



1% Participation Waiver Extension Request for the Alternate Assessments

ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(D) and 34 CFR 200.6(c) and (d) Submission to U.S. Department of Education



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Wyoming Department of Education

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Introduction

Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA), addresses students participating in alternate assessments aligned with alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS) of the statewide assessment system. Each state must submit a waiver request to the U.S. Department of Education if it predicts exceeding 1.0 percent participation in the AA-AAAS in any subject.

Wyoming assesses students each spring using the Wyoming Test of Proficiency and Progress (WY-TOPP) and the Wyoming Alternate Assessment (WY-ALT) for students designated as a Student with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities (SMSCD). WY-ALT is aligned with the Wyoming Extended Standards (WYES) as adopted by the state of Wyoming and thus qualifies as an Alternate Assessment based on Alternate Academic Achievement standards (AA-AAAS).

The Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) was granted a waiver extension on February 14, 2025, for the 2024-25 school year for ELA, Math, and Science. Based on analysis of Spring 2025 data, the WDE predicts exceeding the AA-AAAS threshold during the 2025-26 school year. Pursuant to the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 34 (34 CFR), Section 200.6(c)(4), the WDE requests an extension to the current ELA, Math, and Science waivers for the 2024-25 school year.

Component 1

Be submitted at least 90 days prior to the start of the state's testing window for the relevant subject.

The testing window for WY-ALT (Wyoming's AA-AAAS) in the Spring of 2026 will last from March 3 through April 10, 2026. The WDE will submit this waiver request and waiver extension to the U.S. Department of Education 90 days prior to the testing window starting on December 3, 2025. Provided is the public publishing of the testing information found on the [WDE public website](#).

2025-26 Wyoming WY-ALT (AA-AAAS) Testing Schedule:

- WY-ALT: March 3-April 10, 2026
 - ELA & Math: Grades 3-10
 - Science: Grades 4, 8, and 10
- WY-TOPP: April 14-May 8, 2026
 - ELA & Math: Grades 3-10
 - Science: Grades 4, 8, and 10
 - Writing: Grades 5, 7, and 9

Component 2

A. The number and percentage of students in each subgroup of students who took an alternate assessment.

Data provided are from Wyoming’s Summative Assessment given in the Spring of 2025. The data found in the tables below detail the participation in the WY-ALT for English, Math, and Science in 2025 (See Tables 1-6). From this data, the WDE anticipates exceeding the 1% threshold for participation in the AA-AAAS for the Spring of 2026.

Table 1 shows the percentage of students who took an alternate assessment, by content area in grades 3-10, from Spring 2018 to Spring 2025. While data from the Spring 2017 testing session is not shown (ELA & Math: 1.49%, Sci: 2.42%), there was a 2-year downward trend in all subjects prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, then a four-year upward trend in AA-AAAS participation rates for ELA and Math. Rates for ELA participation did fall slightly from the 2023-24 to 2024-25 school years, by 0.02%, or approximately 11 students; for Math participation, rates fell by 0.01%, or approximately six students. Science participation rates rose steadily from Spring 2019 to Spring 2023, then dropped below 1% in Spring 2024. Unfortunately, Science participation rates rose again above 1% for the Spring 2025 administration, or approximately 24 students.

Table 1: Wyoming Participation in Alternate Assessment by Subject Across Years

WY-ALT YEARS	2017-18	2018-19	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
ELA	1.16%	0.99%	1.00%	1.07%	1.08%	1.10%	1.08%
Math	1.16%	0.98%	1.00%	1.07%	1.08%	1.09%	1.08%
Science	1.42%	0.96%	1.04%	1.10%	1.13%	0.97%	1.08%

It is important to note the limitations of Wyoming due to the low student population. The Wyoming overall tested population of the general summative assessment is small, and the alternate assessment takers are even smaller in number. For Spring 2025, 37 of 48 Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and 3 of 3 Wyoming charter schools have an N size of ten or fewer students taking all three of the WY-ALT tests (ELA, Math, & Science). Of the 27 LEAs (including one charter school) that exceeded the 1% threshold, six LEAs went over the threshold in Science only, and three LEAs (including one charter school) exceeded the threshold in both ELA and Math. Eighteen LEAs were over 1% in all three testing areas. Wyoming remains committed to ensuring only students meeting the eligibility criteria for the WY-ALT are taking the test. In our case, students may be designated correctly as Student with the Most Significant Disability (SMSCD), but an LEA/charter school may remain over the 1% threshold due to a low student population overall.

Table 2: WY-ALT Tested Numbers 2022-23 to 2024-25

	2022-23 # TESTED	2023-24 # TESTED	2024-25 # TESTED	2022-23 % TESTED	2023-24 % TESTED	2024-25 % TESTED
ELA Grades 3-10	610	607	592	1.09%	1.10%	1.08%
Math Grades 3-10	608	608	594	1.08%	1.09%	1.08%
Science Grades 4, 8, 10	241	202	221	1.13%	0.97%	1.08%

Table 3: Total Enrolled & Tested Numbers 2022-23 to 2024-25

	2022-23 # ENROLLED	2023-24 # ENROLLED	2024-25 # ENROLLED	2022-23 # TESTED	2023-24 # TESTED	2024-25 # TESTED
ELA Grades 3-10	56,749	56,017	55,443	56,173	55,408	54,673
Math Grades 3-10	56,848	56,017	55,443	56,331	55,581	54,805
Science Grades 4, 8, 10	21,495	21,055	20,795	21,272	20,835	20,499

