments were canceled.</i>					
<b>2020-21</b>	73,459	64,907	88.4%	11,963	10,113	84.5%
<b>2021-22</b>	71,539	69,746	97.0%	11,874	11,185	94.9%
<b>2022-23</b>	70,338	68,878	97.9%	12,119	11,661	95.6%
<b>2023-24</b>	70,071	68,939	98.4%	12,918	12,426	96.2%
<b>2024-25</b>	<b>71,084</b>	<b>69,884</b>	<b>98.3%</b>	<b>13,197</b>	<b>12,744</b>	<b>96.6%</b>
<b>SCIENCE</b>						
<b>2017-18</b>	32,799	31,390	95.7%	5,040	4,634	91.9%
<b>2018-19</b>	32,513	31,486	96.8%	4,769	4,458	93.5%
<b>2019-20</b>	<i>All state assessments were canceled.</i>					
<b>2020-21</b>	32,159	26,469	82.3%	5,120	3,938	77.0%
<b>2021-22</b>	31,431	29,754	94.7%	4,896	4,416	90.2%
<b>2022-23</b>	30,603	29,511	96.4%	4,923	4,581	93.1%
<b>2023-24</b>	31,073	30,054	96.7%	5,240	4,873	93.0%
<b>2024-25</b>	<b>30,875</b>	<b>30,063</b>	<b>97.4%</b>	<b>5,327</b>	<b>5,032</b>	<b>94.5%</b>

**Requirement 3c: AA-AAAS participation rates for SYs 2017-18 through 2024-25 (including estimates for SY 2025-26, if available) in each subject for which the State is seeking a waiver.**

The AA-AAS participation rates for school years 2017-18 through 2024-25 are included in Appendix 3. While we have seen a 13% decrease in the number of students participating in the alternate assessment since 2017-18, RI was still above 1.0% participation in 2024-25. However, based on the 3% decrease we saw in the number of students who took the alternate assessment from 2024 to 2025, we anticipate that the number of students eligible for the alternate assessment will decrease further between now and the spring 2026 assessment administration. Estimates are provided in the charts in Appendix 3 and show a slight increase in the number of students tested last year but we know that this will likely change in the coming months as student IEPs are reviewed.

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**Requirement 4: Include a statement of assurance in the waiver request that the State has verified that each LEA the State anticipates will assess more than 1.0 percent of all students assessed in any subject using an AA-AAAS has:**

- a. **Followed the State’s guidelines for participation in the AA-AAAS; and**
- b. **Will address any disproportionality in the percentage of students in any student group taking the AA-AAAS.**

**Requirement 4a: Followed the State’s guidelines for participation in the AA-AAAS.**

We require all LEAs to agree to the assurances as part of their Consolidated Resource Plan (CRP) application. LEAs have already completed the assurances for the 2025-26 school year. LEA responses are included with this waiver in a separate document and posted at [www.ride.ri.gov/onepercent](http://www.ride.ri.gov/onepercent).

The assurances were updated in the 2024-25 school year to meet the ESSA requirements that states implement measures to help LEAs reduce the number of students participating in the alternate assessment to 1.0% or less. By answering these questions, the LEA assures RIDE that each of these activities is part of the LEA’s process for ensuring that students are correctly identified for participation in the alternate assessments:

- Does the LEA assure that it follows the state’s guidelines, criteria, and process for identifying students for participation in the alternate assessment as outlined in the *IEP Team Guidance on Eligibility for Alternate Assessment*? Yes/No
- Does the LEA assure that it is following the state’s definition of a *student with a significant cognitive disability*? For more information, please refer to the *IEP Team Guidance on Eligibility for Alternate Assessment* document posted at [www.ride.ri.gov/dlm](http://www.ride.ri.gov/dlm) or [www.ride.ri.gov/onepercent](http://www.ride.ri.gov/onepercent).
- Does the LEA assure that it is addressing all disproportionality that could be present in identifying students for the alternate assessment?
- Does the LEA assure that for each student evaluated for alternate assessment eligibility, the *Alternate Assessment Documentation Form*, along with all required documentation, is included in the student’s school record as a justification for why the student does or does not meet the state’s criteria for the alternate assessment?
- Does the LEA anticipate assessing more than 1% of students using the alternate assessment this year? If yes: Please provide a justification as to why the LEA needs to assess more than 1% of students using the alternate assessment. Write your justification in the space provided.
- Did the LEA assess 95.0% or more of students with disabilities on all state assessments? Yes/no If no, please provide a plan for increasing the LEA’s participation rate to 95.0% or more in each content area for which the LEA is below 95.0%.

