Implementing Alternate Assessment Eligibility Changes for the 2019-2020 School Year

July 2019
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Alternate Assessment Background
Louisiana believes that all students, including students with the most significant disabilities, should be held to the highest possible grade-level expectations. Over the past few years, much progress has been made to deliver on this belief including:

- new Louisiana Connectors standards in ELA, mathematics, and science with aligned instructional resources
- LEAP Connect, alternate assessment eligibility criteria revisions to Bulletin 1530
- a LEAP Connect alternate assessment aligned to the LEAP Connectors to measure student progress
- a graduation pathway to a high school diploma for students assessed on an alternate assessment
Alternate Assessment History

- **Statewide assessment of SWDs did not exist**
  - Early 1990’s

- **Federal requirements for alternate assessment**
  - 1997

- **No Child Left Behind and participation rate requirement of at least 95%**
  - 2002

- **Alternate assessment standards and proficiency cap**
  - by 2003

- **All states built alternate assessments**
  - by 2008

- **Every Student Succeeds Act and 1.0% state cap on participation**
  - 2015
Characteristics of Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities

The term “students with the most significant disabilities” did not create or refer to a specific disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). Rather the United States Department of Education (USDOE) intended the term to include the small number of students:

1. within one or more of the existing categories of disability under IDEA;
2. whose cognitive impairments may prevent them from attaining grade level achievement standards, even with the very best instruction; and
3. who are unable to participate in the regular assessment, even with accommodations.

Nationally, it’s estimated that 1.0% of students are students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.
Alternate Assessment Data
Alternate Assessment By the Numbers
Louisiana

Join the quiz at kahoot.it
Policy, Progress and Implications
BESE policy outlines specific criteria a student must meet to participate in the LEAP Connect alternate assessment. This criteria is found in Bulletin 1530, *Louisiana IEP Handbook for Students with Exceptionalities.*

The alternate assessment eligibility criteria revisions to this Bulletin were approved by BESE in December 2018 and are effective for the 2019-2020 school year.

To access guidance documents with that incorporate the revisions made to this policy, school systems can use the following links:

- Bulletin 1530 policy revisions effective for the 2019-2020 school year
- Criteria for students entering a high school cohort during the 2020-2021 SY or beyond
- Criteria for students entering a high school cohort on or before the 2019-2020 SY

In addition, SER enhancements for alternate assessment are available and the revisions are reflected in these enhancements.

*Please note that the version of 1530 on BESE's website contains a technical error. This will be updated in the fall. Until then, use the guidance linked above and the IEP in SER, both reflect the BESE-approved policy changes.
BESE Bulletin 1530 now contains high school cohort specific language that requires IEP teams to apply grade band specific criteria when determining student eligibility for the alternate assessment.

IEP teams are responsible for determining if a student is eligible to participate in the alternate assessment, based on this newly revised eligibility criteria:

- **Criterion 1 contains significant revisions** and is now high school **cohort specific**
- **Criterion 2 contains minor revisions** that apply to all **students** at all grade levels
- **Criterion 3 contains minor revisions** that apply to all **students** at all grade levels
### Criterion 1: High School Cohort Specific

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HS Cohort on/before the 2019-2020 SY*</th>
<th>HS Cohort during the 2020-2021 SY*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Criterion 1:</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. For students entering a high school cohort on or before the 2019-2020 school year, the student has a disability that significantly impacts cognitive function and/or adaptive behavior. This may be demonstrated in the following ways. *Students in 8th grade or above during the 2018-2019 school year</td>
<td>1. For students <strong>entering a high school cohort during the 2020 – 2021 school year and beyond</strong>, the student has a disability that significantly impacts cognitive function. This may be demonstrated in the following ways. *Students in 7th grade or below during the 2018-2019 school year</td>
</tr>
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</table>
## Criterion 1 (A)
### High School Cohort Specific