It is also important to note the difference in Wyoming's number of students AA-AAAS tested (3-10) during the last three years, as compared to the numbers of total students enrolled and total students tested (3-10) from the same time period. While the number of students AA-AAAS tested has remained relatively constant for both ELA and Math (see Table 2), total student enrollment/total number of students tested for the state has dropped significantly from the 2022-23 to the 2024-25 school year (see Table 3). Specifically, from 2023-24 to 2024-25, Wyoming AA-AAAS numbers decreased by only 12-15 students, while the total number of students tested statewide decreased by more than 700. In terms of 1% calculations, therefore, Wyoming's numerator remains relatively constant, while the denominator has decreased significantly, raising the 1% figure despite an actual decrease in ELA and Math AA-AAAS students. Regarding Science, the percentage of AA-AAAS students did increase from 0.97% to 1.08%. While again, falling overall student population numbers are pushing the 1% rate higher, the number of students tested did increase. As Wyoming AA-AAAS students must take all ALT assessments, the increase in Science numbers can only be explained by concentrated pockets of eligible AA-AAAS students that impact the grade 4, 8, and 10 testing windows.

This breakdown of data of each tested subject area provides further details regarding Wyoming's AA-AAAS numbers for the 2024-25 school year. Table 4 shows that 1.08% of all students, and 6.81% of Students with Disabilities, participated in the AA-AAAS for English in grades 3-10.

Table 4: English Grades 3 to 10: 2024-25 Alternate Assessment Participation

GROUP	# TESTED	# TESTED WY-ALT	% TESTED WY-ALT
All Students	54,673	592	1.08%
IDEA Students	8,690	592	6.81%
American Indian/Alaska Native	1,717	25	1.46%
Asian	312	7	2.24%
Black	436	12	2.75%
Hispanic	8,485	96	1.13%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	83	1	1.20%
Two or More Races	2,201	36	1.64%
White	41,439	415	1.00%
English Learner	1,587	15	0.95%
Free/Reduced Lunch Eligible	23,566	365	1.55%

Table 5 shows that 1.09% of all students, and 7.02% of Students with Disabilities, participated in the AA-AAAS for Math in grades 3-10.

Table 5: Math Grades 3 to 10: 2024-25 Alternate Assessment Participation

GROUP	# TESTED	# TESTED WY-ALT	% TESTED WY-ALT
All Students	54,805	594	1.08%
IDEA Students	8,703	594	6.83%
American Indian/Alaska Native	1,718	25	1.46%
Asian	317	7	2.21%
Black	438	12	2.74%
Hispanic	8,602	97	1.13%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	83	1	1.20%
Two or More Races	2,199	36	1.64%
White	41,448	417	1.01%
English Learner	1,719	17	0.99%
Free/Reduced Lunch Eligible	23,675	367	1.55%

Table 6 shows that 1.08% of all students, and 7.20% of Students with Disabilities, participated in the AA-AAAS for Science in grades 4, 8, and 10.

Table 6: Science Grades 4,8,10: 2024-25 Alternate Assessment Participation

GROUP	# TESTED	# TESTED WY-ALT	% TESTED WY-ALT
All Students	20,499	221	1.08%
IDEA Students	3,068	221	7.20%
American Indian/Alaska Native	631	7	1.11%
Asian	109	4	3.67%
Black	152	3	1.97%
Hispanic	3,315	34	1.03%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	34	0	0.00%
Two or More Races	767	12	1.56%
White	15,491	161	1.04%
English Learner	660	9	1.36%
Free/Reduced Lunch Eligible	8,603	134	1.56%

B. The state measured the achievement of at least 95% of all students, and 95% of students in the children with disabilities subgroup enrolled in grades for which the assessment is required.

Wyoming follows federal requirements for participation in statewide assessments as outlined in the Every Student Succeeds Act 34 CFR 200.6(c)(4)(ii)(B), as well as 34 CFR 200.5(a)(i-ii). Students in grades 3 through 10 are required to take both ELA and mathematics assessments annually. Students in grades 4, 8, and 10 must take a science assessment. Data in Table 7 indicate that the WDE met the requirement and measured achievement of more than 98.6% of all students and more than 98.1% of students with disabilities enrolled in grades and courses for which an assessment is required in Spring 2025.

Table 7: Spring 2025 Participation Rate of All Students and Students with Disabilities (Grades 3-10)

SUBJECT	# TESTED	# ENROLLED	% TESTED	IDEA # TESTED	IDEA # ENROLLED	IDEA % TESTED
ELA Grades 3-10	56,673	55,443	98.61%	8,690	8,831	98.40%
Math Grades 3-10	54,805	55,443	98.85%	8,703	8,831	98.55%
Science Grades 4, 8, 10	20,499	20,795	98.58%	3,068	3,128	98.08%

Evidence of Progress:

Wyoming continues to test a high percentage of students, including a high percentage of students with disabilities.

Table 8 shows data from previous year administrations across all three tests.

Table 8: Longitudinal Percent Participation Measured of All and Disabled Students

	2017-18	2018-19	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
% Tested, All Students	99.27%	99.36%	96.45%	98.82%	99.03%	99.05%	98.61%
% Tested, IDEA Students	98.58%	98.66%	95.72%	98.20%	98.48%	98.51%	98.40%

This table shows that percentages remain consistent over time (except for an expected 2020-21 decrease immediately following the COVID-19 pandemic), and the percentage tested remains consistently high for Wyoming.