To ensure that our state guidelines for participation in the alternate assessment are followed, we have accomplished the following:

- We continue to provide training for LEAs through our Alternate Assessment Eligibility Training Course. This course is designed to ensure that all educators involved in AA-AAAS participation decisions receive the same training on the state’s eligibility criteria and the process all IEP Teams are expected to follow to ensure defensible eligibility decisions. By offering everyone the same online course, we can ensure that everyone receives the same information, in the same way, and has the same interpretation of the new criteria, guidance, and policies. In addition to the three online modules, each participant must demonstrate their understanding with an end-of-course quiz.

The first round of the course was open to all LEAs from December 18, 2023, through March 29, 2024. The second round was open from August 1, 2024, through October 31, 2024, to provide an additional opportunity for LEA participants to complete the training. The third round of the course opened on May 29, 2025, and is set to close on December 31, 2025. RIDE tracks the completion of the courses and follows up with LEAs to ensure all appropriate staff complete the training. The course agenda is below.

#### **Eligibility for Alternate Assessment Training Course Agenda**

Module 1: The One Percent Rule and Introduction to the Revised Alternate Assessment Eligibility Guidance

Module 2: Understanding and Using Tool A: Intellectual Functioning Tool

Module 3: Understanding and Using Tool B: Adaptive Functioning Rubric and Tool C: Previous Test Participation and Performance Documentation Form

#### ***Required Quiz***

- All LEA and school staff involved in the decision-making process must be trained through the RIDE online course. This requirement means that in addition to special education directors and the student's classroom teacher, school psychologists, LEA representatives on IEP Teams (usually school principals), general education teachers, occupational therapists, chairs of special education departments, etc., are all required to complete the Alternate Assessment Eligibility Training Course. RIDE provides the names and quiz grades of educators who completed the Alternate Assessment Eligibility Training Course to LEA special education directors. Since the opening of the course in December 2023, 1,172 educators in Rhode Island schools completed and passed the course. This is a substantial increase from the training program we used to have which only included classroom teachers.
- We continue to provide consultation sessions through Zoom meetings and in-person sessions for LEAs that request more targeted training and assistance in applying the eligibility criteria. In the 2024-25 school year we provided 36 individual consultation sessions for 20 public LEAs (out of 64 total LEAs) and two Private Special Education Schools. In addition, we held three question-and-answer sessions for special education directors. So far, for the 2025-26 school year, we have provided 27 individual Zoom consultation sessions for 12 public LEAs (out of 64 total LEAs), one private special education school, and two charter schools. We also held three in-person training sessions with three LEAs.
- Since our last waiver, we began to implement our tiered Alternate Assessment LEA Support Plan (submitted with this waiver). The first in-person training session for the nine LEAs in Tier 2 and Tier 3 was held in spring of 2025. LEAs reviewed the eligibility criteria, analyzed disproportionality data, and discussed and analyzed a case study. Two of the five LEAs identified for Tier 3 significantly decreased the percentage of students eligible for the alternate assessment from over 2% to just above 1%. September of 2025, we conducted the site visit record review and verification for one Tier 3 LEA. The remaining two LEAs will be monitored this year.
- We have begun to refine our Alternate Assessment LEA Support Plan to include additional tasks and verification steps for Tier 2 and Tier 3 LEAs. In addition, we are working on updating the Alternate Assessment Eligibility Training Course to include additional modules that will focus on instruction and presumed competence.

#### **Requirement 4b: Provide assurance that any disproportionality in students taking the alternate assessment will be addressed.**

RIDE will continue with its plan to address disproportionality in any student subgroup using statewide longitudinal data and by requiring LEAs to provide assurance that they have identified and addressed



any disproportionality. Most of our LEAs have fewer than 60 students participating in the alternate assessments, across all tested grades. Last year, to assist with identifying where disproportionality may exist, we provided LEAs with additional data and analysis, we provided a report to each Tier 2 and Tier 3 LEA during an in-person, guided data analysis activity. A sample of this report is included with this waiver. For example, we noticed that rates of identification for alternate assessment increase beginning in eighth grade, leading us to provide grade-level rates of identification for alternate assessment to LEAs.

