



ASSESSMENTS

Alternate

1% Cap Justification per District School Year 2024-2025

Acorn Montessori Charter School (13-87-60-000)

Since we are a Charter School many of the public schools do not offer the individual attention, we give to our students. Also, many parents transfer from the public schools to our school because of school choice with Alternate Testing already in place. We have wellness programs, small groups and include our students in our general education population. We do not have an inclusion program. There is more than 1 teacher in our classrooms that can help with students that have major struggles. This year it did happen that all of our students testing were in either fifth or eighth grade so we went over the 1% in Science.

Aguila Elementary District (07-03-63-000)

Aguila Elementary School District #63 is a single-school district with a small number of students who take state tests. Eligibility for the alternate assessment is determined by established criteria, including significant cognitive, adaptive, and academic needs. Participation decisions are made individually based on these qualifications. Because the alternate assessment rate is calculated as a percentage of the total tested population, changes in participation can affect the overall percentage and may result in exceeding the 1% threshold.

After reviewing our data, we determined that exceeding 1% was due to our small number of tested students, not because of changes in how students are identified for alternate assessments. There has not been an increase in students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

All decisions about alternate assessment participation were made by IEP teams using the eligibility criteria set by the Arizona Department of Education for the Arizona's Academic Standards Assessment.

Aguila Elementary School does not operate any specialized regional programs, and

there have been no changes to our special education identification practices. We will continue to review our assessment participation each year to ensure we remain in compliance with federal requirements.

Ajo Unified District (10-02-15-000)

Similar to what the school has done in the past years, AUSDI has Once again gone over the number of students who are taking state assessments at all levels. Ajo Unified School District is the only LEA in the area. Based on comparisons between this year and the past years, the school has identified that there has been a significant increase in the number of students who are enrolling in the school district who have a high level of needs. After reviewing these numbers and researching newly enrolled students, the school district cannot determine a root cause as to why new students are enrolling in the Ajo School District. The school has also closely reviewed their policies and procedures when it comes to identifying students with special needs and following the proper checklists when it comes to alternate assessments. After conducting this review, the school has determined that all decisions have been made in accordance with state and federal regulations. The students who have been selected to participate in alternate assessments truly require this method of being assessed at a state level.

Alhambra Elementary District (07-04-68-000)

AESD has been accepting open enrollment for students in self contained classrooms, which is not a typical practice in surrounding districts. Some of those students were eligible for Alternate Assessments. AESD's boundaries include several apartment complexes, and the population is very transient. In addition, we have encountered an increase in students with significant cognitive disabilities and medical needs. Overall enrollment is declining; however, ESS enrollment is increasing.

Alpine Elementary District (01-03-07-000)

The district has reviewed its assessment participation procedures and ensured that all decisions are aligned with state criteria for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Following this review, all current students are appropriately assigned to the general state assessment with accommodations as needed. At this time, the district has no students participating in the alternate assessment. The

previous percentage was impacted by the district's small population size rather than systemic overidentification.

Altar Valley Elementary District (10-03-51-000)

Grandfamilies and Special Needs Support

The district serves a notable population of grandparents raising grandchildren, including students with identified disabilities. This household structure presents unique considerations for school engagement and service delivery. Grandparent caregivers may experience challenges navigating current educational systems, including IEP processes, digital communication platforms, and specialized behavioral or instructional supports.

Foster Care Dynamics

The district serves a significant number of students in foster care. These students often experience frequent placement changes, academic disruptions, and the effects of trauma, all of which can impact learning and assessment outcomes.

In-Migration for Educational Quality

The district has experienced an increase in families relocating to the community due to its reputation for small-school benefits and individualized attention. While this growth reflects positively on the district, it introduces increased diversity in academic readiness, cultural backgrounds, and family expectations.

Amphitheater Unified District (10-02-10-000)

Our LEA exceeds the 1% participation threshold due to the presence of specialized programs within our attendance zone that serve students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. These programs draw students and families from surrounding communities, including geographic areas with high poverty rates. Research consistently demonstrates a correlation between intellectual disability and poverty, which contributes to a higher concentration of students eligible for the alternate assessment in our LEA. As a result, the elevated participation rate reflects programmatic access and community need rather than inappropriate assessment decisions.

Apache Junction Unified District (11-02-43-000)

The district's current alternate assessment participation rate is 1.74% (42 of 2,415 students), which exceeds the 1% cap. A contributing factor to this rate has been

systemic inconsistencies in assessment programming and onboarding supports for newly hired special education staff. While eligibility determinations for alternate assessments were appropriately documented within students' IEPs, the district identified administrative-level gaps in the systems and processes needed to ensure effective implementation. Specifically, inconsistencies occurred in the timely alignment of IEP documentation, assessment system setup, staff training, and understanding of alternate assessment procedures and timelines. These circumstances did not reflect a lack of compliance in IEP team decision-making, but rather a need for stronger districtwide structures to support accurate assessment planning, staff readiness, and procedural consistency. As a result, the district is taking corrective action to strengthen internal processes, improve onboarding and training for special education staff, and ensure that alternate assessment participation decisions are consistently implemented in alignment with state guidance and student needs.

[Archway Classical Academy Glendale \(07-84-06-000\)](#)

Archway Glendale is a public charter school, and we welcome students with all levels of disability. We have an inclusion program, and we carefully plan to ensure that students with intellectual disabilities are supported within the classroom. The parents of the students who participated in the MSAA wanted to remove their children from a self-contained classroom so they could benefit from general education peer interactions. Their children were not making progress in their self-contained settings, and this led to a change in enrollment at Archway Glendale. Additionally, the siblings of these students also attend Archway Glendale. Parents desired to have all of their children enrolled at one school.

[Arizona Autism Charter Schools, Inc. \(07-82-26-000\)](#)

Arizona Autism Charter School (AZACS) is committed to providing a high-quality, individualized education for students with Autism and other neurodiverse needs. While AZACS welcomes students with and without disabilities, the school is designed to support students who qualify for special education services. As a result, AZACS classrooms primarily consist of special education students. We currently have 1073 students enrolled in our charter organization, with 985 students qualifying as special needs. In addition to a high proportion of students with Autism, we also serve students with disabilities in the different categories of Intellectual Disabilities and Multiple Disabilities. The design of our program is set

up to support students of all ability levels which results in one-third of each grade level having significant cognitive and adaptive needs.

Arizona Community Development Corporation (10-87-09-000)

The LEA's participation rate exceeding the 1% cap for alternate assessments is primarily driven by identifiable demographic, programmatic, and enrollment factors unique to the district. Through a structured root cause analysis, the LEA has identified several contributing elements that influence the proportion of students eligible for alternative assessments.

First, the LEA has experienced an increase in enrollment of students with significant cognitive disabilities, including students transferring from neighboring districts and specialized programs. The district is recognized within the region for providing comprehensive special education services, including self-contained classrooms and specialized supports, which has resulted in a higher concentration of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities compared to the surrounding LEAs.

Second, mobility patterns within community contribute to fluctuations in the student population. The LEA serves the population with higher rates of transiency, including students in foster care, housing and stability, and other high need situations. These factors can lead to mid-year enrollments of students already identified as eligible for alternative assessments, impacting overall participation rates.

Third, the LEA maintains a strong commitment to compliance with Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, ensuring the IP teams make individualized, student-centered decisions based on knowledgeability criteria for alternative citizens. The LA does not restrict access to alternative assessments based on participation caps, and teams are trained to prioritize appropriate assessment selection aligned to each student's instructional needs.

Additionally, the LEA Identified through its root cause analysis that prior staff understanding of the distinction between alternate and general assessments varied across sites. While decisions were made in good faith, this inconsistency may have contributed to a slightly higher identification rate. This has informed the LEA's planning and professional development focus.