Component 3

A. Include assurances from the state that it has verified that each local education agency that the state anticipates will assess more than 1% of its assessed students in any subject using an alternate assessment followed the state's guidelines for participation in the alternate assessment.

As stipulated in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), LEAs/charter schools that expect to exceed 1% participation are required to complete and submit electronic justification and assurances. Traditionally, the WDE first tiers each LEA/charter school in the state using ALT assessment and 1% data from the previous spring (see Component 4 section B for further tiering information, including tiering results), communicates these findings, and then seeks out justifications and assurances from each LEA/charter school.

In the 2022-23 school year, 45 districts submitted justifications and assurances by January 27, 2023. Another three were part of corrective action and submitted their assurances through the Google form. Thus, 100% of LEAs replied.

For the 2023-24 school year, the WDE requested justifications and assurances from 48 LEAs in total, due January 26, 2024 (two charter schools were excluded from this, being brand new for the school year). 42 LEAs submitted justifications and assurances; one did not, as they did not exceed the 1% threshold; 5 LEAs were listed at Tier 3 and are maintaining that status coming into the 2024-25 school year, with monitoring and greater oversight and support provided by the WDE.

In the 2024-25 school year, the WDE communicated with all 48 LEAs and three charter schools to collect alternate assessment justifications and assurances via a Google form, due January 31, 2025. These justifications can be requested through a Public Records Request from the WDE. LEAs/charter schools that did not anticipate testing more than 1% of their students on the alternate assessment are not required to submit justification.

For the 2025-26 school year, the WDE will again communicate with all 48 LEAs and three charter schools to collect alternate assessment justifications and assurances via Google form, due January 30, 2026. As always, these justifications can be requested through a Public Records Request from the WDE. All LEAs/charter schools will be required to submit justification, regardless of whether or not they anticipate testing more than 1% of their students on the alternate assessment.

WDE required assurances include:

- General and special education teachers and other appropriate staff are knowledgeable about the administration of assessments, including making appropriate use of testing accommodations.
- Our district provides individualized education program team members with training on the Wyoming Alternate Assessment Participation Guidance and Checklist.
- Our district continues to allow individualized education program teams to decide which students qualify for an alternate assessment using the guidance provided by the Wyoming Department of Education.
- All alternate assessment test administrators have the required training for administering the alternate assessments.
- Our district continues to address any disproportionality in the percentage of students in any subgroup participating in the alternate assessment.
- Parents are informed when their students will be assessed on alternate achievement standards, including information about the implications of participation in the alternate assessment.

After WDE receives and reviews requested materials, letters may be sent to LEAs/charter schools to either clarify concerns or request further documentation. Depending on tiering results (see Component 4, section B), LEAs/charter schools are each handled differently. Tier 1 LEAs/charter schools are asked to submit justification, even if they do not anticipate more than 1% of their students will need ALT testing. Tier 2 LEAs/charter schools that have provided sufficient evidence are cleared after assurances. However, if these assurances are found to be incomplete, WDE may suggest that the LEA/charter school provides to their appropriate staff WDE-approved training, or revisit determination policies. Tier 3 LEAs/charter schools whose WY-ALT participation explanations were found to be complete are cleared following a file review. If the WDE Special Education Programs Monitoring Team finds these files to be incomplete, WDE may require further training, policy review, or other direct support such as coaching or facilitated file review. Specific letters and plans are developed for each LEA/charter school as they are deemed necessary by the WDE Special Education Programs division.

B. Include assurances from the state that it has verified that each district or community school that the state anticipates will assess more than 1 percent of its assessed students in any subject using an alternate assessment will address any disproportionality in the percentage of students in any subgroup taking an alternate assessment.

The WDE collects assurances from LEAs/charter schools through the grant application process for Part B Federal Special Education Funds. The WDE conducted a state-level targeted analysis to identify disproportionality data of student participation in Alternate Assessments in Spring 2024 by 1) disability category, 2) race and ethnicity, 3) English Learner status, and 4) free or reduced lunch eligibility (used as an indicator of socioeconomic status). (See Tables 9-10).

The WDE utilizes the NCEO's disproportionality calculator for our AA-AAAS disproportionality calculations. As we are such a small state with very small n-counts, we utilize a 3-year cycle of calculating the risk ratio with a threshold criterion of a 2.0 risk ratio. As we examine this data, we consider particularly low n-sizes as an additional factor. Previously, the only risk ratio we have seen above a 2 over the last few calculations (2018-2024) has traditionally been for our Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander population, which stays below 20 students consistently. For the 2025 spring ALT administration, the Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander population's risk ratio dropped below 2, to 1.91. While still high, the ratio is shrinking and will be tracked closely.

However, as stated last year, the ratio for Black students has risen and slightly emerged over a risk ratio of 2 in the previous 3-year calculation. For the current 3-year calculation (2023-25), the risk ratio for black students has now surpassed 2, with a new current 3-year average of 2.5. The small count for our Black student population makes the calculation highly volatile; therefore, we confer with the SPED division to determine if their calculations show a disproportionality, which they have not. We must continue to track and analyze the growing count of our Black student population with the SPED division to ensure adequate data tracking and determine appropriate next steps.