#### **Providing data analysis to LEAs:**

- **Rates of eligibility for alternate assessment by grade level.** We have noticed that the number of students found eligible in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades is greater than in the lower grades. We will provide lists of students to LEAs who were found eligible for the alternate assessment *for the first time* at 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grades with the expectation that LEAs will review these students for eligibility. RIDE will also review these records during the monitoring process with the expectation that LEAs will be able to show that they followed the required process and applied the eligibility criteria appropriately. An example of the report we provided to each Tier 2 and Tier 3 LEA was submitted with this waiver.
- **Students who received scores on the general education assessments.** Lists of students who achieved a score on the general education assessments who were then found eligible for alternate assessment with the expectation that LEAs review these students for eligibility. RIDE will also review these records during the monitoring process with the expectation that LEAs will be able to show that they followed the required process and applied the eligibility criteria appropriately.
  - **For 2025-26:** This will be included as part of the 2025-26 LEA Disproportionality Report provided to Tier 2 and Tier 3 LEAs. *See the Plan and Timeline for more information.*
- **Rates of eligibility for alternate assessment by disability category** with the expectation that LEAs review eligibility decisions for students with the following disability categories identified as their *primary disability*: speech/language impairment, hearing impairment, deafness, deaf blindness, visual impairment; emotional disturbance, other health impairment, orthopedic impairment, developmental delay, multiple disabilities\*. We expect that students who qualify for the alternate assessment are likely to have disabilities that fall into the autism spectrum disorder, traumatic brain injury, intellectual disability, and multiple disabilities\* categories.
  - **For 2025-26:** This will be included as part of the 2025-26 LEA Disproportionality Report provided to Tier 2 and Tier 3 LEAs. *See the Plan and Timeline for more information.*
- **Rates of eligibility for alternate assessment of MLLs and by race/ethnicity.** While LEAs have this data in their student information systems, we have found that if we can provide easy access to the data to conduct disproportionality analysis and facilitate the conversations the LEAs can spend their time engaging in discussion about the data instead of trying to prepare the data. An example of the report we provided to each Tier 2 and Tier 3 LEA was submitted with this waiver. This report was used in a data analysis activity during an in-person workshop held specifically for Tier 2 and Tier 3 LEAs. See the *Alternate Assessment Eligibility Determination* workshop slide deck, *Reviewing Your Data*, slides 12 - 17.

*\*Depending on the individual disabilities.*

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**Requirement 5: Provide documentation that each LEA over the 1% submits a justification for why they need to exceed the 1% cap. States must show where these justifications are made publicly available, and that this information is easily accessible.**

RIDE requires that each LEA that predicts it will be over the 1% in the following school year to provide a justification for why they feel they must exceed the one percent cap. Justification is provided through their Consolidated Resource Plan (CRP). RIDE staff monitor these responses and use them to provide targeted assistance to LEAs. Anyone wishing to view an LEA's justification for being over one percent, can view the full document of justifications at <http://www.ride.ri.gov/onepercent>.

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**Requirement 6: Provide a current plan and timeline by which the State will do the following:**

- a. **Improve the implementation of its participation guidelines, including by reviewing and, if necessary, revising its definition of "students with the most significant cognitive disabilities" so that less than 1.0 percent of all students assessed take an AA-AAAS.**
- b. **Take additional steps to support and provide appropriate oversight to each LEA that the State anticipates will assess more than 1.0 percent of all students assessed in any subject with an AA-AAAS. This should include describing how the State will monitor and regularly evaluate each such LEA to ensure that the LEA provides sufficient training such that school staff who participate as member of an IEP Team or other placement team understand and implement the guidelines established by the State for participation in the AA-AAAS so that all students are appropriately assessed.**
- c. **Address any disproportionality in the percentage of students taking an AA-AAAS as identified through the State's data.**

**Requirement 6a: Improve the implementation of its participation guidelines, including by reviewing and, if necessary, revising its definition of "students with the most significant cognitive disabilities" so that less than 1.0 percent of all students assessed take an AA-AAAS.**

As part of our plan and timeline, we continue to provide training around the IEP Team Guidance on Determining Eligibility for Alternate Assessment document that was updated and required as of March 29, 2024. The IEP Team Guidance for Eligibility for the Alternate Assessment, and all required forms, including the Documentation of Eligibility Form, are posted at [www.ride.ri.gov/dlm](http://www.ride.ri.gov/dlm) and at [www.ride.ri.gov/onepercent](http://www.ride.ri.gov/onepercent).

In addition, we finalized the first draft of our Alternate Assessment LEA Support Plan.

The first in-person training session for nine LEAs in Tier 2 and Tier 3 was held in spring of 2025. LEAs spent a half day reviewing the criteria, analyzing disproportionality data, and discussing and analyzing case studies. In September of 2025, we conducted the first record review and verification for one Tier 3 LEA.

Our criteria, the tools LEAs must use to evaluate evidence for each student for alternate assessment, and the required training course, produced a decrease in the number of students found eligible for the alternate assessment even though our participation rate remains above 1.0% (currently 1.25%). We have seen a steady decrease since the 2022-2023 school year (see Table 9). Our guidance documents, the online training course, and the implementation of our Tired System of Support are improving the accuracy of LEA eligibility decisions.

