

Kentucky Alternate Assessment:
Local Educational Agency (LEA) Justifications for
Alternate Assessment Participation

2022-2023 School Year
Assessment Data
2023-2024 Reporting Year



Kentucky Department of
E D U C A T I O N

Office of Special Education and Early Learning (OSEEL)

July 2024

Overview

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires Kentucky to ensure that the total number of students assessed in each subject using the alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS) does not exceed 1.0% of the total number of all students participating in the statewide assessment – the Kentucky Summative Assessment (KSA). States that anticipate exceeding 1.0% participation in the AA-AAAS must submit a waiver request to the U.S. Department of Education (USED) 90 days before the beginning of the AA-AAAS testing window.

Kentucky requested and received a one-year extended waiver from the USED regarding the 1.0% cap on participation in the AA-AAAS.

Kentucky’s AA-AAAS participation rates for each subject area for the 2022-2023 school year are listed in *Table 1* below.

Table 1: 2022-2023 AA-AAAS Participation by Subject

<i>SUBJECT</i>	<i>NUMBER PARTICIPATING IN AA-AAAS</i>	<i>NUMBER PARTICIPATING IN STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT</i>	<i>PERCENT PARTICIPATING IN AA-AAAS</i>
Reading (elem/middle/high)	3,895	334,873	1.16%
Math (elem/middle/high)	3,895	337,453	1.15%
Science (elem/middle/high)	1,619	141,873	1.14%

ESSA also requires each local educational agency (LEA) or community school to submit an annual justification if the LEA anticipates AA-AAAS participation rates will be greater than 1.0% in one or more subject areas.

The 2022-2023 assessment data was used to identify any LEA with an AA-AAAS participation rate greater than 1.0% in one or more subject areas. The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) Division of IDEA Monitoring and Results (DIMR) identified 126 LEAs and required the identified LEAs to submit information justifying the need to exceed the 1.0% threshold.

The following data includes justification responses for the 126 LEAs identified from the 2022-2023 assessment data as exceeding the 1.0% participation rate. A list of LEAs exceeding 1.0% participation in the alternate assessment can be found in Appendix A.

Additional information on the ESSA requirements for a state waiver request can be found in the [“Requirements to Request a Waiver/Waiver Extension for the 2023-24 School Year from](#)

[the 1.0 Percent Cap on the Percentage of Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities Who May Be Assessed with an Alternate Assessment Aligned with Alternate Academic Achievement Standards \(AA-AAAS\)](#),” dated Sept. 20, 2023, provided by the USED.

Questions about the 1.0% justification responses should be directed to the DIMR at (502) 564-4970 or by emailing Lauren Thieneman at lauren.thieneman@education.ky.gov. Individual district justification responses are available upon request.

Survey Questions and Responses

The justification form included 12 questions for LEAs to answer. Each question was developed to inform the KDE of current LEA processes around AA-AAAS participation and to provide an opportunity for LEAs to identify any factors contributing to the LEA exceeding 1.0% participation.

Question 1: How has the LEA ensured all Admissions and Release Committees (ARCs) are using the participation guidelines correctly to make AA-AAAS participation decisions?

Of the 126 responses received, LEAs indicated the following were used to ensure ARCs used participation guidelines:

- Annual ARC chairperson training
- Yearly training modules completed by ARC members
- Trainings provided by Special Education Regional Technical Assistance Centers (SERTACs)
- District-level desk reviews
- Directors of Special Education (DoSEs) and other administrators chair ARC meetings when AA-AAAS is discussed
- Data committees

All 126 LEAs indicated they use the AA-AAAS participation guidelines to make assessment decisions. Students must meet all eligibility criteria on the participation guidelines to participate in the alternate assessment.

Question 2: Do LEA staff have questions about specific participation criteria or areas of the AA-AAAS eligibility guidelines?



Of the 126 responses received, three LEAs indicated that district staff had specific questions about participation criteria or areas of AA-AAAS eligibility. Questions included:

- Should the ARC consider general intelligence and adaptive scores more and not rely on other data as much?
- How much weight should be given to adaptive and cognitive scores?

Question 3: Do LEA staff need additional training?



Of the 126 responses received, eight LEAs indicated they need additional training. Additional training needs identified included:

- Training for newer staff including teachers and administrators, specifically focusing on documentation and data-based decision making
- Training for general education teachers on how to support students with significant cognitive disabilities in their classrooms

- Training on specially designed instruction (SDI)
- Follow-up training for new staff to ask clarifying questions
- Individual Education Program (IEP) development training specifically for students participating in AA-AAAS

Question 4: How does the LEA document that all ARC members (ARC chairpersons, administrators, special education teachers, etc.), who are involved in making decisions regarding participation in the Alternate Kentucky Summative Assessment (AKSA), have completed the AA-AAAS participation guideline training?