<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Criterion 1 (A):</strong></td>
<td><strong>Criterion 1 (A):</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. For students who have not completed the fifth grade, an eligible student is functioning 3 or more standard deviations below the mean <strong>in cognitive functioning and/or adaptive behavior</strong>.</td>
<td>A. For students who <strong>have not completed the fifth grade</strong>, an eligible student is functioning <strong>3 or more standard deviations below the mean in cognitive functioning</strong>.</td>
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*Students in 8th grade or above during the 2018-2019 school year

*Students in 7th grade or below during the 2018-2019 school year
**Criterion 1 (B)**
High School Cohort Specific

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Criterion 1 (B):</strong> B. <strong>For students who have completed fifth grade,</strong> an eligible student is functioning <strong>2.3 or more standard deviations below the mean</strong> in <strong>cognitive functioning and/or adaptive behavior.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Criterion 1 (B):</strong> B. <strong>For students who have completed fifth grade,</strong> an eligible student is functioning <strong>2.3 or more standard deviations below the mean</strong> in <strong>cognitive functioning.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Students in 8th grade or above during the 2018-2019 school year

*Students in 7th grade or below during the 2018-2019 school year
## Criterion 1 (C)

### High School Cohort Specific

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<th>HS Cohort on/before the 2019-2020 SY*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Criterion 1 (C):</strong></td>
<td><strong>Criterion 1 (C):</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Students who have <strong>completed the fifth grade</strong> functioning between 2.0 and 2.29 or more standard deviations below the mean in cognitive functioning and/or adaptive behavior may be eligible for alternate assessment participation if the IEP team provides <strong>additional empirical evidence</strong> an alternate assessment identification is appropriate for the student.</td>
<td>C. Students who have <strong>completed the fifth grade</strong> functioning between 2.0 and 2.29 or more standard deviations below the mean in cognitive functioning and <strong>with deficits in adaptive behavior</strong> may be eligible for alternate assessment participation if the IEP team provides <strong>additional empirical evidence</strong> an alternate assessment identification is appropriate for the student.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*Students in 8th grade or above during the 2018-2019 school year

*Students in 7th grade or below during the 2018-2019 school year
## NEW Criterion 2
Applies to All Students at All Grade Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous Criterion</th>
<th>New Criterion: All Grade Levels*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Criterion 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Criterion 2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The student requires extensive modified instruction aligned with the Louisiana extended standards to acquire, maintain, and generalize skills.</td>
<td>2. The student requires direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains on the challenging state academic content standards for the grade in which the student is enrolled.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Applies to all students in all grades
NEW Criterion 3
Applies to All Students at All Grade Levels

The decision to include the student in an alternate assessment is not solely based on the following:

a. student’s educational placement;
b. excessive or extended absences;
c. disruptive behavior;
d. English language proficiency;
e. student’s reading level or academic level;
f. student’s disability according to Bulletin 1508;
g. social, cultural, and/or economic differences;
h. anticipated impact on school performance scores;
i. administrative decision;
j. expectation that the student will not perform well on the LEAP 2025 or other statewide assessments;
k. the student’s previous need for accommodation(s) to participate in general state or district-wide assessments.
Implications for IEP Teams

It is the IEP team’s responsibility to determine how a student will participate in state assessments and whether accommodations are required to enable the student to participate in state assessments.

BESE policy outlines specific criteria a student must meet to participate in the LEAP Connect alternate assessment. IEP teams are responsible for determining if a student should participate in the LEAP Connect alternate assessment, based on the state’s criteria.

If the IEP team determines that a student will not participate in the regular assessment, the team is required to:

- identify why the regular assessment is not appropriate for the student and how they will be assessed, such as through an alternate assessment
- inform parents that their child’s achievement will be measured on alternate standards
- inform parents of any implications of their child’s participation in LEAP Connect or possible delays to completing the requirements for a diploma

Louisiana Believes
Implications for the Pupil Appraisal Team

Evaluation/Assessment

- Valid cognitive assessment for students suspected of having a significant cognitive disability
- Valid adaptive assessment for students suspected of having a significant cognitive disability

Report must include

- Name of the assessment administered
- Date the assessment was administered
- Score reported as standard deviation (from the mean)
- Cognitive assessment score reported as standard deviation (from the mean) for Full Scale IQ
Applying the State’s Eligibility Criteria
1. Did your group determine that your student qualified for alternate assessment using the states guidelines? Why or Why Not?