Table 9: State-Level Targeted Analysis of Alternate Assessment Participation Data by IDEA Disability

	% OF IDEA STUDENTS TESTED WY-ALT				
IDEA DISABILITY	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Autism (AT)	23.16%	22.44%	22.20%	21.15%	21.81%
Cognitive Disability (CD)	71.51%	70.79%	70.55%	67.75%	65.29%
Deaf-Blind Disability (DB)	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Developmental Delay (DD)	0.00%	0.00%	4.88%	0.00%	0.00%
Emotional Disability (ED)	0.68%	0.97%	0.67%	0.82%	0.82%

	% OF IDEA STUDENTS TESTED WY-ALT				
IDEA DISABILITY	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Hearing Impairment (Including Deafness) (HI)	1.18%	0.00%	0.00%	1.32%	0.00%
Learning Disability (LD)	0.15%	0.27%	0.36%	0.33%	0.30%
Multiple Disabilities (MU)	56.95%	61.61%	56.99%	54.79%	51.36%
Orthopedic Disability (OI)	7.79%	2.30%	6.25%	3.23%	6.90%
Other Health Impaired (HL)	2.05%	2.27%	2.72%	2.56%	1.88%
Speech/Language Disability (SL)	0.37%	0.53%	0.48%	0.30%	0.09%
Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)	23.33%	19.09%	25.27%	19.51%	33.33%
Visual Impairment (including Blindness) (VI)	0.00%	3.28%	3.61%	2.30%	2.17%

Table 10: State-Level Targeted Analysis of Alternate Assessment Participation Data for Disproportionality (3-year average).

	3 YEAR TOTAL				
GROUP	# NOT AA-AAAS	% ASSESSED	# TAKING AA-AAAS	% TAKING AA-AAAS	RISK RATIO
All Students	164,279		1,809		
American Indian/Alaska Native	5,211	3.17%	76	4.20%	1.32
Asian	946	0.58%	18	1.00%	1.73
Black	1,308	0.80%	36	1.99%	2.50
Hispanic	23,637	14.39%	282	15.59%	1.08
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	238	0.14%	5	0.28%	1.91
Multiracial	6,505	3.96%	96	5.31%	1.34
White	126,434	76.96%	1,296	71.64%	0.93
Economic Disadvantage	62,821	38.24%	1,019	56.33%	1.47
English Learner	4,367	2.66%	55	3.04%	1.14

WDE understands the value of annually analyzing state disproportionality data to target areas of technical assistance and guidance. The department also believes that analyzing state disproportionality data ensures that IEP teams are positioned to make well-informed decisions about a student's participation in the alternate assessment, based on the state's guidelines and the student's educational goals.

Component 4

A. Include a plan and timeline for improving the implementation of its guidelines for participation in the alternate assessment.

The WDE continues to refine and improve the use of state guidelines for participation in the alternate state assessment. For many Wyoming LEAs/charter schools, we know that small n-counts are putting organizations over the 1% threshold. In Spring 2025, we saw our LEAs/charter schools alternate assessment participation at approximately the same level, with slight decreases overall. Although some LEAs/charter schools are on a downward trend in at least two of the three subject areas tested (29 LEAs/charter schools of the 48 LEAs and 3 charter schools in the state), others are trending upwards or remain on an upward trend over the 1% threshold, occasioning this waiver.

Improvement Plan and Timelines

WDE has taken, and will continue to take, the following actions for improving the implementation of guidelines for participation in the alternate assessment:

- From June 2023 to August 2023, the WDE Assessment team and Special Education Monitoring Team coordinated an educator work group to create a more comprehensive designation for Student with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities (SMSCD), as well as revise the WY-ALT participation guidelines. This work group of four stakeholders met over Zoom twice to discuss and revise the guidelines. They spent two more hours revising and reviewing feedback after additional stakeholder reviews. Twelve stakeholder groups were invited to provide feedback on the guidelines. Of those twelve, one person from each group listed, unless otherwise noted, provided feedback:
 - Wyoming Advisory Panel on Students with Disabilities (WAPSD).
 - Wyoming Institute for Disabilities (WIND) at the University of Wyoming.
 - Wyoming Association of Special Education Administrators (WASEA).
 - Attorney General's Office.
 - One parent.
 - Central Wyoming College Disability Supports Office.
 - Wyoming Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities.
 - NCEO 1% Community of Practice (three staff members).

In addition, the participation guidelines included a link to a feedback form for IEP teams to provide suggestions. That feedback form remained open until Spring 2024.

- In the summer of 2024, the WDE released the current edition of the Alternate Assessment Participation Guidance document, which will be used for the 2025-26 school year, as well as a new video regarding the use of the updated participation guidance document, featured on the WDE District Resources website for LEA/charter school use.
- The WDE strongly encourages LEAs/charter schools to utilize Wyoming's Alternate Assessment Participation Checklist, included in the Participation Guidance document, or a similar tool created within the organization, to address the same criteria given in the checklist. The SPED team provides this

checklist for all LEAs/charter schools that show identification issues during the monitoring process.

- Improving communication by establishing regular reminders to SPED Directors, district, and school staff about the Alternate Assessment Checklist and their Tier support. Included in the communication to all LEAs/charter schools is a reminder about, and a copy of, the guidance and checklist WDE provides to assist IEP teams in determining participation in the alternate assessment. This Tier 1 support is distributed twice a year, in the fall and spring, to guide LEAs/charter schools through their training and decision-making processes. Reminders of the Alternate Assessment Guidance and checklist will be included in District Test & Building Coordinator meetings, Test Administrator trainings, Special Education Programs trainings, and other SPED and Assessment training opportunities as appropriate.
- Developing and disseminating resources and training to LEAs/charter schools and families about alternate assessment eligibility. WDE will continue to invite stakeholder feedback as they create resources to ensure they are efficient and effective in the field. Most recently, the S&A Division maintains:
 - An Assessment page on the public WDE website to provide Alternate Assessment details,
 - An Alternate Assessment Participation Decision-Making Tool,
 - Frequently Asked Questions, and is currently developing
 - Resources for LEAs/charter schools to assist with data analysis.