The online training course has had the biggest impact. By increasing the scope of educators who are required to be trained, it has made everyone on the IEP team more aware and accountable for the decision to qualify a student for the alternate assessment. Since opening the course, Rhode Island has had 1,172 educators complete the course. This is a substantial increase from training just the 350 to 375 classroom teachers who teach students who participate in the alternate assessment.

**Requirement 6b: Take additional steps to support and provide appropriate oversight to each LEA that the State anticipates will assess more than 1.0 percent of all students assessed in any subject with an**

**AA-AAAS.** This should include describing how the State will monitor and regularly evaluate each such LEA to ensure that the LEA provides sufficient training such that school staff who participate as member of an IEP Team of other placement team understand and implement the guidelines established by the State for participation in the AA-AAAS so that all students are appropriately assessed.

RIDE will take the following steps to support and provide monitoring for each LEA that exceeds the one percent cap:

- **Require all LEAs to complete the online, self-paced course** in understanding and applying eligibility criteria correctly and the process that we expect all LEAs to implement to ensure defensible decisions.
- **Implement a Tiered System of Support and Monitoring Plan focusing on alternate assessment and implementing the eligibility criteria.** During the 2024-25 school year we began to implement our Tiered System of Support and Monitoring Plan. Below is the table outlining the criteria for each tier of support, what technical assistance is available to those LEAs, and the number of LEAs in that tier for the 2025-26 school year.

The Rhode Island Plan and Timeline includes additional details for this work.

TIER 1
<p><b>Identification:</b> LEAs that are below <i>or</i> just above 1.0% for one year <i>or</i> LEAs between 1% and 2% and decreasing from previous year.</p> <p><b>Technical Assistance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LEA staff serving on IEP teams continue to participate in eligibility training.</li> <li>• RIDE staff are available to answer questions about implementing the eligibility criteria or a specific student's situation.</li> </ul> <p><b>Number of LEAs in Tier 1: 55 LEAs (out of 64)</b></p>
TIER 2
<p><b>Identification:</b> LEAs between 1.0% and 2.0% and are seeing no change or have increased from the previous year.</p> <p><b>Technical Assistance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LEA staff serving on IEP teams continue to participate in eligibility training.</li> <li>• RIDE staff are available to answer questions about implementing the eligibility criteria or a specific student's situation.</li> <li>• LEA leadership team to participate in technical assistance session with all Tier 2 LEAs to analyze data including examining disproportionality using the NCEO tool, review their eligibility process and student data, and develop/update a plan to ensure accurate eligibility decisions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Number of LEAs in Tier 2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LEAs between 1.0% and 2.0% and are seeing no change: 2 LEAs (out of 64)</li> <li>• LEAs between 1.0% and 2.0% and have increased from the previous year: 5 LEAs (out of 64)</li> </ul>
TIER 3
<p><b>Identification:</b> LEAs with more than 2.0% of students participating in the alternate assessment in 2025.</p> <p><b>Technical Assistance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LEA staff serving on IEP teams continue to participate in eligibility training.</li> <li>• RIDE staff are available to answer questions about implementing the eligibility criteria or a specific student's situation.</li> <li>• LEA leadership team to participate in technical assistance session with all Tier 2 LEAs to analyze data including examining disproportionality using the NCEO tool, review their eligibility process and student data, and develop/update a plan to ensure accurate eligibility decisions.</li> </ul>

- RIDE staff conduct a sample record review of at least 10 students who qualify for the Alternate Assessment to ensure that the LEA is following the procedures outlined in the Guidance Document and the Online training course.
- RIDE staff review the results of the record review with LEA leadership team to feedback and technical assistance in areas identified as a need.

**Number of LEAs in Tier 3:**

- LEAs above 2.0%: 2 LEAs (out of 64)

**Requirement 6c: Address any disproportionality in the percentage of students taking an AA-AAAS as identified through the State's data.**

Rhode Island uses the NCEO Disproportionality Calculator to examine possible under- and over-identification of students participating in the alternate assessment. Our analysis consists of reviewing participation rates from 2021 through 2025 to determine if disproportionality exists across grade levels, race/ethnicity, economic status, and English Learner status. The threshold for identifying disproportionality is a risk ratio of 1.5.

