



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: February 27, 2020
To: Chief School Administrators, Charter School and Renaissance School Project Leads
Route To: Directors of Special Services
From: Peggy McDonald, Ed.D., Assistant Commissioner
Division of Student Services
Deadline: April 3, 2020

Dynamic Learning Maps Justification to Exceed the 1 Percent Cap

The *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* allows for the use of alternate assessments, based on alternate achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. In New Jersey, this alternate assessment is the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM).

ESSA requires that no more than 1 percent of the total number of tested students participate in the DLM assessment. **School districts are not prohibited from assessing more than 1 percent of their tested students with the DLM; however, they are required to submit information justifying the need to exceed the 1 percent limit.**

In the 2018-19 school year, New Jersey exceeded the 1 percent statewide DLM participation cap. Under direction from the U.S. Department of Education, New Jersey is required to conduct activities, statewide and in selected districts with high DLM participation rates, to ensure that only those students who meet [DLM participation criteria](#) participate in the assessment. These activities will assist IEP teams in making individualized decisions, based on multiple sources of student data, with regard to participation in statewide assessments. Please visit the [DLM website](#) for more information on the DLM assessment and participation criteria.

The U.S. Department of Education does allow for individual school districts with more than 1 percent of their tested students taking the DLM to do so with justification. If you anticipate that participation in the DLM assessment in your district will exceed 1 percent for the 2019-20 school year, you must submit a [justification form](#) for review. Guidelines for calculating the DLM participation rate can be found on the form. It is important to include students placed in separate public programs in other school districts or approved private schools for students with disabilities in these calculations. Justification forms should be submitted by email to kimberly.murray@doe.nj.gov by April 3, 2020. Your participation in this process will enable us to ensure that we have the most accurate representation of the results of students with the most significant disabilities in the accountability system.

Contact information

If you or your staff have any questions or need assistance, please contact Kim Murray at (609) 376-9060 or email Kimberly.murray@doe.nj.gov.

c: Members, State Board of Education
Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D., Commissioner
NJDOE Staff

Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
Garden State Coalition of Schools
NJ LEE Group