Of the 126 responses received, LEAs stated the following were used to ensure documentation of all ARC members completing required training:

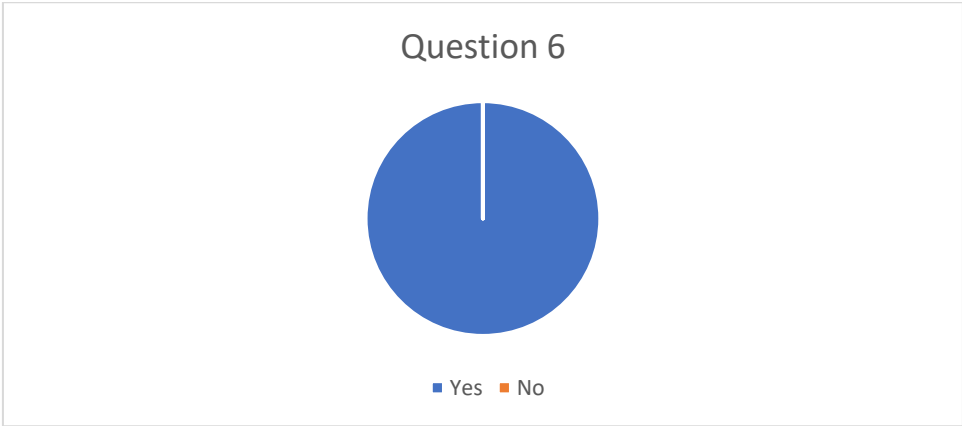
- Agendas
- Training sign in sheets
- Certificate of completion kept on file by district administrator
- District level checklists submitted to the DoSE
- Spreadsheets for tracking purposes

Question 5: Do ARC members use the participation guidelines effectively to determine whether a student has a significant cognitive disability?



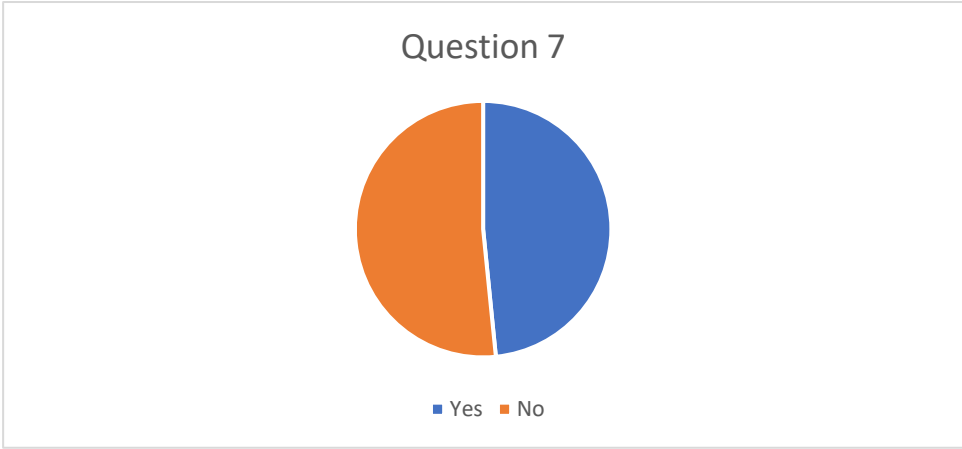
Of the 126 responses received, all LEAs indicated that ARC members use the participation guidelines effectively to determine if a student has a significant disability.

Question 6: Do ARC members understand how to gather and analyze data when making the decision to determine whether a student is eligible to participate in the AA-AAAS?



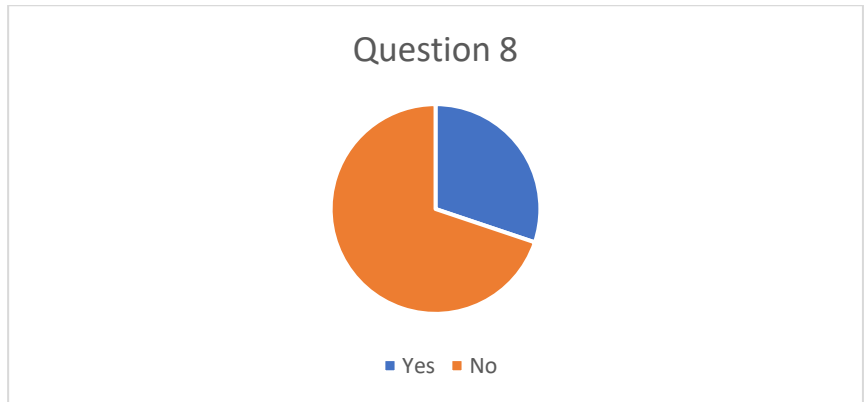
Of the 126 responses received, all LEAs reported that ARC members understand how to gather and analyze data when determining a student eligible for AA-AAAS.