Our analysis (see tables 5 and 6) identifies students who are economically disadvantaged as likely overidentified with the risk ratio 1.15 for all content areas in 2025. This has not changed from 2024 data. We also identified English learners as a group that is likely still overidentified in ELA in 2025 (risk ratios of 1.26 and 1.27). To address this, RIDE will expand the disproportionality review and data analysis as part of the in-person training as many of the Tier 2 and one of the Tier 3 LEAs are urban districts.

Additionally, because Rhode Island assesses fewer than 900 students on the alternate assessment, additional analysis on disproportionality by subgroup and disability category will be conducted using data from our IEP Census and provided to the LEAs.

Most students who take the AA-AAAS have the diagnosis of Autism however, we found more than 100 students were identified as having a disability category that would likely not be consistent with the eligibility criteria including Learning Disabled, Other Health Impairment, Speech and Language, and Emotional Disturbance. As part of our targeted support, we have been asking LEAs to prioritize reviews of eligibility of students under these disability categories.

During our *LEA Monitoring for Tier 2 and Tier 3 LEAs* workshop held in April 2025, we provided LEAs with a disproportionality report that included grade level, subgroup, and historical alternate assessment participation rates. We also included a list that included all LEAs in Rhode Island and their alternate assessment participation rates.

Part of the conversation we facilitated in the *LEA Monitoring* workshop was looking at similar sized LEAs to broaden their understanding and move beyond the boundaries of their district. This helps them begin to see that other more urban or larger districts have reached 1.0%. This generated questions and conversations between the district teams at the workshop and helped them look at their policies and procedures through a different lens.

The report also includes the number of students who would take the alternate assessment if the LEA met the 1.0% threshold. This number was not presented as a goal to reach but as a gauge for them to ask more questions about why they were over 1%. Being over 1% by less than five students may not indicate a need for revising any part of the LEA eligibility process but being over the 1% by more than 10 students indicates a higher chance that there is a misunderstanding of the eligibility criteria or a district policy that is at odds with state eligibility criteria and required process.

LEAs found this report helpful. The goal was to provide them with actionable student data that would highlight areas where they could begin to reevaluate student eligibility. We plan on expanding this report this year to include information on student disability category and students who received a score on general education assessments in the past but who are now taking the alternate assessment.

The next *LEA Monitoring* workshop (see the Plan and Timeline for more information) will include the same report but with expanded information. To make the report more useful, we will include the number of students by primary disability category with flags for those categories that do not typically indicate a student with the most significant cognitive disability (such as speech/language, deaf and hard of hearing, etc.). We will also provide information on students who received a score on the general education assessment but who are now qualified for alternate assessment. Our goal is to eventually create a report that is informative and provides concrete next steps for the LEA to take next that are based on their data.

**Table 5: Risk Ratio and Likelihood of Disproportionality by Grade Level (2021-2024) by Content Area<sup>1</sup>.**

	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 11	Economically Disadvantaged	English Learner
2021-2024	0.92	0.90	0.95	1.03	1.04	1.11	1.04	1.16	1.23
2021-2024	0.92	0.90	0.95	1.03	1.05	1.12	1.05	1.17	1.15
2021-2024			0.91			1.06	1.03	1.17	1.19
<b>ELA</b>	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Yes	Yes
<b>Math</b>	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Yes	Expected
<b>Science</b>			Expected			Expected	Expected	Yes	Expected

**Table 6: Risk Ratio and Likelihood of Disproportionality by Grade Level (2021-2025) by Content Area<sup>1</sup>.**

	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 11	Economically Disadvantaged	English Learner
2021-2025	0.98	0.97	0.93	1.02	1.02	1.06	1.01	1.15	1.26
2021-2025	0.98	0.96	0.93	1.02	1.03	1.07	1.02	1.15	1.18
2021-2025			0.92			1.05	1.03	1.15	1.15
<b>ELA</b>	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Yes	Yes
<b>Math</b>	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Yes	Expected
<b>Science</b>			Expected			Expected	Expected	Yes	Expected

**Table 7: Risk Ratio and Likelihood of Disproportionality by Race/Ethnicity (2021-2024) by Content Area<sup>1</sup>.**

	American Indian	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Multi-racial	Pacific Islander	White	Economically Disadvantaged	English Learner
2021-2024	1.48	1.31	1.20	0.93	1.22	0.55	0.96	1.18	1.25
2021-2024	1.47	1.29	1.20	0.92	1.23	0.55	0.97	1.18	1.16
2021-2024	1.31	1.20	1.12	0.89	1.29	0.42	1.00	1.17	1.19
<b>ELA</b>	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Yes	Yes
<b>Math</b>	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Yes	Expected
<b>Science</b>	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Yes	Expected