Currently, work is underway to develop new resources for LEAs/charter schools and families, including documentation that better explains the state alternate assessment and the various assessment supports embedded or allowed for students with IEPs/504s.

- Providing Wyoming's LEAs/charter schools with district and state-wide data that identifies alternate assessment participation. WDE notifies LEAs/charter schools of Tier 3 identification regarding alternate assessment participation data above 1%. WDE will provide a template as guidance for LEA/charter school staff to evaluate Alternate Assessments and identification data.
- Providing technical assistance to educators during the alternate assessment testing window with direct access to state assessment consultants.
- Participating in national networks and learning opportunities for state staff as available. WDE works collaboratively with members of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), Assessment, Standards and Education of Students with Disabilities (ASES) State Collaborative, and National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) by participating in bi-monthly NCEO 1 % Communities of Practice.
- Reviewing and revising standards in conjunction with the State Board of Education's efforts to do so. The S&A department will concurrently review and revise Wyoming's Content and Performance Standards (WYCPS) and Wyoming's Extended Standards (WYES). Review and revision included contracted work with EdMetric, to conduct independent Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) alignment studies to ensure alignment between the WYCPS and the WYES. These WIOA studies occurred in 2024 (Math and Science), as well as 2025 (ELA). Math and Science Extended Standards have been completed and approved by the Wyoming State Board of Education. ELA standards are currently undergoing revisions, a process that started during the summer of 2025.
- Opening and amending the Wyoming Chapter 7 Rules: Services for Children with Disabilities. Those rules are currently working their way through a review process, and it is estimated that the rules will be posted for 90 days of public comment by October 2025. Following public comment and once given board approval, these new Chapter 7 rules will be in effect.
- Collaborating with the WDE special education monitoring and school improvement teams to identify and strengthen systemic practices to support Tier 2 and Tier 3 identified LEAs/charter schools.

The WDE Assessment Team and Special Education Programs Division will continue to monitor the enrollment of students in the alternate assessment administration to determine the effectiveness of these changes. If further action is required, both teams will determine future improvements to the guidance and implementation of that guidance as needed.

B. Include additional steps to support and provide oversight to each district or community school projected to exceed the 1 percent threshold.

Table 11: Tiering Criteria Matrix

TIER	DETERMINED BY	REQUIREMENTS
1. Meets Requirements	100% compliance: no more than 1% of students taking WY-ALT for that grade and content area.	LEAs/charter schools may request and access available training for staff as needed.
2. Needs Assistance	Exceed 1% of students taking WY-ALT AND/OR up trend or possible concerns after subgroup analysis including population size.	Required Assurances of staff training, annual IEP review, and understanding of WY-ALT guidance documents for participation. Suggested participation in WDE-approved training AND/OR policy review/update. Technical support is available for participation determinations.
3. Needs Intervention	Exceed 1% of students taking WY-ALT, a 2-year trend of exceeding 1%, a significant trend up, AND/OR concerns after subgroup analysis.	WDE file review of LEA explanation for the students' participation in the AA-AAAS. Required participation in WDE-approved targeted training AND/OR policy review/update. Possible facilitated file review, coaching, direct support, analyzing root causes, and an improvement plan.

Tiered Intervention and Monitoring Plan:

The WDE continues to work with LEAs/charter schools to ensure appropriate participation in the Alternate Assessment based on Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (AA-AAAS). The Special Education Programs Monitoring Team and Assessment Team review each LEA's/charter school's WY-ALT participation data. For each organization exceeding 1% participation in the AA-AAAS, the nature and root causes of the data are analyzed, including trends over the past three years, analysis of disability categories, services, environment, other subgroups, and population size of the LEA/charter school. Based on these analyses, LEAs/charter schools are placed in Tier 1, 2, or 3 using the Tiering Criteria (see Table 11) and special education monitoring team's background information on LEAs/charter schools (e.g., new special education director or whether there is a large group home in the district).

Tiering for 2025-26 happened on September 3, 2025, with the Special Education Monitoring Team and the Assessment Team reviewing the data for WY-ALT administration from the previous spring. At this time, LEAs/charter schools were placed in Tier 1, 2, or 3 based on this analysis using the tiering criteria matrix (Table 11). It's important to note that the WDE team tiered a few LEAs/charter schools as Tier 1 based on an extremely low n-count, because the team could say with confidence that those LEAs/charter schools were compliant and the right students were taking the right tests. Also, unlike previous years, all three Wyoming charter schools were placed at Tier 1.