2. Did your group have difficulty coming to consensus on any particular criterion? Why or Why Not?

3. After having time to work with the participation guidelines, how comfortable/confident are your group members in using the guidelines in an IEP meeting? What questions/concerns about the guidelines does your group still have?
1. Did your group determine that your student qualified for alternate assessment using the states guidelines? Why or Why Not?

2. Did your group have difficulty coming to consensus on any particular criterion? Why or Why Not?

3. After having time to work with the participation guidelines, how comfortable/confident are your group members in using the guidelines in an IEP meeting? What questions/concerns about the guidelines does your group still have?
Special Education Reporting (SER) System
SER Enhancements

BESE Bulletin 1530 contains high school cohort specific language that requires IEP teams to apply grade level specific criteria when determining participation in the alternate assessment.

The Department is adding additional enhancements to the SER system to incorporate these policy changes. These enhancements include:

• Change or delete evaluation results on Evaluation page
• “Instruction Aligned to Louisiana Connectors” checkbox on Instruction Plan pages
• LEAP Connect assessment choices on Program Services page
• New LEAP Connect forms (based on cohort or grade for the 2018-2019 SY)
• Additional Documentation (Criterion 1.C.)
SER Enhancements
LEAP Connect Forms

Entering a high school cohort on or before the 2019-2020 school year

Note: The first page is continued in the back section of the guide and is not included as an Alt Form.

Alternate Assessment Participation Criteria Descriptors for the Participation Requirements for Alternate Assessment for Students Entering a High School Cohort During the 2020-2021 School Year

LEAP Connect alternate assessment was developed for students with disabilities for whom there is evidence that the student has a significant cognitive disability. The alternate assessment is a performance-based assessment designed for students whose instructional program is aligned to the Alternate Standards.

Individual educators and IEP team members are responsible for determining how a student will participate in state assessments of student achievement and whether accommodations for the assessment are required to enable the student to participate in the assessment. If the student determines that a student will not participate in the regular course curriculum, the state is required to identify only the assessment to meet appropriate for the student and may use the student’s Alternate assessment. IEP teams are responsible for determining if a student is eligible to participate in the year plan based on the state’s alternate assessment eligibility criteria. The decision for a student to participate in the alternate assessment must be made annually.

CRITERION ONE:
The student must document the IEP at the time the student is determining the criteria for evaluating achievement, the criteria for determining whether the student will participate in the Alternate Assessment, and the IEP

CRITERION TWO:
The student requires individualized instruction aligned with the content standards and supports to achieve measurable goals on the LEAP Connect ALT.

CRITERION THREE:
The student’s eligibility is determined based on the assessment criteria in the Schoolwide Program.

The IEP team should review all relevant information in the student record to determine if the student is eligible for LEAP Connect ALT. The student must meet the following criteria:

The student has a disability or disabilities that significantly affect the student’s performance, as determined by the student’s IEP team, and demonstrates a need for special education services.

The student’s cognitive function is significantly impaired and the student is unable to perform adequately on the LEAP Connect ALT.

The student is unable to demonstrate adequate progress on the LEAP Connect ALT.

The student is qualified for special education services and is eligible for LEAP Connect ALT.

The IEP team must be provided with evidence of the student’s current performance.

The student is significantly delayed in one or more areas of development.

The student requires adaptations and accommodations to participate in the LEAP Connect ALT.

The student is unable to participate in the LEAP Connect ALT due to a significant cognitive disability.

The student is unable to participate in the LEAP Connect ALT due to a significant physical disability.

The student is unable to participate in the LEAP Connect ALT due to a significant emotional disturbance.

The student is unable to participate in the LEAP Connect ALT due to a significant other health impairment.

The student is unable to participate in the LEAP Connect ALT due to a significant hearing impairment.