**Table 8: Risk Ratio and Likelihood of Disproportionality by Race/Ethnicity (2021-2025) by Content Area<sup>1</sup>.**

	American Indian	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Multi-racial	Pacific Islander	White	Economically Disadvantaged	English Learner
2021-2025	1.34	1.35	1.21	0.94	1.26	0.58	0.94	1.16	1.27
2021-2025	1.34	1.32	1.21	0.94	1.27	0.57	0.95	1.16	1.19
2021-2025	1.15	1.18	1.16	0.91	1.30	0.33	0.98	1.15	1.15
<b>ELA</b>	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Less than expected	Yes	Yes
<b>Math</b>	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Less than expected	Yes	Yes
<b>Science</b>	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Expected	Yes	Expected

<sup>1</sup> Expected: There is no evidence of disproportionality when the risk ratio is at or very near 1.

Yes: Values greater than 1 that have a less than 5% chance that the real number is 1 are in this group. The risk ratio indicates that the probability or “risk” of a focal group student being a participant in the AA-AAAS is greater than expected.

Less Than Expected: Values less than 1 that have a less than 5% chance of being 1 are in the “less than expected” group. It indicates that a focal group student is less likely to be a participant in the alternate assessment than expected.

**Requirement 7: Demonstrate that the State reduced its AA-AAAS participation rates in each subject for which the state is seeking a waiver. The Department expects that a State requesting to extent a waiver will have decreased its AA-AAAS rates in SY-2024-25 compared to SY 2023-24. A State with relatively high rates of AA-AAAS participation should demonstrate a greater reduction in its AA-AAAS participation rates compared to States near the 1.0 percent cap.**

Table 9 shows the total number of tested students using the AA-AAAS in 2024 and the total number of those tested students who remain on the AA-AAAS as of October 2024. There is a reduction of 75 students. Comparing last year’s tested students to the October 2025 enrollment file for the AA-AAAS, a further 40 students have since been removed.

**Table 9: Total number of students who took the AA-AAAS (grades 3-8, 11) and the total number of those tested students who still qualify for AA-AAAS.**

<b>Total Tested Students SY 2023-24</b>	<b>Tested Students Eligible for AA-AAAS as of Oct. 2024</b>	<b>Change</b>
890 students	815 students	-75 students

  

<b>Total Tested Students SY 2024-25</b>	<b>Tested Students Eligible for AA-AAAS as of Oct. 2025</b>	<b>Change</b>
867 students	827 students	-40 students

In addition to the data above, we conducted analysis using the initial registration files for the 2025-26 state assessments to obtain a projection for this year’s participation in AA-AAAS. The tables in Appendix 3 show these projections. This analysis shows a 10-student increase in the number and percentage of students anticipated to take the AA-AAAS to 877 students (1.2%) over last year. This calculation is “live” and uses real-time enrollment data so it will go up and down. We still believe that this is a useful calculation and we anticipate that this number will actually go down as we get closer to the testing window and as we continue working with our Tier 2 and Tier 3 LEAs to ensure that they are properly identifying students, understanding and using the disproportionality data, and implementing a plan for students with disabilities to participate in the general education assessments appropriately.

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## States Applying to Extend a Waiver from SY 2024-25

### **1. Follow steps 1-7 to request a new waiver as described in section A above.**

Rhode Island has completed steps 1-7, including submitting a plan and timeline that shows an improved monitoring process of LEAs exceeding 1.0 percent of students taking the alternate assessment.

### **2. Provide information demonstrating that the State made substantial progress towards achieving each component of the prior year’s plan and timeline with regards to:**

- a. **Improving the implementation of the State’s guidelines for participation in the AA-AAAS.**  
Please see Requirement 6a for information on our efforts to improve LEAs’ understanding and use of the eligibility guidelines and plans for improvement for SY 2025-26.
- b. **Supporting and providing appropriate oversight to each LEA that the State anticipates will assess more than 1.0 percent of all students assessed with an AA-AAAS.**

Please see Requirement 6b for information on our monitoring activities with the LEAs and plans for improvement for SY 2025-26.

**c. Addressing any disproportionality in the percentage of students taking an AA-AAAS.**

Please see Requirement 6c for information on how we addressed disproportionality with the LEAs and plans for improvement for SY 2025-26.

**For this item, note that a State must describe both of the following items:**

- a. Progress implementing the plan it provided last year.**
- b. Plan to improve or expand on its plan this year.**



## Appendix 1: Supporting Documents for 2024 Waiver

All documents listed below, including this waiver, are posted at [www.ride.ri.gov/onepercent](http://www.ride.ri.gov/onepercent).