After LEAs/charter schools have been assigned a tier, WDE sends out communication to each LEA/charter school regarding their tier status. Tier 1 & 2 LEAs/charter schools were notified in September 2025, and Tier 3 LEAs/charter schools were notified in October 2025. Regarding tiering statuses:

- 21 LEAs maintained Tier 1
- 4 LEAs and 1 charter school moved from Tier 3 to Tier 1
- 1 LEA and 2 charter schools moved from Tier 2 to Tier 1
- 5 LEAs maintained Tier 2
- 2 LEA moved from Tier 1 to Tier 2
- 1 LEA moved from Tier 3 to Tier 2
- 11 LEAs maintained Tier 3
- 2 LEAs moved from Tier 1 to Tier 3
- 1 LEA moved from Tier 2 to Tier 3

For the tiering notification process, each LEA/charter school receives a cover letter explaining the background, purpose, and process for monitoring the 1% participation threshold, as well as their current tier level. This cover letter also includes available resources for training and support for the current school year, including the following:

- [Participation Guidance Video.](#)
- [Least Dangerous Assumption and Using 1% Guidance Video.](#)
- [Modified Curriculum and Accommodations Video.](#)
- [Extended Standards vs. Wyoming Content and Performance Standards and Relationship to Statewide Assessment.](#)
- WDE Assessment Team Monthly Office Hours Information.
- Parent/student resources for support in understanding the AA-AAAS.

Finally, each LEA/charter school also receives a spreadsheet including their district or school-level data.

Tier 1 LEAs/charter schools did not test more than 1% of their overall students in any content area on the AA-AAAS and were categorized as meeting requirements. Wyoming continues moving in a positive direction as 29 LEAs/charter schools met requirements in 2024-25, as compared to 26 LEAs during the 2023-24 school year. In addition to the above-listed resources, Tier 1 LEAs/charter schools also receive a letter of congratulations on their current status.

Tier 2 LEAs/charter schools that exceed 1% participation in one or more content areas of the WY-ALT, demonstrate an upward trend, and/or raise concerns after subgroup analysis, will receive their Tier 2 letter with the supports listed above. In addition, the Special Education Monitoring Team may make specific training recommendations for a Tier 2 LEA/charter school. Wyoming Tier 2 LEAs/charter schools for the 2025-26 school year increased from 6 to 8.

Tier 2 letters **may** request the LEA/charter schools to submit a file review to the WDE. For each LEA/charter school placed in Tier 2 status, the WDE determines whether Tier 2 status was due to small population size or other contributing factors. In the case of such factors, some Tier 2 districts are not required to submit a file review. For all other Tier 2 LEAs/charter schools, the tiering letter requires a file review containing the following assurances and evidence:

- Annual review and use of the WY- ALT guidance documents.
- Staff training on the WY-ALT participation criteria.
- Annual review of IEPs to determine AA-AAAS participation.
- Analysis of WY-ALT data from the 2024-25 school year using a provided template and guide.

For Tier 3 LEAs/charter schools that exceed 1% participation in one or more content areas of the WY-ALT, demonstrate an upward trend, and/or show possible concerns after subgroup analysis, the Special Education Monitoring Team **will** provide specific training recommendations based on the available supports listed above.

LEAs/charter schools in Tier 3 have additional requirements for the 2025-26 school year. This was communicated to Tier 3 LEAs/charter schools in writing in October 2025, with a follow-up contact by a special education monitoring consultant. In writing, Tier 3 LEAs/charter schools are given the following instructions regarding required activities:

- "WDE requires that your staff complete the following activities to ensure they are meaningfully determining students' WY-ALT participation and that you provide a letter of assurance that these activities have been completed no later than February 27, 2026:
 - Review the WY-ALT Participation Guidance Video and documents.
 - Complete the WY-ALT Determination and Least Dangerous Assumption Training.
 - Review Wyoming Extended Standards and the Modified Curriculum and Accommodations video with your teams.
 - Review district policies and procedures on WY-ALT determinations.
 - Participate in additional targeted training and file reviews as the WDE indicates. "

Additionally, Tier 3 LEAs/charter schools will also be required to submit the following information:

- A copy of their policies and procedures for determining WY-ALT participation.
- Evidence of WY-ALT participation, including explanations, team discussions, and decision-making processes, as reported in the IEP or Prior Written Notice.
- Requested data summary and analysis files for WDE review, based on subgroup analysis of the disability category, service environment, or other subgroup concerns.

Evidence of Progress:

The WDE continues to receive 100% of assurances from LEAs/charter schools in 2022-2025. We expect to receive 100% of assurances for the 2026 WY-ALT administration. In analyzing the identification data from the Spring 2025 WY-ALT administration and discussing characteristics of school districts/charter schools, the WDE identified 22 LEAs as Tier 2 and 3.

A simplified table showcasing tiering levels can be found below (Table 12). During tiering discussions, the following data were determined:

- 29 LEAs/charter schools at Tier 1 status:
 - 21 LEAs maintained status at Tier 1
 - 4 LEAs and 1 charter school moved from Tier 3 to Tier 1
 - 1 LEA and 2 charter schools moved from Tier 2 to Tier 1

- 8 LEAs at Tier 2 status:
 - 5 LEAs maintained status at Tier 2
 - 2 LEAs moved from Tier 1 to Tier 2
 - 1 LEA moved from Tier 3 to Tier 2
 - Note: of the 8 LEAs at Tier 2, three have significantly decreased their percentage of students tested over the 1% threshold.
- 14 LEAs at Tier 3 status:
 - 11 LEAs maintained status at Tier 3
 - 2 LEAs moved from Tier 1 to Tier 3
 - 1 LEA moved from Tier 2 to Tier 3
 - Note: of the 14 LEAs at Tier 3, three have significantly decreased their percentage of students tested over the 1% threshold.