Finally, the LEA serves a diverse student population, including students with disabilities Also qualify for additional support such as English learner services or Title 1 interventions. The intersection of these needs can increase the complexity of instruction and assessment decisions, contributing to a higher proportion of

students meeting alternate assessment criteria.

Arizona Connections Academy Charter School, Inc. (07-85-11-000)

Arizona Connections Academy (ACA) is an online, statewide, K–12 public charter school serving a diverse student body across Arizona. Due to our unique virtual model, we consistently observe a higher participation rate in alternate assessments, exceeding the 1% threshold. This variance stems from distinct factors related to our open enrollment patterns, specialized programming, and rigorous individualized education program (IEP) processes. Enrollment has increased this school year across all grade levels, and the number of students participating in the Alternative Assessment has remained stable. This consistency is largely due to the fact that once enrolled, these students typically remain with us throughout their entire educational career. Families enroll at ACA because they are seeking a more tailored educational experience for their children—particularly when traditional school settings have not sufficiently addressed their child’s diverse needs. Reference the explanation below regarding exceeding the 1% participation in alternate assessments.

Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (00-12-02-000)

We are a small district/agency with only two campuses. One campus in Tucson (housing the school for the Deaf and the school for the Blind) and one campus in Phoenix (Phoenix Day School for the Deaf). ASDB has a substantially small enrollment compared to most districts in Arizona. 100% of our student population is on an IEP with a primary eligibility of at least one sensory impairment. Each of our alternate assessment students have at least one disability in addition to their sensory impairment and a documented educational need. Therefore meeting 1% does not accurately reflect our student population and would make testing inaccessible for a significant percentage of our students.

Arlington Elementary District (07-04-47-000)

Arlington Elementary School District is a single-school district located in a rural community. During the 2024/2025 academic school year (as well as in years prior) we saw an influx of families moving out to our rural community looking for affordable land costs. With this influx of families has come an increase in student enrollment, specifically special education students—which includes those who

qualify for the MSAA.

During the 2025 testing window, students who were administered the MSAA were students who enrolled into our district with predetermined eligibility for the alternate assessment. The special education team, as well as the parents of these students, did not feel as though a change in eligibility was appropriate; therefore, our number of eligible students continued to exceed our 1% goal.

Avondale Elementary District (07-04-44-000)

The Avondale and Goodyear areas continue to experience significant population growth due to increased housing developments and affordability. As a result, Avondale Elementary School District (AESD) has seen a rise in student enrollment, including students transferring in with existing IEPs that identify eligibility for alternate assessments such as MSAA. AESD utilizes a transfer checklist to review the current MET and IEP for MSAA eligibility in all transfer and out-of-state student files. Upon review of the documentation, the determination of MSAA eligibility for the students was found to be fair and appropriate in supporting the provision of FAPE.

Since the district maintains an open enrollment policy that does not discriminate based on disability or eligibility, AESD has an increase in students transferring into the district with pre-existing IEPs that already designate them for alternative assessments. Per federal law, the district must implement a student's existing IEP upon enrollment. While the district reviews these for accuracy, it cannot immediately invalidate a student's eligibility for alternative testing. Over the last three years, the number of specialized programs for students with Autism has increased from two to five classrooms.

AESD's IEP teams follow a rigorous review process for new enrollments to ensure alternate assessment eligibility aligns with Arizona Department of Education criteria. This includes verifying cognitive functioning, adaptive behavior, and instruction aligned with alternate academic achievement standards. AESD is committed to reviewing and revising eligibility decisions to maintain alignment with state expectations and reduce participation percentages where appropriate.

Baboquivari Unified School District #40 (10-02-40-000)

Our student population is comprised primarily of Tohono O'odham students. The Tohono O'odham nation is the second largest reservation in Arizona. Our school district roughly covers 4,460 square miles and services most school age students

on the Tohono O'odham nation. • Parents of transfer students have stated that BUSD 40 provides a better educational program and their child will receive a better education despite their home being in closer proximity to other schools. • 27% of our total enrolled students are identified for McKinney Vento. • BUSD 40 currently qualifies for 100% free and reduced meals for all students. • Resources are lacking on the Tohono O'odham Nation that would provide students with cultural knowledge. There is no public library, limited social events, a limited number of recreational facilities, no public transportation, a limited number of medical facilities, etc. • Many households on the Tohono O'odham Nation do not have internet access. • The United Census Bureau for 2023 reported the poverty rate for the Tohono O'odham Nation at 36.5% compared to the overall poverty rate of 12.5% for Arizona.

Ball Charter Schools (Dobson) (07-89-88-000)

Dobson Academy currently exceeds the 1% threshold for students participating in alternate assessments. This pattern appears to result from several demographic, community, and program-related factors unique to our school. The following outlines possible contributors to this trend:

Dobson Academy serves a student population that includes a comparatively higher number of students with significant cognitive disabilities, as reflected in their IEP eligibility. This may be influenced by multiple factors, including regional birth trends, reduced access to prenatal care, environmental conditions, and a large proportion of families experiencing low socioeconomic circumstances. In addition, our school has a strong Child Find and early intervention process that effectively identifies and transitions young children with cognitive delays into the educational system. This results in earlier and more consistent identification of students who may meet the criteria for alternate assessments.

Dobson Academy also provides both inclusive and specialized instructional programs designed to support students with complex learning needs. These programs draw families from nearby communities, which contributes to a higher concentration of students with significant disabilities compared to other schools. Positive and trusting relationships between families and special education staff further support a collaborative decision-making process, where parents feel comfortable considering alternate assessment options when appropriate. Furthermore, the school benefits from a strong team of experienced special

education teachers, paraprofessionals, and related service providers. This level of staffing supports accurate identification and effective services for students with disabilities and has contributed to Dobson Academy's reputation as a supportive and desirable placement for families of students with more intensive needs.

Ball Charter Schools (Val Vista) (07-85-86-000)

Val Vista Academy currently exceeds the 1% threshold for students participating in alternate assessments. This pattern appears to result from several demographic, community, and program-related factors unique to our school. The following outlines possible contributors to this trend:

Val Vista Academy serves a student population that includes a comparatively higher number of students with significant cognitive disabilities, as reflected in their IEP eligibility. This may be influenced by multiple factors, including regional birth trends, reduced access to prenatal care, environmental conditions, and a large proportion of families experiencing low socioeconomic circumstances. In addition, our school has a strong Child Find and early intervention process that effectively identifies and transitions young children with cognitive delays into the educational system. This results in earlier and more consistent identification of students who may meet the criteria for alternate assessments.

Val Vista Academy also provides both inclusive and specialized instructional programs designed to support students with complex learning needs. These programs draw families from nearby communities, which contributes to a higher concentration of students with significant disabilities compared to other schools. Positive and trusting relationships between families and special education staff further support a collaborative decision-making process, where parents feel comfortable considering alternate assessment options when appropriate.

Furthermore, the school benefits from a strong team of experienced special education teachers, paraprofessionals, and related service providers. This level of staffing supports accurate identification and effective services for students with disabilities and has contributed to Val Vista Academy's reputation as a supportive and desirable placement for families of students with more intensive needs.

Balsz Elementary District (07-04-31-000)

Our district has experienced a notable shift in enrollment patterns over recent years. Specifically, there has been a decline in general education student enrollment across all campuses, largely attributable to the growing availability and accessibility of charter schools and online learning options. As families pursue these alternatives, our overall general education population has decreased. At the same time, our special education population has continued to increase both in number and proportion relative to total enrollment. As a result, the percentage of students participating in alternative assessments has also increased. This change is reflective of a higher concentration of students with significant cognitive disabilities who meet the criteria for alternate assessment participation, rather than a change in identification practices.