Questions 7: Small LEA sizes may result in a greater impact on participation rates. Is your LEA participation rate impacted by an overall small student population size?



Of the 126 responses received, 61 LEAs reported that their AA-AAAS participation rate is impacted by an overall small student population size.

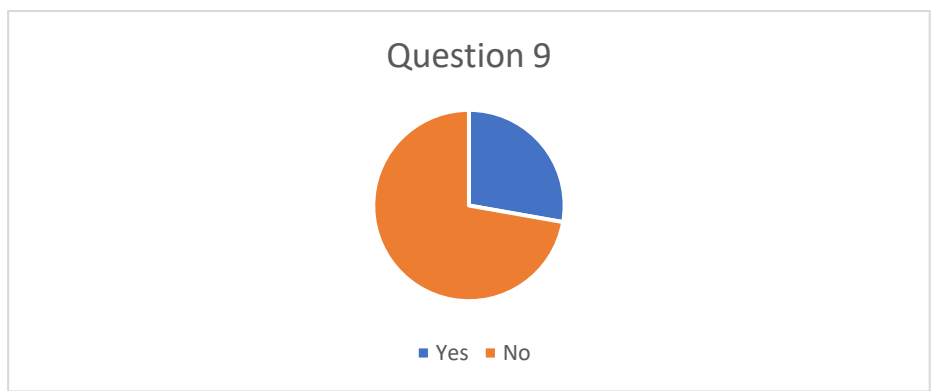
Question 8: Does the LEA include school, community or health programs that draw large numbers of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities?



Of the 126 responses received, 38 LEAs indicated they have school, community or health programs that draw large numbers of students with significant cognitive disabilities. School, community and health programs shared by LEAs:

- Special classrooms
- Special schools
- Children’s hospitals
- Military bases
- Foster care facilities
- Rehabilitation centers
- Psychiatric facilities and residential centers
- Subsidized housing

Question 9: Are there other reasons why your LEA has more than 1.0% of students eligible for the AA-AAAS?



Of the 126 responses, 35 LEAs reported that they had additional reasons for more than 1.0% of their students eligible for the AA-AAAS. Additional reasons reported by LEAs included:

- Small overall population size
- Community drug epidemic
- Low cost of living
- High rates of foster care

Question 10: Has the LEA reviewed and analyzed data (data examples: disability category, Learner Characteristics Inventory, English Language Learner, communication status) on students eligible for the AA-AAAS?



Of the 126 responses, 101 LEAs indicated that have analyzed data on students in their district eligible for the AA-AAAS. Data analyzed included:

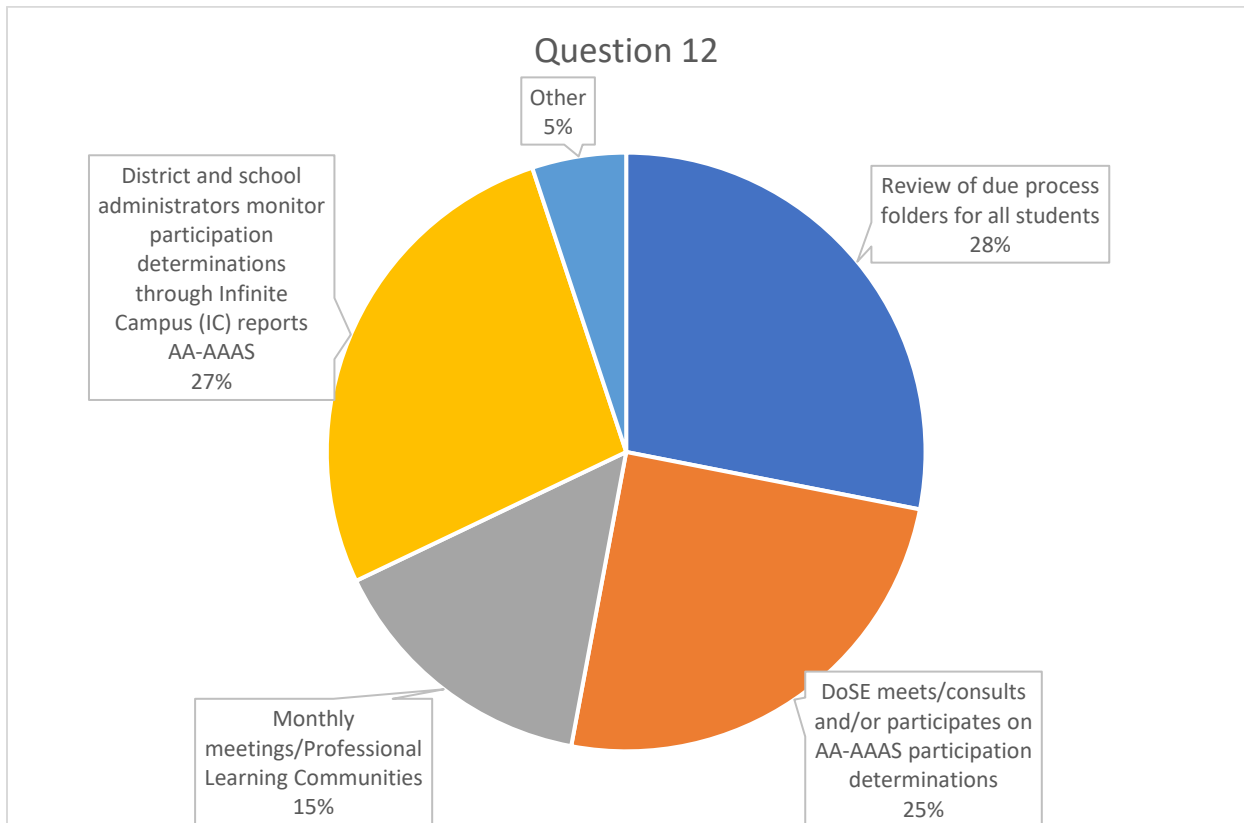
- Child Count data
- Data obtained through Record Reviews
- Data on English Language Learners (ELL)
- Eligibility data
- Communication data
- Progress monitoring data
- Assessment data

