

Division of Elementary and Secondary Education - Special Education Unit Advisory Council for the Education of Children with Disabilities Curriculum and Assessment, October 2020

US Department of Education Presentation

The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education's Special Education Unit (DESE-SEU) Curriculum and Assessment team was asked to present information on a national webinar pertaining to alternate assessment. The following is the webinar description:

How Do We Lower our Alternate Assessment Participation Rate? Five States Share their Stories

Many states are grappling with the 2016 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requirements related to meeting a state-level threshold of 1.0% for alternate assessment participation. Five states participating in the NCEO 1% Cap Community of Practice successfully reduced their participation rates in reading and math by more than 0.1 % from 2016-2017 to 2017-2018. In this session, education leaders from five states will share their challenges and highlight the strategies and resources they used to successfully reduce alternate assessment participation. Participants will gain knowledge that will benefit efforts to meet the 1.0% threshold in their own states.

The webinar was held on August 20, 2020.

National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) presentation

The DESE-SEU Curriculum and Assessment team was asked to present information on a national NCEO webinar pertaining to supports for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who are receiving instruction remotely. The webinar was held on September 15, 2020.

Alternate Assessment

Arkansas is required to submit to the US Department of Education a request for an extension on its 1% Alternate Assessment Waiver. The DESE-SEU submitted our waiver extension request for 2020-2021 on June 14, 2020. The waiver extension request included 2018-2019 testing data and 2019-2020 assessment portal enrollment data. The US Department of Education approved the Arkansas waiver extension request on August 4, 2020.

Professional Development

The Curriculum and Assessment team developed two virtual trainings pertaining to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. More than one thousand special educators attended the trainings over the summer. Three additional sessions have been scheduled for the fall in an effort to reach newly hired teachers.

Alternate English Language Proficiency Exam Development

Arkansas has joined a collaborative of states working to develop an alternate English language proficiency assessment for students who are English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Tabitha Riendeau and Robin Stripling from the DESE-SEU and Dr. Alan Lytle from the DESE Assessment Unit are the state members on this team. The team meets on a weekly basis.