Additionally, our district's geographic location and community characteristics contribute to this trend. We are located in close proximity to Phoenix Children's Hospital, a major regional medical provider. Families of students with complex medical and developmental needs may choose to reside within our district boundaries to access nearby healthcare services. Furthermore, the availability of more affordable housing within our district makes it a feasible option for families seeking both medical access and supportive educational services. Taken together, these factors have resulted in a higher proportion of students with significant needs, which has directly impacted our alternative assessment participation rates.

BASIS Charter Schools, Inc. (07-82-72-000)

The LEA's participation rate exceeding the federal 1% cap is primarily influenced by the small overall testing population within the district. In LEAs with smaller enrollment numbers, a small number of students appropriately participating in the alternate assessment can result in percentages that exceed the federal threshold. Because the denominator of tested students is small, participation rates may fluctuate from year to year based on changes in grade-level enrollment and cohort size rather than systemic over-identification. Additionally, the LEA serves students with a range of support needs and experiences year-to-year variation in enrollment, which can affect participation percentages in tested grade levels. The LEA conducted a review of assessment participation decisions and confirmed that IEP teams are applying the state participation criteria for alternate assessments and

considering multiple sources of data when making decisions. The district continues to ensure that alternate assessments are reserved only for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who require extensive, direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to access the curriculum aligned with alternate academic achievement standards. The LEA will continue to monitor assessment participation decisions annually and provide training and guidance to staff to ensure that assessment determinations remain aligned with federal and state participation requirements.

Beaver Creek Elementary District (13-03-26-000)

Beaver Creek School is a small school district with an enrollment of around 280 students. This makes it very likely that we will exceed the 1% cap for any alternative testing. Our local demographics are a low-income area that struggles with poverty, arrests, domestic violence, and drug and alcohol misuse. Our enrollment for students who take the general assessments and the students who take the alternative assessments has remained fairly steady over the last few years. Our staff continues to put effort into providing students with special programming based on the students' needs.

Bell Canyon Charter School, Inc (07-89-72-000)

As a very small K-8 public charter school, with a low overall enrollment (252 students), Imagine Bell Canyon Charter School, Inc. accepts all students with disabilities when there are openings at a specified grade level. The demographics of this neighborhood include highly migrant, transient, and homeless families, including a diverse enrollment of students with disabilities. The demographics of the school is diverse, with 51.6% Hispanic, 24.6% White and 11.1% African American. Approximately 63% of students qualify for free or reduced lunch indicating socio-economic practices in the area. Additionally, school choice gives families the opportunity to enroll in schools close to home after reporting concerns with their home school district. Imagine Bell Canyon Charter School, Inc. competes with a neighboring district that is the 5th largest in Arizona, where class sizes are larger, and families report they prefer smaller student to teacher ratios for their child and choose to enroll with us.

Benson Unified School District (02-02-09-000)

BUSD is a small rural district about an hour away from Tucson. We have a diverse socio-economic status, but many new families are moving to this area from other places within and outside our state. Some of these incoming families reside with extended family and friends on larger, more rural land with room for travel trailers and living environments unavailable in larger cities/school districts. We also have many families with multiple children and extended family units. Some of our families have a high incidence/prevalence of disabilities and more fluid family units. Benson is one of the larger school districts in the area, and therefore draws families that have children that need more support.

Bicentennial Union High School District (15-05-76-000)

Bicentennial Union High School #76 (BUHSD) is a single school district with a wide geographical area. As a single high school in a rural district the number of students enrolled has a steady percentage of about 20% of learners with special needs over the last four years.

Blueprint Education (07-87-45-000)

Blueprint Education is a small alternative charter school comprising two campuses serving high school grades 9-12, Hope High School located at 75 Ave and Lower Buckeye in Phoenix and Hope High School Online AOI which serves a statewide population of students. We were just over the 1% threshold this year. Many students transfer to us who are far behind on credits toward graduation. We do not restrict enrollment and therefore, we often accept students who have been long term suspended or expelled from their previous school. In addition, we have students who enroll who have severe medical conditions, severe anxiety, or mental health issues that prevent them from being on a school campus and opt to attend online. Therefore, we draw many students with individualized education plans from the full continuum of services including students with low cognitive and adaptive skills. When students enroll we carefully review all student records and ensure we provide FAPE. We follow strict guidelines for Alternate Assessment Eligibility. Currently, our Hope High School HHS enrollment is 137 students and Hope High School Online HHSO has 429 students totaling 566 students. Our ESS student population as of this date is HHS 18 and HHSO is at 66 with a total of 84 ESS students. Therefore, small numbers of Alternate Assessment students places us

over the 1% threshold.

Bouse Elementary District (15-04-26-000)

During fiscal year 2025, 37 students at Bouse Elementary participated in the Mathematics assessment, 37 participated in the ELA assessment, and 11 participated in the Science assessment. In a school with a small student population, the presence of only a few students with significant cognitive impairments can substantially impact participation rates.

Bouse Elementary School District is a small, rural district located in La Paz County, serving the community of Bouse, Arizona, which has an approximate population of 1,119. Bouse Elementary School is a public PK–8 school in a remote rural setting with a total student enrollment of 46.

Bowie Unified District (02-02-14-000)

Our school district is K-12th grades with a total enrollment of 64 students in a rural farming community. The community, as well as the school population, continues to decline due to lack of jobs in the area.

Buckeye Elementary District (07-04-33-000)

The City of Buckeye continues to be one of the fastest-growing communities in Arizona, with ongoing development focused on affordable housing and expanded community services. A review of the most recent regional demographic studies and growth projections indicates that this pattern of rapid residential expansion is expected to continue over the next several years, suggesting that enrollment growth within the district will likely persist.

Within a 10-mile radius, Buckeye Elementary School District maintains the largest and most comprehensive special education programming, including specialized classrooms and service delivery models designed to support students with significant cognitive disabilities. As a result, families seeking robust special education services frequently inquire about and enroll in the district. During the past year, the district traced multiple inquires for enrollment in special education programs with a high percentage of students enrolling. Some of the students were previously qualified for MSAA. While not all of those students qualified for

participation in the Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA), this data reflects the broader enrollment growth trend and the district's reputation for specialized programming.

In alignment with last year's action plan, the district implemented additional training and strengthened IEP team decision-making processes regarding eligibility for alternate assessments. As a result, students were removed from MSAA participation. However, when accounting for students who newly enrolled in the district already qualifying for MSAA, compared to those removed or graduating, there was a zero net reduction in overall MSAA participation. Additionally, while the rate of new identification among students already enrolled in the district decreased slightly following enhanced staff training, the reduction was not sufficient to offset the number of move-in students who met criteria for alternate assessment participation. In addition to continuing training, with all staff, the lead psychologist is taking a more active role in looking at individual student needs and how this relates to qualification overall.

Given continued community growth trends and projected demographic expansion, the district anticipates that enrollment patterns — including the proportion of students with significant cognitive disabilities — are likely to remain consistent in the coming years and our team will need to continue to look closely at the students we currently have as well as students moving in as the true need for MSAA participation given data.

Bullhead City School District (08-04-15-000)

We are the only elementary public-school district within the city limits. The charter schools in our area do not accept students that require a higher level of service. We are located in a rural area that has a highly transient population. The smaller rural schools are sending students to our district as they do not have the staffing to provide the services required to meet the student level of needs.