The student is unable to participate in the LEAP Connect ALT due to a significant visual impairment.

The student is unable to participate in the LEAP Connect ALT due to a significant speech or language impairment.

The student is unable to participate in the LEAP Connect ALT due to a significant multiple disabilities.

The student is unable to participate in the LEAP Connect ALT due to a significant other health impairment.

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The student is unable to participate in the LEAP Connect ALT due to a significant learning disability.
SER Enhancements
LEAP Connect Forms

Entering a high school cohort during the 2020 – 2021 school year and beyond

Alternate Assessment Participation Criteria

The student must be determined on the RTI that the student is functioning within the standard
assessment eligibility criteria. For a student to participate, he or she must be determined on the RTI that the
criteria for participation in alternate assessments must be met.

Criterions:
The student has a disability or multiple disabilities that significantly limit cognitive functioning and
as described in Section 6, includes adoption behavior.

The RTI must reflect the student’s need for individualized instruction to achieve measurable
goals on RTI goals and objectives that are consistent with the Alternate Connections developed for students
participating in alternate assessment. The RTI may also contain the student’s goals and objectives relating to
or other needs of the student which result from his or her disability, such as functional skills and social
development.

The LEAP team should receive all relevant information to verify that the student is functioning
within the standard assessment eligibility criteria. The student must be determined on the RTI that the
student is functioning within the standard assessment eligibility criteria. For a student to participate, he or
she must be determined on the RTI that the criteria for participation in alternate assessments must be met.

Agree Disagree
The student has a disability that significantly limits educational performance.

Criterions:
The student requires individualized instruction aligned with the Alternate Connections and
supports to achieve measurable goals in the LEAP Connects for the grades in which the student is enrolled.

The LEAP must reflect the student’s need for individualized instruction to achieve measurable
goals on LEAP goals and objectives that are consistent with the Alternate Connections developed for students
participating in alternate assessment. The LEAP may also contain the student’s goals and objectives relating to
or other needs of the student which result from his or her disability, such as functional skills and social
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The LEAP team should receive all relevant information to verify that the student is functioning
within the standard assessment eligibility criteria. The student must be determined on the RTI that the
student is functioning within the standard assessment eligibility criteria. For a student to participate, he or
she must be determined on the RTI that the criteria for participation in alternate assessments must be met.

Agree Disagree
The student has a disability that significantly limits educational performance.
SER Enhancements

Additional Documentation for Criterion 1.C.

Current Version

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<th>Eligibility Criteria Narrative</th>
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<td>1. The student has completed the 5th grade.</td>
<td>Grade 6 completed 5th grade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The student has a disability that significantly impedes their academic or occupational functioning and exceeds educational limitations of a student without disabilities.</td>
<td>Grade 6 with disability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The student is a minority student.</td>
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Student Assessment in Louisiana Educator Standards (LESO) [N].

Criterion 1.C. requires teachers to provide additional documentation that an alternative assessment identification is appropriate for the student. This guidance document serves as additional documentation to accompany criterion 1.C. of the state’s efficacy criteria ratings. The ratings in the majority of the remaining district-level criteria, but not this one, in the current form is a higher grade level to be eligible for 1.C. The student is a minority student, and students determined to have a significant cognitive disability. However, some descriptors may be more reflective of the teacher’s service model. Ratings are used for documentation and description.

Revised Version

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternate Assessment Participation Criteria</th>
<th>Students Entering a High School Cohort On or Before the 2019–2020 School Year Additional Documentation for Using Criterion 1.C.</th>
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Additional Documentation for Criterion 1.C. Guidance
Case Study - Applying Criterion 1.C.
Case Study #1 - Hunter

Join this survey at kahoot.it
Case Study - Applying Criterion 1.C.
Case Study #2 - Parker

Join this survey at kahoot.it
Alternate Assessment Participation
Schools Systems Exceeding 1.0 Percent
Alternate assessment participation data and review packages were sent via FTP on July 18, 2019 and are now available to school systems.