- Rhode Island Plan and Timeline
- LEA justifications document
- *IEP Team Guidance on Eligibility for Alternate Assessment*
- *School Support Visits: Including Alternate Assessments*
- **Attendance Matters RI web page:** This web page contains resources for schools and districts to increase attendance rates. It also contains an attendance tool and leaderboard that shows rates of chronic absenteeism for all schools in Rhode Island.
- **Press Release of Nov. 6, 2023:** Governor McKee, Commissioner Infante-Green Recognize Weekly Attendance Leaders and Improved Schools
- **Participation memo to outplacement schools:** To improve the participation of students with disabilities who attend schools outside of their home district, RIDE drafted this memo to explain our participation requirements, steps to take to ensure they have the information they need to properly administer the state assessments and contact information when they have questions.

## Appendix 2: Supporting Documents for 2025 Waiver

All documents listed below, including this waiver, are posted at [www.ride.ri.gov/onepercent](http://www.ride.ri.gov/onepercent).

- Rhode Island Plan and Timeline
- LEA Justifications Document
- *IEP Team Guidance on Eligibility for Alternate Assessment*
- *Alternate Assessment Monitoring Plan*
  - Complete list of LEAs and their tier designation
- Letter to LEAs informing them of their tier of support
- Sample monitoring action plan (Newport)
- LEA Disproportionality Report
- Alternate Assessment: LEA Monitoring for Tier 2 & Tier 3 LEAs presentation and other materials
- **Press Release of September 2, 2025:** Governor McKee and Commissioner Infante-Green Talk Attendance and Outcomes in 2025-26 Kick-Off to Attendance Matters RI Campaign

Appendix 3: Number and Percent of Students Assessed by Subgroup for Mathematics and ELA (2017-18 through 2024-25)

MATHEMATICS	STATE	Female	Male	SWD	Low SES	Migrant	MLL	American Indian	Asian	Black/African American	Hispanic/Latino	Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	White	Two or More Races
2017-18														
Number assessed all students	75,171	36,653	38,518	11,490	36,484	8	6,767	532	2,426	6,459	19,497	132	42,925	3,200
Number assessed DLM Math	997	308	689	997	525	0	76	12	25	110	230	1	574	45
% who took DLM Math	1.33%	0.84%	1.79%	8.68%	1.44%	0.00%	1.12%	2.26%	1.03%	1.70%	1.18%	0.76%	1.34%	1.41%
2018-19														
Number assessed all students	74,669	36,296	38,373	11,375	36,247	0	7,756	551	2,465	6,479	19,648	113	42,112	3,301
Number assessed DLM Math	933	282	651	932	483	0	101	11	27	100	229	1	522	43
% who took DLM Math	1.25%	0.78%	1.70%	8.19%	1.33%	0.00%	1.30%	2.00%	1.10%	1.54%	1.17%	0.88%	1.24%	1.30%
2020-21														
Number assessed all students	64,575	31,404	33,165	10,045	28,148	22	7,270	450	2,162	5,802	17,653	102	35,336	3,070
Number assessed DLM Math	815	245	570	814	441	0	115	10	31	92	199	0	433	50
% who took DLM Math	1.26%	0.78%	1.72%	8.10%	1.46%	0.00%	1.58%	2.22%	1.43%	1.59%	1.13%	0.00%	1.23%	1.63%
2021-22														
Number assessed all students	70,112	34,220	3,586	11,185	30,830	38	8,667	514	2,415	6,298	20,016	94	37,334	3,441
Number assessed DLM Math	904	291	613	902	481	0	117	11	38	97	228	1	476	53
% who took DLM Math	1.29%	0.85%	1.71%	8.06%	1.56%	0.00%	1.35%	2.14%	1.57%	1.54%	1.14%	1.06%	1.27%	1.54%
2022-23														
Number assessed all students	69,601	33,801	35,761	11,644	32,089	46	9,294	572	2,339	6,136	20,404	110	36,536	3,504
Number assessed DLM Math	899	276	623	897	498	0	134	10	41	97	242	1	454	54
% who took DLM Math	1.29%	0.82%	1.74%	7.70%	1.55%	0.00%	1.47%	1.47%	1.75%	1.58%	1.19%	0.91%	1.24%	1.54%
2023-24														
Number assessed all students	69,969	33,923	36,017	12,400	31,749	75	10,248	539	2,315	6,417	21,370	124	35,511	3,693
Number assessed DLM Math	890	284	606	890	458	1	158	8	42	91	262	1	427	59
% who took DLM Math	1.27%	0.84%	1.68%	7.18%	1.44%	1.33%	1.54%	1.48%	1.81%	1.42%	1.23%	0.81%	1.20%	1.60%
2024-25														
Number assessed all students	69,884	34,091	35,782	12,729	40,613	81	10,793	510	2,344	6,561	22,020	124	34,661	3,664
Number assessed DLM Math	867	281	586	867	563	1	171	5	42	102	275	1	378	64
% who took DLM Math	1.24%	0.82%	1.64%	6.81%	1.39%	1.23%	1.58%	0.98%	1.79%	1.55%	1.25%	0.81%	1.09%	1.75%