Camp Verde Unified District (13-02-28-000)

Camp Verde Unified School District is a small, rural district in Arizona that provides a specialized Special Education/Life Skills Program designed to meet the needs of students with significant cognitive disabilities. The district serves students across a large geographic area and also receives students from local K–8 districts who transition to us for continued services. Because comparable programs are limited

in surrounding communities, families seeking comprehensive, individualized support often choose to enroll their children in our district. As a result, Camp Verde Unified has a higher proportion of students with significant cognitive disabilities participating in the Alternate Assessment, reflecting the district's role as a regional provider of specialized services.

Cartwright Elementary District (07-04-83-000)

Increased special education enrollment, coupled with a declining general education population, has proportionally elevated the district's alternate assessment participation rate, contributing to the percentage exceeding the 1% cap. This trend is further explained by the following factors: Community academic performance trends have contributed indirectly to the percentage exceeding the 1% threshold by increasing referrals, which ultimately result in a need for evaluation and program enrollment within the district. In communities where students experience historically lower academic achievement, there is often increased early identification of learning and developmental disabilities, more frequent multidisciplinary evaluations, and a greater likelihood that students with significant cognitive disabilities are identified and supported through specialized programs. These factors can contribute to a higher concentration of students determined appropriate for alternate assessment participation. The district's has a total of 29 specialized program classrooms. These rooms are designed to support scholars with a range of intensive learning and developmental needs by providing highly specialized instructional and therapeutic services. While not all students enrolled in these programs are eligible for alternate assessments, a significant portion of students served within these settings have significant cognitive disabilities requiring highly specialized instructional, therapeutic supports and Alternate Assessment Eligibility Determination. a. The availability of these specialized programs may influence family enrollment decisions, as families of students requiring intensive supports often seek districts where such services are accessible. As a result, the district enrolls a notable concentration of students with significant cognitive disabilities, contributing to a higher percentage of students participating in alternate assessments. b. An additional contributing factor involves student transfers, both within the district and from outside districts. Variability in the review of alternate assessment eligibility documentation during the transfer process has resulted in occasional inconsistencies in implementation.

CASA Academy (07-82-18-000)

We are in a low income area. We are a small school with a high structure charter model that has drawn in families from larger district schools who have not felt that their needs were met.

Casa Grande Elementary District (11-04-04-000)

Casa Grande Elementary School District (CGESD) recognizes that its participation rate for alternative assessments currently exceeds the 1% cap in English Language Arts (1.6740%, 28 students over), Math (1.6624%, 27 students over), and Science (1.8711%, 12 students over). This overrepresentation is primarily due to the district's commitment to appropriately serving a student population with a relatively high incidence of significant cognitive disabilities. CGESD supports several specialized programs and classrooms designed for students with complex needs, including those with co-occurring intellectual and adaptive functioning challenges, who often require highly individualized instruction aligned with alternate achievement standards. Additionally, staff turnover and varying levels of understanding of the strict eligibility criteria for alternate assessments have contributed to inconsistencies in determining appropriate student participation.

Casa Grande Union High School District (11-05-02-000)

Our high school covers a large, rural geographic area, and many students entering from our four feeder districts are identified as needing alternative assessments. During transfer and IEP meetings, we carefully review each student's needs to ensure that assessment requirements align with their instructional levels. Our district programs serve students who require significant support in activities of daily living, functional life skills, and communication and sensory needs. Because their curriculum is modified to meet these needs, their assessments are aligned accordingly.

Catalina Foothills Unified District (10-02-16-000)

Catalina Foothills Unified District (CFSD) is recognized for its robust and highly specialized self-contained programs, which have historically drawn families to the district specifically for the level of support we provide to students with significant cognitive disabilities. A root cause analysis suggests that our participation rate

(ELA: 1.063%, Math: 1.0602%, Science: 1.07%) is impacted by enrollment trends. More specifically, we frequently see an influx of students move into our district from neighboring districts who qualify for alternate assessments specifically to access our specialized inclusive instruction. Furthermore, while our overall district enrollment has remained relatively stable, the proportion of students with intensive needs has increased. Last year, this was compounded by a disproportionately large cohort of 11th graders who met the eligibility criteria. Our district also acts as a "hub" for certain community-based transition services, which naturally attracts and retains a higher density of students who meet the State's criteria for alternate assessments compared to the general population.

Cave Creek Unified District (07-02-93-000)

Our LEA's participation rate in the alternate science assessment exceeded the 1% threshold due to several interrelated enrollment and community factors rather than inappropriate identification or assessment practices. After conducting a root cause analysis, we identified the following contributing factors:

1. Enrollment Shifts Impacting Overall Percentages Over the past several years, our district has experienced declining enrollment in general education due to:
 - Increased use of ESA (Empowerment Scholarship Account) options
 - Open enrollment to nearby public school districtsWhile general education enrollment has declined, students with significant cognitive disabilities particularly those requiring specially designed instruction and alternate assessments are often denied open enrollment to other districts and do not transition to ESA programs at the same rate. Many of our highest-need students require specialized programming, structured environments, related services, and continuity of support that are not readily available in alternative settings. As a result, although our total student enrollment has decreased, our population of students eligible for alternate assessment has remained stable or increased proportionally, which impacts the percentage calculation.
2. Return of Students Following Homeschooling During COVID We have also experienced the return of several students with significant disabilities who were homeschooled during or after COVID. Upon re-enrollment, evaluations and IEP team determinations confirmed eligibility for alternate assessment based on significant cognitive disability criteria. This return-to-district trend has contributed to a higher count of students participating in the alternate assessment.
3. Community and Programmatic Factors Our district has a reputation for providing high-quality services for students with moderate to severe disabilities. Families of students with significant needs often remain in our district specifically because of:

- Established self-contained and specialized program classrooms
- Experienced special education staff
- Access to related services and behavioral supports
- Consistency and stability of programming

These programmatic strengths may contribute to a proportionally higher concentration of students with significant cognitive disabilities compared to surrounding districts.

4. Local Demographics Our community includes families who actively seek stable, structured public-school programming for students with intensive support needs. While general education families may exercise school choice options, families of students requiring alternate assessment often prioritize access to comprehensive special education services that may not be readily replicated in other settings.

5. Review of Assessment Decision-Making We have reviewed our IEP team processes to ensure that:

- Eligibility for alternate assessment is determined using state criteria
- Decisions are individualized and data-based
- Teams consider the full continuum of supports before determining alternate assessment participation
- Students are not placed in alternate assessment due to disability category, placement, or performance alone.

Chandler Unified District #80 (07-02-80-000)

As enrollment decreases in the CUSD, the percentage of students in the SPED program has been consistent (and even increased in 2024). May 2023: 11% SPED population (2,550 of 22,711) May 2024: 12% SPED population (2,571 of 22,215) May 2025: 11% SPED population (2,519 of 22,042)

- CUSD continues to expand the number of programs we offer to support all students' needs as we've seen an increase in children with autism and students identified as LOS B and LOS C.
- After attempting to receive services utilizing vouchers, some students are returning to CUSD to receive the necessary services.
- Many special education staff are new to the district and/or new to the teaching profession. Training needs continue to increase each year.
- Several grade levels received an equal or higher percentage of students scoring performance level 4 compared to the state average (see data below). While acknowledging successes in high academic performance, our analysis of MSAA data indicates a vital need to strengthen protocols for the annual determination and transition, when appropriate, to general state testing.

- o 3 rd Grade Math
- o 7 th Grade ELA
- o 7 th Grade Math
- o 8 th Grade ELA
- o 8 th Grade Science

Chinle Unified District (01-02-24-000)

The circumstances that are affecting the participation rate for our district is that we continue to see that students that are tested in the general population is lower with decreased enrollment into our district. The decline in enrollment has decreased in the past years, with our student population who qualifies for MSAA remain the same.