Question 11: Does the LEA data show disproportionality in specific groups of students taking the AA-AAAS?



Of the 126 responses, nine LEAs reported their data showed disproportionality in specific groups of students. Strategies identified by those LEAs included working with Autism specialists as well as early childhood providers on early intervening services.

Question 12: How does the LEA monitor eligibility for students to participate in AA-AAAS?



Question 13: What additional training or guidance is needed for your LEA to improve the AA-AAAS participation decision-making process? (Example: specific guidance for parents, training on excessive modifications)

Requests identified by LEAs included:

- Training from SERTACs
- Training on excessive modifications
- Training for families
- Offer more in-person trainings
- Additional training requirements for alternatively certified teachers
- Training on how to analyze student progress
- Training for ELL and AA-AAAS

Appendix A

The following LEAs assessed more than 1.0% of their assessed students in any subject with an alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS).

LEAs that exceeded the 1.0% participation rate in at least one subject for SY 2022-23
Adair County
Allen County
Anchorage Independent
Anderson County
Ashland Independent
Augusta Independent
Ballard County
Bardstown Independent
Bell County
Bellevue Independent
Berea Independent
Bourbon County
Boyd County
Bracken County
Breathitt County
Breckinridge County
Butler County
Caldwell County
Calloway County
Campbell County
Campbellsville Independent
Carlisle County

LEAs that exceeded the 1.0% participation rate in at least one subject for SY 2022-23

Carroll County

Carter County

Casey County

Christian County

Clark County

Clay County

Clinton County

Corbin Independent

Covington Independent

Crittenden County

Cumberland County

Danville Independent

Daviess County

Dawson Springs Independent

Dayton Independent

East Bernstadt Independent

Elizabethtown Independent

Elliott County

Eminence Independent

Erlanger-Elsmere Independent

Estill County

Fairview Independent

Fleming County

Floyd County

Fulton County

LEAs that exceeded the 1.0% participation rate in at least one subject for SY 2022-23

Fulton Independent

Garrard County

Glasgow Independent

Grayson County

Green County

Greenup County

Hancock County

Hardin County

Harlan Independent

Harrison County

Hart County

Hazard Independent

Henderson County

Henry County

Hickman County

Hopkins County

Jackson County

Jackson Independent

Jefferson County

Jenkins Independent

Johnson County

Kenton County

Knott County

Knox County

Larue County

LEAs that exceeded the 1.0% participation rate in at least one subject for SY 2022-23

Laurel County

Lawrence County

Lee County

Leslie County

Letcher County

Lewis County

Lincoln County

Livingston County

Logan County

Ludlow Independent

Lyon County

Magoffin County

Martin County

Mason County

Mayfield Independent

McCracken County

McCreary County

Menifee County

Mercer County

Metcalfe County

Middlesboro Independent

Monroe County

Morgan County

Muhlenberg County

Murray Independent

LEAs that exceeded the 1.0% participation rate in at least one subject for SY 2022-23

Newport Independent

Ohio County

Owen County

Owensboro Independent

Owsley County

Paducah Independent

Paris Independent

Pendleton County

Perry County

Pike County

Powell County

Pulaski County

Rockcastle County

Rowan County

Russell County

Russell Independent

Scott County

Shelby County

Somerset Independent

Southgate Independent

Spencer County

Todd County

Warren County

Washington County

Webster County

LEAs that exceeded the 1.0% participation rate in at least one subject for SY 2022-23

Whitley County

Williamsburg Independent

Williamstown Independent

Wolfe County