MATHEMATICS	STATE	Female	Male	SWD	Low SES	Migrant	MLL	American Indian	Asian	Black/African American	Hispanic/Latino	Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	White	Two or More Races
ESTIMATE 2025-26*														
Number all students	71,128													
Number DLM Math	877													
% estimated to take DLM Math	1.23%													

\*As of October 2025.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	STATE	Female	Male	SWD	Low SES	Migrant	MLL	American Indian	Asian	Black/African American	Hispanic/Latino	Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	White	Two or More Races
<b>2017-18</b>														
Number assessed all students	74,377	36,277	38,100	11,436	35,916	4	6,046	528	2,386	6,351	18,995	128	42,808	3,181
Number assessed DLM ELA	996	307	689	996	524	0	75	12	25	110	229	1	574	45
% who took DLM ELA	1.34%	0.85%	1.81%	8.71%	1.46%	0.00%	1.24%	2.27%	1.05%	1.73%	1.21%	0.78%	1.34%	1.41%
<b>2018-19</b>														
Number assessed all students	73,759	35,970	38,011	11,369	35,770	0	7,042	548	2,422	6,393	19,163	113	41,046	3,296
Number assessed DLM ELA	933	281	652	932	482	0	101	11	27	99	229	1	523	43
% who took DLM ELA	1.26%	0.78%	1.72%	8.20%	1.35%	0.00%	1.43%	2.01%	1.11%	1.55%	1.20%	0.88%	1.24%	1.30%
<b>2020-21</b>														
Number assessed all students	64,907	31,616	33,285	10,113	28,355	19	7,123	456	2,154	5,844	17,712	104	35,543	3,094
Number assessed DLM ELA	817	245	572	816	411	0	115	10	31	92	200	0	434	50
% who took DLM ELA	1.26%	0.77%	1.72%	8.07%	1.45%	0.00%	1.61%	2.19%	1.44%	1.57%	1.13%	0.00%	1.22%	1.62%
<b>2021-22</b>														
Number assessed all students	69,476	34,059	35,651	11,266	30,723	38	8,017	517	2,355	6,273	1,926	93	37,323	3,459
Number assessed DLM ELA	905	291	614	903	482	0	118	11	38	92	228	1	476	53
% who took DLM ELA	1.30%	0.85%	1.72%	8.02%	1.57%	0.00%	1.47%	2.13%	1.61%	1.56%	1.16%	1.08%	1.28%	1.53%
<b>2022-23</b>														
Number assessed all students	68,878	33,419	35,423	11,661	31,648	41	8,512	554	2,276	6,069	19,953	109	36,404	3,510
Number assessed DLM ELA	900	277	623	898	498	0	137	10	41	97	242	1	455	54
% who took DLM ELA	1.31%	0.85%	1.76%	7.70%	1.57%	0.00%	1.61%	1.81%	1.80%	1.60%	1.21%	0.92%	1.25%	1.54%
<b>2023-24</b>														
Number assessed all students	68,939	33,436	35,474	12,426	31,113	61	9,112	518	2,266	6,272	20,622	114	35,461	3,686
Number assessed DLM ELA	892	284	608	892	458	1	158	8	43	91	262	1	428	59
% who took DLM ELA	1.29%	0.85%	1.71%	7.18%	1.47%	1.64%	1.73%	1.54%	1.90%	1.27%	1.27%	0.88%	1.21%	1.60%
<b>2024-25</b>														
Number assessed all students	69,109	33,676	35,335	12,744	39,891	76	9,835	513	2,279	6,419	21,417	119	34,608	3,664
Number assessed DLM ELA	861	281	58	861	557	1	165	5	42	101	270	1	378	64
% who took DLM ELA	1.25%	0.83%	1.64%	6.76%	1.40%	1.32%	1.68%	0.97%	1.84%	1.57%	1.26%	0.84%	1.09%	1.75%

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	STATE	Female	Male	SWD	Low SES	Migrant	MLL	American Indian	Asian	Black/African American	Hispanic/Latino	Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	White	Two or More Races
ESTIMATE 2025-26*														
Number all students	70,036													
Number DLM ELA	877													
% estimated to take DLM ELA	1.25%													

\*As of October 2025