Clarkdale-Jerome Elementary District (13-04-03-000)

These are the same students who have taken the MSAA since 3rd grade, but they are clustered in a single grade. Because a smaller group of general education students take the AZSci exam, which only assesses 5th and 8th grade, it naturally skews the percentage, particularly for a small school. Otherwise, the 1% Threshold would have also affected Math and ELA.

Colearn Academy Arizona (10-87-40-000)

Colearn Academy Arizona has a higher enrollment of students receiving special education services (24% of our students). Many students with disabilities transfer to Colean Academy Arizona seeking a more personalized, at-home learning environment. We are a small LEA and this disproportionately affects the percentage.

Colorado City Unified District (08-02-14-000)

Colorado River Union High School District (08-05-02-000)

We are a smaller Union HSD, with a couple of Elementary feeder districts, and several feeder charter schools.

We are a very transient area, and border two other states. We have seen an increase of students coming in from other states. We are seeing more students with need for higher levels of care. We are also seeing an increase of student with Autism and non-verbal traits. We have had several teachers retire or leave our district. Professional Development for new hires, new to teaching teachers is a continuous process.

We have been advised by a couple of our feeder schools and families that the feeder districts are seeing Autism numbers increases since COVID. They are seeing

an increase in SPED numbers, while experiencing an overall decline in enrollment. We have an excellent program for our intellectually disabled children with life skills classes, work-based community opportunities, on site kitchenette, laundry, etc. We believe our program is attractive compared to local charters.

Congress Elementary District (13-03-17-000)

Congress school district is a very small community, one district school. Currently the school has 114 students enrolled. The community has many needs for special education currently, and we are currently the only school within the district to support these needs. Parents would have to travel outside district/county to enroll their children at another school.

Coolidge Unified District (11-02-21-000)

Coolidge Unified School District continues to grow on an annual basis, as evidenced by the ADE October 1st census counts. As a result, the district has added programs at each of our levels (elementary, jr. high school, high school), specifically for our students that are identified with more profound adaptive and cognitive needs. As a result, we have increased the number of students that have been recommended to participate in the MSAA. Monthly meetings are held with site-based staff to review student participation and participation guidelines. Geographically Coolidge Unified School District services students in a 233 sq. mile boundary area. This boundary encompasses students from Coolidge, Casa Grande, and the Gila River Indian Community allowing for an extremely diverse student population, but also due to a rural location, allows for 'affordable' housing, as a result CUSD receives an excessive number of transfer students each school year that have been identified for specialized services. As our overall student population has increased, so have the number of programs that are offered to provide specialized services, specifically for students with more profound needs. When a student transfers to CUSD the team reviews the incoming IEP to outline services, but also if the student is identified to participate in the alternative assessment, and the appropriateness of the recommendation based on ADE criteria.

Deer Valley Unified District (07-02-97-000)

Deer Valley Unified School District has experienced consistent declining enrollment over the last four years. Despite declining enrollment in The Deer Valley

Unified School District, the overall special education enrollment continues to increase. The DVUSD has multiple Charter Schools within our boundaries. Students who are eligible to take alternate assessments return to DVUSD, as we have the resources, staff, and ability to meet the needs of our students. Charter schools such as Great Hearts and Basis accept and retain students with social capital while encouraging parents of students with high academic or behavioral needs to return to their PEA of residence citing that DVUSD has more resources (which we do, as evidenced by the disproportionate amount of students who take MSAA in DVUSD vs. Charters in our attendance area). DVUSD has multiple Great Hearts and Basis Charters within our boundaries. The Deer Valley Unified School District follows very strict guidelines for eligibility for MSAA, however, we receive many transfers from other districts who appear not to follow the same consideration process that DVUSD adheres to. There is a process to correct and remedy this in DVUSD. The campus team calls an IEP meeting for each student to review the data and MSAA eligibility. When a team meets to review cognitive and adaptive skills, IEP teams find that some students who qualified in other school districts are found ineligible for MSAA in DVUSD due to our strict adherence to the state/federal alternate assessment guidelines. Eight (8) students (4.1% of originally identified MSAA students) were deemed ineligible and removed from the MSAA selector by DVUSD IEP Teams after a thorough file review. 21 students (10.8% of originally identified MSAA students) transferred into DVUSD as eligible for the MSAA, adding to the threshold percentage. It would be helpful to have access to the amount of students assessed by the AASA and the MSAA in Charter Schools within our attendance area. The District strongly believes that these results would bring The District far below the 1% threshold. DVUSD is required to enroll any and all students, unlike the charter schools and private schools surrounding us. This indisputably has an effect on the amount of students who are eligible for the alternate assessments. As such, it is important to include the number of charter and private schools in our attendance areas who accept only students who do not require significant specially designed instruction, programmatic supports, and educational supports.

Desert Star Community School, Inc. (13-87-14-000)

Destiny School, Inc. (04-87-01-000)

Destiny School, Inc. is a small, rural charter school located in Globe, Arizona. We

have a student population of 393. This is a single-charter school and not part of a multi-school district. We exceeded the 1% threshold in Alternate Assessment because only approximately 42 students in grades 5th and 8th participated in the science test. Because of that, those who qualified caused us to exceed the 1% threshold.

[Duncan Unified District \(06-02-02-000\)](#)

Duncan Unified School District is a small, rural LEA where minor enrollment fluctuations can significantly impact percentage calculations. A root cause analysis was conducted, including a review of IEP eligibility data, participation criteria, historical trends, and enrollment patterns.

Over the past four years, the district has experienced a 41% increase in students found eligible for special education services, while overall enrollment has declined by approximately 7%. This shift in student demographics has resulted in a higher proportion of students with disabilities within a smaller total enrollment base. Additionally, the district has observed an increase in students with more significant disabilities, which impacts alternate assessment participation rates.

[Dysart Unified District \(07-02-89-000\)](#)

Dysart Unified School District serves over 23,000 pre-kindergarten through 12th grade students in the Northwest Phoenix Metropolitan area. The district encompasses 140 square miles, serving parts of El Mirage, Glendale, Surprise, Youngtown, and Maricopa County. The district is home to 16 elementary schools, four middle schools, four comprehensive high schools, a preschool, and one alternative program. The number of charter schools that serve the Dysart community and are found within the Dysart Unified School District's physical boundaries continues to significantly increase. The city of Surprise, for example, has high rates of students enrolled in charter schools, with over 1 in 3 students attending one. Additionally, while many of these charter schools may serve students with disabilities, we are not aware of any that focus on, or even provide specialized programs specifically for students with more significant cognitive disabilities. Dysart however, has two programs that specifically support students who are eligible for Arizona State Alternate Assessments, should they require a more restrictive environment with more significant supports and modified curriculum (described below). This is in addition to offering a full continuum of special education settings including in the general education and resource settings,

which attracts families from within the district and from neighboring districts. STC Program The Structuring Teaching Classroom (STC) Program provides a highly structured environment with strategies to support communication embedded in the environment. Students who participate in the STC program must meet the criteria for the Arizona State Alternative Assessments in order for IEPs to consider the program as a least restrictive environment. ASPIRE Program The Assisting Student Participation in a Relevant Education (ASPIRE) program provides educational activities in a classroom environment with high levels of support in activities of daily living and functional life skills for students with limited mobility as well as complex communication and physical/medical needs. Dysart Unified School District does not discriminate against students with disabilities, and provides the full continuum of services and least restrictive environments and appropriate assessment based on individualized data and through an IEP team decision making process..

