



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: October 22, 2025
To: Local Educational Agency Leads
Route To: Directors of Special Education
From: Kathy Ehling, Assistant Commissioner
Division of Educational Services
Deadline: January 30, 2026

Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) 1% Justification Form Spring Assessment and Tier 1 Universal Technical Assistances for Exceeding the 1% 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 intellectual disabilities. In New Jersey, this alternate assessment is the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM). *ESSA* requires that statewide no more than 1% of the total number of tested students participate in the DLM assessment. Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) are not prohibited from assessing more than 1% of their tested students with the DLM; however, they are required to submit information justifying the need to exceed the 1% limit.

Under the direction of the U.S. Department of Education (USED), New Jersey is required to conduct statewide activities and target specific LEAs with high participation rates in the DLM assessment, to ensure that only students who meet the [DLM participation criteria](#) are being included. These activities will assist Individualized Education Program teams in making individualized decisions, based on multiple sources of student data, regarding student participation in statewide assessments. Please visit the New Jersey Department of Education, [Office of Special Education Alternate Assessment website](#) and the [NJ DLM website](#) for more information and resources on the DLM assessment and participation criteria.

USED allows LEAs with more than 1% of their tested students taking the DLM to do so with justification. Any LEA that anticipates exceeding the 1% cap for the DLM year-end assessment in the 2025-2026 school year must complete the [Tier 1 Universal Technical Assistance](#), an online self-paced training and submit the completed [1% Justification Form](#) by **January 30, 2026**.

Guidelines for calculating the DLM participation rate can be found on the [justification form](#) and in the Tier 1 Universal Technical Assistance training (will add link). Students placed in separate public programs in other school districts or in receiving schools, including Approved Private Schools for Students with Disabilities (APSSDs) **must** be included in these calculations to ensure comprehensive data reporting.

As a reminder, effective with the Spring 2026 administration, students eligible for special education and related services under the eligibility categories of *auditory impairment*, *emotional regulation*

impairment, orthopedic impairment, specific learning disability and eligible for speech and language services only are **not eligible** to participate in the alternate assessment. These students must be administered the New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA) or New Jersey Graduation Proficiency Assessment (NJGPA), with appropriate accommodations and accessibility features.

For additional information or clarification, please direct questions to the Office of Special Education at (609) 376-9060 or email AAparticipation@doe.nj.gov. Additionally, please visit the [NJDOE Office of Special Education Alternate Assessment](#) for more information.

c: Members, State Board of Education
NJDOE Staff
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
Garden State Coalition of Schools
NJ LEE Group