Table 12: Tiering Status

TIER 1 LEAs	TIER 2 LEAs	TIER 3 LEAs
2024: 26	2024: 6	2024:16
2025: 26	2025: 8	2025: 14

TIER 1 CHARTER SCHOOLS	TIER 2 CHARTER SCHOOLS	TIER 3 CHARTER SCHOOLS
2024: 0	2024: 2	2024:1
2025: 3	2025: 0	2025: 0

In 2025, only 11 of Wyoming’s 48 LEAs and 3 charter schools AA-AAAS tested more than 10 students during spring administration; thus, while still going over, many LEAs/charter schools that exceeded the 1% threshold for participation did so with a low overall n-count; when tiering, the WDE took this into account. In 2025, the low overall n-count remains an issue, as many of these schools are classified as “Frontier” (one step below Rural) and have small overall school populations. Upward trends from LEAs/charter schools prompted WDE to designate 14 LEAs as Tier 3, indicating a need for more intensive assistance.

Finally, it is important to note again the issue Wyoming has faced over the last three years with significant drops in total student enrollment, coupled with little change in the number of students that qualify for the AA-AAAS. Tables 2-3, found on pages 4-5, showcase the near constant numerator (number of AA-AAAS students) and substantially decreasing denominator (number of total enrolled students). Because of the large number of students (1000+) who have left the state over the last three years, Wyoming’s 1% calculation is significantly increasing, while, if anything, the AA-AAAS student population has remained nearly constant in that same time period.

Evidence of Progress

As stipulated in ESSA, Wyoming's improvement plan includes:

- Annually requiring justifications from districts exceeding the 1% threshold.
- Supporting and monitoring districts to ensure appropriate use of the state's eligibility guidelines for the alternate assessment.
- Using a statewide tiered system of support to provide appropriate oversight and support to districts that exceed the 1% threshold.

The WDE's commitment to ensuring that students are taking the correct tests continues to drive our improvement efforts in this area. Not only do we collaborate within the WDE and align our efforts, but we also partner with national and state organizations to ensure only students designated as Student with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities (SMSCD) are participating in alternate assessments. The Assessment team works regularly with the Special Education team to analyze data and plan interventions. In addition, members of the Assessment and Special Education teams participate in:

- The National Center for Educational Outcomes (NCEO) 1% Waiver Community of Practice, which meets twice monthly.
- The TIES Center.
- The Developmental Disability Advisory Council.
- The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) State Collaborative for Assessment, Standards and Education of Students with Disabilities (ASES).
- The National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative (NTACT:C).
- The Wyoming Advisory Panel on Students with Disabilities (WAPSD)
- The Wyoming Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities.

The WDE Standards & Assessment (S&A) Division and the Special Education Monitoring team work together to provide technical assistance and monitoring to LEAs/charter schools. A tiered system of support is used to assist LEAs/charter schools in reviewing and improving their alternate assessment policies and practices. One goal is to ensure that only eligible students designated as SMSCD participate in the AA-AAAS. Another goal is to ensure that each student has access to rigorous curriculum and assessments that prepare them for future success. Wyoming's overall goal is, and will continue to be, to ensure the right students are taking the right tests.

The WDE's work on alternate assessment participation aligns with the purpose and goals of the WDE [Strategic Plan](#) 2023-2027. The Strategic Plan has six key initiative areas:

- Parental empowerment & eliminating political bias.
- Preparing students for jobs through career & technical education.
- Developing citizenship for students.
- Reducing bureaucracy & creating efficiencies.
- Valuing and supporting teachers.
- Improving outcomes through early literacy.

The WDE Standards & Assessment (S&A) Division and Special Education Monitoring team have taken significant steps toward improving the appropriate use of the alternate assessment statewide that aligns with these six key initiatives. These steps include the following:

- In Summer 2023, the Assessment team formed a workgroup to revise the state Alternate Assessment Participation Guidelines and Checklist, aiming to include a more precise designation of Student with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities (SMSCD). In that review, numerous stakeholder groups across the state, including parents, provided feedback to the workgroup, which was incorporated in the final guidance and checklist for Individualized Education Program (IEP) and 504 teams. The WDE revised the guidelines again for the fall of 2024 so that guidance remains workable and practical for those in the field. The new Alternate Assessment Participation Guidance and Checklist are posted on the new WDE District Resources WY-ALT [webpage](#), and are also available in Spanish.
- The S&A Division continues to display updated information for IEP and 504 teams, especially parents, regarding AA-AAAS inquiries, eligibility, and participation on the WDE District Resources WY-ALT webpage. In addition, the Special Education Department has publicly available materials on the Wyoming Instructional Network [webpage](#).
- The S&A Division contracted with EdMetric to conduct an independent Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) alignment study to address the relationship between student performance standards on the WY-ALT and the demands of postsecondary opportunities in competitive, integrated employment and higher education. EdMetric engaged ten Wyoming professionals representing K-12 education and special education, employment, and higher education for two workshops in early 2023 to review the alignment between (1) knowledge, skills, and understandings (KSUs) evident in a relevant, representative sample of postsecondary opportunities and (2) evidence of mastery of relevant performance standards as assessed by the WY-ALT. The report found that students who have been instructed on grade-level Extended Standards and are considered proficient on the WY-ALT have indeed had the opportunity to demonstrate the academic knowledge, skills, and understandings needed for postsecondary opportunities in education and competitive, integrated employment.
- Results of the 2023 WIOA study also point to potential areas for improved alignment with the Wyoming Extended Standards.
- In September 2024, the S&A Division contracted with EdMetric to review the Math and Science Extended Standards, ensuring they align with postsecondary opportunities. EdMetric enlisted 11 Wyoming professionals from K-12 education, special education, employment, and higher education. These professionals matched knowledge, skills, and understanding (KSUs) developmental work, completed by EdMetric after 2023 workshops, to the Math and Science Extended Standards. This work to align the Wyoming Extended Standards (WYES) with postsecondary opportunities will continue with the ongoing revision and adoption of the English Language Arts (ELA) standards, scheduled for a Fall 2025 review.
- The Wyoming Content and Performance Standards (WYCPS) and the Wyoming Extended Standards (WYES) for Math were revised in 2020 by the S&A Division, and were implemented in the 2023-2024 school year. Standards reviews and revisions involve multiple stakeholders, including educators and parents. Further standards reviews are ongoing to reduce the number of standards in Math, Science, Computer Science, Health, PE, and Fine and Performing Arts. The work on the reduction of the WYCPS Math standards is complete, and work is ongoing to reduce the English Language Arts standards.