[EAGLE College Prep Maryvale, LLC \(07-82-22-000\)](#)

EAGLE Maryvale is a small single-site charter school with a total enrollment of 231 students. We only have one section for each grade level. We have approximately 150 students who participate in AASA.

[East Mesa Charter Elementary School, Inc. \(07-85-09-000\)](#)

As a small K-6 public charter school, with a low enrollment (585 students), Imagine East Mesa Elementary, Inc. accepts all students with diverse disabilities when there are openings at a specified grade level. The demographics of this neighborhood include a large, city setting across multiple zip codes where families are often enrolling with Imagine after withdrawing from the largest surrounding school district in the state. 55.2% of the overall enrollment include minority students, and 67.1% are economically disadvantaged. Additionally, school choice gives families the opportunity to enroll in schools outside of the district home school, but still close to home. Imagine East Mesa Elementary, Inc. competes with a neighboring district that is the largest elementary school district in Arizona, where class sizes are larger, and families report they prefer smaller student to teacher ratios for their child and choose to enroll with us.

[Edkey, Inc. - Sequoia School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing \(07-87-44-000\)](#)

This LEA had two specialized ESS programs that serve a unique population of

students with significant needs, which is an important community and program factor to consider. Although students attending these programs represent diverse backgrounds and demographics, there is no current data indicating any specific demographic pattern that would impact assessment participation. Due to the nature of the programs offered within this PEA, there is an increased likelihood of enrolling students who may meet eligibility criteria for the alternate assessment rather than the general assessment. Additionally, a reduction in overall student enrollment further decreased the total number of students participating in the state assessment, thereby magnifying the proportional impact of any student who qualified for the alternate assessment. As a result, the LEA exceeded the 1% participation threshold. It is important to note that both specialized programs within the PEA inherently require high levels of services and supports for most students, which contributes to the unique circumstances influencing assessment participation rate.

Eloy Elementary District (11-04-11-000)

Eloy Elementary School District is located in a small rural town that is experiencing a decline in student enrollment, similar to many surrounding communities. However, this decrease in enrollment does not affect the population of students with special needs and those who require additional support. While we strive to identify only those students who fully meet the criteria for alternative assessments, we currently exceed the 0.1% threshold due to the overall number of students eligible to participate in state assessments.

Flagstaff Montessori (03-87-05-000)

Montessori School of Flagstaff is a small charter school with a smaller number of students who participate in Arizona State Testing (under 100 students for the 2024/2025 school year). As families in the area look for a school that is going to best meet their students' needs, they may view the Montessori pedagogy as aligning with that desire. Montessori education benefits students by focusing on the whole child, fostering independence, confidence, and a lifelong love of learning through self-directed, hands-on, and mixed-age learning environments. Key advantages of learning in a Montessori environment have been identified by The American Montessori Society. These include enhanced emotional stability, social skills, and cognitive development, often leading to better academic outcomes. We are a public school that serves the needs of students who enroll in our school,

including those with and without disabilities. We have a broad range of needs and abilities and a small number of students. It's our duty to students identified with a disability under IDEA that we develop and follow an accurate and data supported IEP and follow that IEP, no matter what it does to our metrics. Our alternative assessment participation rate reflects our school's commitment to providing appropriate assessments based on individual student needs. Given our limited enrollment, we note that small numbers of students participating in alternative assessments may result in percentages that warrant contextual interpretation within our overall assessment program.

Flagstaff Unified District (03-02-01-000)

Flagstaff is a community with many charter schools and families that are selecting the Empowerment Scholarship. Charter schools and families on the Empowerment Scholarships have absorbed a number of students who participate in the AASA test, but have not absorbed our students who qualify for the Alternative Assessment, which gives us a higher percentage. Overall enrollment in the Flagstaff Unified School District continues to decline, however our special education population is holding steady giving us a disproportionate amount of students that are in special education and qualify for the Alternative Assessment.

Florence Unified School District (11-02-01-000)

Florence Unified School District exceeded the 1% participation threshold in ELA (1.6692%), Science (1.3255%), and Math (1.6547%) during the 2024-2025 administration of the alternate assessment. There are a few reasons the district has exceeded the threshold. Although our total enrollment is down, our ESS population is increasing. Currently, we have 1756 K-12 students in special education, which is 21.4% of our total population. This is an increase from 19.7% last year. We have 369 (21% of the ESS Population) students with services provided in a more restrictive setting (Levels C, D, and Home Instruction) due to their higher academic and adaptive needs. With the growing population of students who need specialty programs in self-contained classrooms, we now have 40 specialty classrooms for K-12 students in our district. Our sites with more specialty programs housed on campus have a higher number of students participating in the Alternate Assessment. With open boundaries and as knowledge of our exceptional specialty programs increases across the community, we are bringing additional students into our district who may have previously been served in other districts or charter schools, who qualify for the alternate assessments.

Flowing Wells Unified District (10-02-08-000)

The Flowing Wells Unified School District serves a high-poverty community, with poverty rates of approximately 17% for individuals and 15.2% for families—both higher than the national average of around 12%. We operate in a high poverty area with about 75% of students across our District qualified for free-and-reduces lunch options for the 2024 – 2025 school year. That number may not represent the true number of students in need as it is voluntary and in the previous year the percentage was 79% pre COVID 19 and a grant where all students qualify for free lunch regardless of need.

We continue to experience an influx of students with significant cognitive disabilities and adaptive needs coming into our school district at all levels. In the school year 2018 – 2019 we had 99 who met state/federal qualification for the alternative assessment and were listed on our database. In less than six years that number has grown to 137 students in our system. These requirements are significant cognitive disability; learning content linked to (derived from) state content standards; and need for extensive direct individualized instruction and substantial support to achieve measurable gains in the grade appropriate curriculum.

Fowler Elementary District (07-04-45-000)

Fowler Elementary School District exceeded the 1% cap for alternative state testing participation with the final percentage of 1.7% for FY20 24. Fowler Elementary School District had a higher percentage of students in a class that provided an alternative curriculum. The exceeding of the 1% cap occurred as the district saw an increase in the number of students with more significant disabilities enrolling periods as a small district within a metropolitan county, the district is experiencing a reduction in overall enrollments. This had a greater impact on the enrollment of nondisabled peers. This growth continues to affect our 1% cap as well as our overall special education percentage. We have new teachers and our special needs classrooms as well as classrooms across the state as staff change over, and staff shortages are addressed. Staff turnovers calls for increased professional development for those riding ISP. We are continuing to monitor our process slash procedures and understanding of alternative assessment legibility. We will continue to monitor our data, and review our needs related to training and professional development to strengthen our practices in the area.

Fredonia-Moccasin Unified District (03-02-06-000)

There are currently 103 students in grades K – 12 for the entire district. There are 58 students in grades 3 – 8 who take state testing at Fredonia. There are currently 10 students in grade 6. We have experienced declining enrollment since 1995 due to families electing to attend other schools with the implementation of School Choice and Homeschooling options. Fredonia is designated a Frontier area, and many families are moving to more populated areas of Arizona and Utah to seek out more favorable options for employment.

Gadsden Elementary District (14-04-32-000)

Our unique circumstances of being in a border community with the vast majority of our students population being first generation families or migrant families. The plan is conducting a thorough root cause analysis to determine the reason Gadsden Elementary School District #32 exceeds the 1% participation.

Upon further review it was discovered that some students did not meet the Severe Cognitive Impairment criteria. These cases have been identified as false positive for

AA. Our internal analysis alongside our ADE Program Specialist considered IQ as a defining measure for qualification of AA. Consequently, given this variable, our special education department focus will be on providing professional development for all stakeholders. We currently have the infrastructure to accomplish this goal within the 2025 – 2026 school year. Furthermore, to accomplish this task our focus will be on the eligibility criteria as well as reviewing current cases.