All school systems received:
- an alternate assessment process letter
- an alternate assessment participation data file

School systems exceeding 1.0 percent participation received additional files including:
- review process document
- justification form
- student specific files request
All school systems must:

- retrieve their alternate assessment package from the FTP
  - file name - LEA Code_LEA Name_Prelim Alternate Assessment 2019
- review their alternate assessment participation data
- verify whether the school system is over the 1.0 percent threshold in any content area

School systems not exceeding the 1.0 percent threshold, in any content area, are not required to take any additional actions.
School systems exceeding 1.0 percent participation, in any content area, must take additional actions including:

- review alternate assessment participation data for disproportionality amongst ESSA subgroups
- complete the alternate assessment review process
  - submit the alternate assessment review request
  - submit the alternate assessment justification form
  - submit, via FTP, up to 11 student specific files for review by the Department

The Department will host this webinar again on August 5 at 11:00 a.m. to help school systems complete these actions. **These actions must be completed by August 14, 2019.**
Alternate Assessment Review Process

Summary of Key Actions

✔ Review alternate assessment participation data
  ● for disproportionality by subgroup
  ● to determine possible reason(s) for exceeding 1.0 percent participation

✔ Complete and submit the alternate assessment review request form
  ● describe disproportionality data review process
  ● if needed, describe school systems actions to address disproportionality
  ● verify IEP team members were or will be trained on alternate assessment participation eligibility criteria
  ● verify evaluation results are entered in SER
  ● review student files for compliance to eligibility criteria

✔ Complete and submit the written justification form
  ● describe reasons the school system exceeded 1.0 percent participation in the alternate assessment
  ● provide assurance the school system reviewed participation data for any disproportionality and followed eligibility criteria

✔ Compile and submit the required student specific records to the Department for review

School systems are responsible for completing and submitting the review request form, the justification form and all requested student specific files to specialeducation@la.gov no later than August 14, 2019.
Resources, Supports & Reminders
In March, the Department launched a new hub page with a comprehensive list of tools and resources for educators and families to support students with significant cognitive disabilities, including

- Family Resources
- Classroom Supports
- Assessment Resources
- High School Pathways Information
- BESE Policy Bulletins

The new web page also links to a new library that indexes academic and policy resources.
Resources and Supports

The Department has released tools and resources to help school systems navigate these changes:

- **Alternate Assessment Review Process Support Webinar Slide Deck** (NEW)
- **SER Enhancements 2019-2020 SY Slide Deck** (NEW)
- **Alternate Assessment Eligibility Criteria Flowcharts** (NEW)
- **Alternate Assessment Eligibility Additional Documentation** (NEW)
- **Alternate Assessment Eligibility FAQ for IEP Teams** (updated March 2019)
- **Alternate Assessment Webinar** (February 2019)
- **Alternate Assessment Webinar Slide Deck** (February 2019)
- **Evaluation Updates in SER Q&A for School Systems** (Fall 2018)
- SER evaluation results and alternate assessment eligibility report
Alternate Assessment Review Process
Review Request and Justification PDF Forms

Some school systems have experienced some trouble saving and printing the fillable PDF forms with the content in the form fields visible.

If this is the case for your school system we have created a fix for this issue and you can download an alternate version of the Review Request form and/or Justification form in the Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities Resources library or download the forms using the direct PDF links below.

Attach 2_AA Review Request PDF Form_2019
Attach 3_AA Justification PDF Form_2019

Please note these forms must be downloaded and saved before entering information in the fields.
Seclusion and Restraint

The Department is required to collect data on the use of seclusion and restraint for students with disabilities and produce an annual report. School systems must also have local written guidelines and procedures for appropriate responses to the behavior of students with disabilities that may require seclusion and/or restraint. These guidelines and procedures must be submitted to the Department.

School systems will be provided with seclusion and restraint reports this week to verify their data. Please make any updates in SER, if needed, and submit new or revised policies to specialeducation@la.gov by August 16.
Jeopardy
Alternate Assessment FAQs
Questions?