- The S&A Division works with the Assessment Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) multiple times per year to ensure that all assessments are technically sound and decisions for those assessments take into consideration all perspectives. The Wyoming Assessment TAC provides expertise in large-scale assessments, offering technical advice and insights into the implications of policy-related decisions. They review all major changes to the assessment, technical reports, and peer review documents before they are finalized or sent to the Wyoming State Board of Education for approval or adoption. Recently, they have reviewed the peer review submissions for ELA, Math, and Science WY-ALT assessments, technical reports for our alignment studies of the WY Extended Standards and the WY-ALT assessment, and the WIOA technical reports.
- In August 2022, for the first time, the WDE identified and categorized LEAs into three categories based on whether they exceeded the 1% threshold using a tier definitions form (see Table 11). Letters went out to all LEAs on November 7, 2022, and included details for their tier level. Tier 2 received recommended activities, and Tier 3 received required activities. A publicly available report on districts exceeding the 1% threshold remains available on the WY-ALT website. Assessment and special education consultants are also available to answer questions and guide Tier 2 and 3 LEAs. These same activities occurred in August 2023 and 2024.
- In 2022, WDE contracted with The Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (BUROS Center for Testing) and BNP Education Partners LLC dba Marzano Research to offer Data Literacy training opportunities for all districts across the state. The BUROS Center for Testing provided an in-depth analysis of assessment data. One of the deliverables of this contract was a specific look at the data from the WY-ALT from 2018 through 2022. Marzano then held both in-person and virtual trainings for educators to facilitate an analysis of district data in an evidence-based manner in two phases. Phase 1 asked educators to use the Marzano 5Ds process to analyze statewide data and drill down to specific populations, including the alternate assessment population. During Phase 2, educators brought their own data, both statewide assessment and local context, to analyze as a team while receiving guidance from Marzano's expert trainers. WDE continues to utilize the data analysis structure to inform our interactions with districts and their data.
- The S&A Division revises the Accommodations and Accessibility Manual and the Alternate Assessment Participation Guide each year and has video training available. In 2022, the Special Education team created the WY-ALT Determination and Least Dangerous Assumption video, and the S&A Division created a Wyoming Extended Standards video. These resources are available to educators via the [Wyoming Instructional Network](#) along with the Alternate Assessment Participation Guidelines and Checklist, At-a-Glance Assessment Supports and Accommodations for IEP Teams, WY-ALT FAQ, and WY-ALT Sample Tasks.
- For the 2024-25 and 2025-26 school years, the WDE Assessment Team holds regular monthly office hours on the second Monday of each month for LEA/charter school staff regarding open topics, including, if needed, questions about AA-AAAS and student eligibility/participation. WDE regularly communicates about office hours via the WDE Superintendents Updates, the WDE District Resource website, direct emails to LEA/charter school special education directors, the Wyoming Instructional Network [calendar](#), and in LEA/charter school 1% letters.
- The Assessment Team has a recorded "Test Talk" from January 2025, which discusses WY-ALT participation guidance for LEAs/charter schools, and is accessible for future viewing.
- To elicit educator and administrator feedback, the Assessment Team created and sent out an End-of-Year Assessment Feedback survey on April 21, 2025, and collected responses through May 25, 2025. 321 respondents provided feedback. Each response was reviewed individually by five team members and then discussed as a group, resulting in recommendations for training and improvement in communication and guidance for the WY-ALT.

- In September 2025, WDE tiered LEAs/charter schools and sent letters to them about their tier status in September (Tier 1 & 2) and October (Tier 3).
- For the 2025-26 school year, the WDE continues to develop additional documents for supporting families of students eligible for the AA-AAAS, including documentation to better explain the state alternate assessment and the various assessment supports embedded or allowed for students with IEPs/504s.

The WDE continues to support LEAs/charter schools in their efforts to make sure that the right students are taking the right tests.

Conclusion

Due to the increased participation in the WY-ALT, as reflected in the Spring 2025 assessment data, WDE anticipates exceeding the 1% threshold of participation. Therefore, pursuant to the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 34 (34 CFR), Section 200.6(c)(4), the WDE is requesting a federal waiver for exceeding the 1% threshold on AA-AAAS participation in the Summative Administration of the WY-ALT for English/Language Arts, Math, and Science for the 2026 assessment administration. WDE continues to work with each LEA/charter school individually to ensure the implementation of the Alternate Assessment Participation Guidelines. The included intervention and monitoring plan, as well as action steps, indicate Wyoming's commitment to the right students taking the right tests.