Ganado Unified School District (01-02-20-000)

Just as previous years, we continue to receive a large number of students with severe needs/eligibilities. It seems that this is due to our school being on open enrollment status as many of our students reside from outside our school district. In addition, we have vast lands with so many families living in remote areas of the Navajo Reservation. For whatever reason we have a large number of students with Autism, as well.

Gilbert Unified District (07-02-41-000)

Gilbert Unified School District maintains a rigorous adherence to state-mandated eligibility criteria. The district's current variance from the 1.0% threshold is the result of a dual-impact demographic confluence. Primarily, the district proactively develops and maintains high-quality specialized programs specifically designed for students with significant cognitive disabilities. These highly desirable programs attract families to the district, leading to a concentrated population of students requiring specialized services. Simultaneously, the district is experiencing a decline in general education student enrollment. These two factors shift the percentage of students requiring alternate assessments.

Glendale Elementary District (07-04-40-000)

It has been determined by a root cause analysis that the district exceeded the 1% threshold in both ELA and Math due to the needs of specialized, self-contained programs that are not as readily available in neighboring districts and charter schools, including an Autism Specific Program currently consisting of 13 classrooms. In the 2024-2025 school year, the district had 11 classrooms specific to the Autism Program. Due to students enrolling from out of district, aging out of ABA programs, and being identified in our district preschool program, the Autism Program classrooms are steadily increasing year over year. This current school year

saw two more classrooms open due to these factors. The district also has 5 Foundational Skills classrooms, 1 Multiple Disabilities classroom, and 3 Foundational Academics classrooms (students grade 6-8). The district has noted increased open enrollment into these programs from families across the valley looking to access Glendale Elementary's comprehensive special education services. Additionally, the district has seen an overall decline in general education enrollment. The number of students taking general education assessments has decreased year to year, while the number of students in specialized programs has increased. Demographically, the Glendale Elementary district is a high-need socio-economic and linguistically diverse population. All students qualifying for Alternative Assessments are determined eligible through the IEP team using the ADE eligibility forms. Professional development presentations and coaching for teams support that decisions are based on students with severe cognitive disabilities meeting eligibility criteria.

[Globe Unified District \(04-02-01-000\)](#)

We had the same number of students assess on the ELA, Math and Science assessment. However, because fewer grade levels are required to assess the science standards, the percentages of students taking the science assessment increased. I believed that we were under the 1% threshold when we tested. I did not take into account there were fewer students testing in science overall and how that would affect the percentage of students being tested.

[Haven Montessori Children's House, Inc. \(03-87-55-000\)](#)

Based on a 2022 report from ADE, the statewide special education population has increased by over 7000 students in a 5 year period. Flagstaff has felt that increase. Overall the student enrollment in Flagstaff has decreased due to a more transient population from high cost of living as well as lower birth rates. Haven has felt the impact of decreased enrollment over the last three years and we have less 3rd-6th grade students overall taking the state assessments which then makes the weight of the students who qualify for the alternate assessments feel greater. Haven Montessori is a charter school and when we have an opening in any grade level we accept the student regardless of special education status. Unlike the local school district we do not have specific specialized program for different SPED populations but we look at the individual needs of the child including their evaluation report, IEP and any other information in order to provide FAPE, which also includes the

appropriate assessment for their individual needs.

[Hirsch Academy A Challenge Foundation \(07-82-04-000\)](#)

The participation percentage is strongly impacted by our school's smaller overall enrollment and the specific instructional setting designed to support our students' needs. Hirsch Academy serves a specialized population, including students in targeted support programs and special education classrooms that provide individualized instruction for learners who require more intensive academic, behavioral, and therapeutic support. As a result, the overage of 1% reflects the unique composition of our student body and the individualized services provided to ensure each student receives appropriate educational support

[Holbrook Unified District \(09-02-03-000\)](#)

HUSD faces an unusual demographic trend in which total district enrollment declines by about 2% annually, while the number of students requiring special education services, including those with cognitive impairments, continues to grow. The district covers a vast, largely rural area of approximately 1,500 square miles and includes many small communities with limited access to medical resources. These factors, particularly restricted access to prenatal and early childhood healthcare, have likely contributed to the rising number of students identified with disabilities. Because the overall student population is relatively small, even slight increases in special education enrollment have a significant effect on participation rates. As a result of decreasing general enrollment combined with stable or increasing special education numbers, the district remains above the 1% cap. Nevertheless, we believe our IEP teams are making appropriate and accurate determinations of student eligibility.

[Humboldt Unified District \(13-02-22-000\)](#)

Humboldt Unified School District serves the Dewey/Humboldt, Prescott Valley, Castle Canyon Mesa, and surrounding newer developments. As families move into the area, many are exploring alternative educational options such as charter schools, private schools, micro-schools, or homeschooling. However, families of students with significant cognitive disabilities are less likely to choose these alternatives and more likely to enroll in HUSD to ensure access to appropriate special education services. This enrollment pattern contributes to the district

approaching or exceeding the 1% threshold, as alternative educational options primarily draw from the general education population rather than students with IEPs. HUSD provides special education services across a wide range of disabilities and educational settings, from preschool through high school. The availability of these comprehensive programs supports appropriate placement decisions and contributes to increased participation in the alternate assessment. While Humboldt Unified has experienced a decline in general education enrollment, special education enrollment has remained stable or increased, resulting in a higher proportion of students with disabilities within the district.

Hyder Elementary District (14-04-16-000)

we are an extremely small school with a total K through a student population of around 80 students. Our testing population even smaller. Declining overall enrollment, with an uptake in our special ed population. To help with this we actively seek outside enrollment to increase student population.

Imagine Avondale Middle, Inc. (07-85-53-000)

As a very small 6-8 public charter school in a mid-size suburban setting, with a low overall enrollment (186 students), Imagine Avondale Middle accepts all students with disabilities when there are openings at a specified grade level. The demographics of this neighborhood include minority families who speak predominantly Spanish. 95.2% of the overall enrollment includes minority students, and 74% are economically disadvantaged. Additionally, school choice gives families the opportunity to enroll in schools outside of the district home school, but still close to home. Imagine Avondale Middle competes with a mid-size neighboring district where many families report upon enrollment that they prefer smaller student to teacher ratios for their child, have been unhappy in their home school district, and choose to enroll with us.

Imagine Avondale Middle, Inc. (07-85-53-000)

As a very small 6-8 public charter school in a mid-size suburban setting, with a low overall enrollment (186 students), Imagine Avondale Middle accepts all students with disabilities when there are openings at a specified grade level. The demographics of this neighborhood include minority families who speak predominantly Spanish. 95.2% of the overall enrollment includes minority

students, and 74% are economically disadvantaged. Additionally, school choice gives families the opportunity to enroll in schools outside of the district home school, but still close to home. Imagine Avondale Middle competes with a mid-size neighboring district where many families report upon enrollment that they prefer smaller student to teacher ratios for their child, have been unhappy in their home school district, and choose to enroll with us.

[Imagine Camelback Middle, Inc. \(07-85-31-000\)](#)

As a very small 6-8 public charter school, with a low overall enrollment (170 students), Imagine Camelback Middle, Inc. accepts all students with disabilities when there are openings at a specified grade level. The demographics of this neighborhood include highly migrant, transient, and homeless families, including a diverse enrollment of students with disabilities. 97.1% of the overall enrollment include minority students, and 88% are economically disadvantaged. Additionally, school choice gives families the opportunity to enroll in schools outside of the district home school, but still close to home. Imagine Camelback Middle, Inc. competes with a neighboring district that is the largest elementary school district in Arizona, where class sizes are larger, and families report they prefer smaller student to teacher ratios for their child and choose to enroll with us.

[Imagine Middle at Surprise, Inc. \(07-85-22-000\)](#)

As a very small 6-8 public charter school in a large suburban setting, with a low overall enrollment (268 students), Imagine Surprise Middle accepts all students with disabilities when there are openings at a specified grade level. The demographics of this neighborhood include suburban housing in multiple zip codes, where families are enrolling from multiple school districts. 53.4% of the overall enrollment includes minority students, and 40% are economically disadvantaged. Additionally, school choice gives families the opportunity to enroll in schools outside of the district home school, but still close to home. Imagine Surprise Middle competes with a large neighboring district where many families report upon enrollment that they prefer smaller student to teacher ratios for their child, have been unhappy in their home school district, and choose to enroll with us, especially families with students who have more significant needs when transitioning from elementary to middle school.

Isaac Elementary District (07-04-05-000)

Community or Program Factors: Isaac School District has a transient population of students that move in and out of the district. 2. Local demographics that have recently impacted the Isaac School District are the apartment complexes that support families being relocated from other countries and they prepare to resettle in the state of Arizona. There are affordable housing apartment complexes that have been built in the Isaac School District that support affordable family living. 3. There was a slight misunderstanding of the calculation of students participating in the alternate assessment. The original percentage was calculated by the total number of students that were enrolled. It was not calculated by the number of students that were participating in the general assessments.

J O Combs Unified School District (11-02-44-000)

Enrollment in our self contained programs for students with complex needs continues to grow. The overall district enrollment numbers dropped 2.5% from the 23/24 school year to the 24/25 school year, based on the Oct. 1 count. Many of those are students without disabilities, which impacted our special education populations. As a result, our percent of students with disabilities has increased in comparison to our population of students without disabilities. Our SPED percentage for the 23-24 school year was approximately 15.3%, 24-25 school year was approximately 16.8% and for the 25-26 school year was approximately 17.6% at our Oct. 1 count. This is higher than the state average.

Our community is also surrounded by several charter schools and other schools of choice as enrollment options. We currently have 4 charter schools within the district boundaries and 5 additional charter schools in our area. Additionally, per county records, we have several families that enroll in other public schools in our area under open enrollment, are home schooled, or are enrolled in other schools of choice, including online charter school programs. As a result, we have somewhere around 60% of students that reside within our district boundaries that choose to attend schools or receive education outside of the district boundaries. In looking at student withdrawals, and requests for evaluations, it appears that most of those students who do not attend our schools are not individuals with disabilities or are not students with significant cognitive impairments that impact intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior and require Alternative State Assessments, therefore, our enrollment of students who participate in regular state assessments has also declined.

Additionally, our community is currently more affordable than the surrounding larger cities. When parents are looking at buying or renting in our general area, they often contact our district to hear about our schools and programs. The district currently has a good reputation with our self contained programs for students with complex needs and as a result, families with students with significant impairments select our district to reside in, thus increasing the number of students who moved into the district with alternative assessments identified on their IEPs.

Finally, there are currently more than 7 group homes in our community that often support students with significant needs. All of these factors contribute to why we have identified higher than 1% of students in certain groups that require participation in alternative state assessments.

Joseph City Unified District (09-02-02-000)

We are a rural school district with only one feeder school. We are also impacted by the low socioeconomic status in our area. We independently evaluate each student case annually to ensure that the students meet the eligibility criteria and have agreed that the students submitted meet the three eligibility criterion for alternate assessment. Action Plan (List the steps as measurable actions that directly address your unique issues related to the 1% Cap and can be completed within the annual timeline.) Action Plans should include, at a minimum, dependent on your LEA's Tier assignment: Prior to the end of the 1st quarter of the 26-27 school year, the LEA will examine alternate assessment participation requirements and implement any needed adjustments. The DTC will provide the training on participation requirements and eligibility criteria with student evaluation teams and to all personnel who administer alternate assessments.

Kaizen Education Foundation dba Vista Grove Preparatory Academy (07-85-67-000)

The LEA exceeded the 1% participation threshold for alternate assessments due to the overall composition of its enrolled student population and not as a result of systemic over-identification or procedural error. The percentage reflects the characteristics of students served within the school during the reporting year.. The district serves communities with higher rates of poverty and other risk factors associated with increased incidence and identification of disabilities requiring substantial educational support. These demographic factors contribute to a higher proportion of students whose instructional needs align with alternate academic

achievement standards. The school conducted a root cause analysis to examine eligibility determinations, IEP team decision processes, and assessment assignment procedures. The review confirmed that: IEP teams follow state eligibility criteria and required decision-making protocols Assessment participation decisions are made individually based on documented cognitive and adaptive functioning needs There is no evidence of systemic misclassification or inappropriate assignment to alternate assessments The district's participation rate reflects the unique characteristics of its student population rather than a breakdown in procedures or policy.

Kaleidoscope School (07-86-16-000)

Kaleidoscope has a strong, well-established special education department with a reputation for high-quality services and compliance. Families often seek enrollment due to our comprehensive special education supports, structured programs, and specialized staff. This has resulted in an increase in our special education population over prior school years. We are a public charter school without geographic boundaries and accept all students who apply. Our local demographics include an overall enrollment of 268 students. We currently have 57 students enrolled in special education. While overall school enrollment has remained stable, our special education population has increased. This shift in student demographics has resulted in a higher proportion of students with significant disabilities relative to total enrollment. During the Spring 2025 testing window, 161 students participated in the AASA assessment. For English Language Arts and Mathematics, the percentage of students who took the Alternate Assessment was below the state's 1% threshold, with rates of 0.6329% for ELA and 0.6211% for Math. For Science, in fifth and eighth grades, the total number of students across those two grades was 42. Kaleidoscope School exceeded the 1% threshold for science due to the small size of the tested population and an increase in the special education population. There was no increase in the number of students participating in the alternate assessment from Spring 2024 to Spring 2025. The exceedance of the 1% threshold is attributable to growth in the special education population, specifically students meeting criteria for significant cognitive disability in certain grade levels, rather than inappropriate identification or overuse of alternate assessment.

Kayenta Unified School District #27 (09-02-27-000)

A review of district assessment practices showed that IEP teams were not

consistently using the state-required Alternate Assessment Eligibility Determination Form. Targeted training is needed to ensure all IEP team members understand how to use the eligibility form to guide decision-making, apply criteria with fidelity, and document determinations accurately so that only students who truly meet the state's definition of significant cognitive disability are identified for the alternate assessment.

Kingman Academy Of Learning (08-86-20-000)

Kingman Academy of Learning (KAOL) exceeded the 1% participation threshold for alternate assessments during the 2024–2025 school year. As a small, rural district, overall enrollment numbers are lower than those of larger districts, which can result in higher percentage calculations even when the total number of students participating in alternate assessments is small. KAOL operates a self-contained instructional program designed to serve students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Because of this specialized program, KAOL serves a concentrated population of students who meet state eligibility criteria for participation in alternate assessments aligned to alternate academic achievement standards under the Every Student Succeeds Act. Participation decisions are made annually by IEP teams using state-established criteria. Teams review comprehensive evaluation data, including cognitive, adaptive behavior, and academic performance information, to ensure that only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are considered for alternate assessment participation. The district reinforces that the 1% cap is not a target and that placement in alternate assessment is not based on disability category, placement setting, or academic performance alone. KAOL provides ongoing guidance and oversight to ensure appropriate decision-making and conducts internal reviews of participation data annually. KAOL remains committed to ensuring compliance with state and federal requirements while appropriately serving students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Kirkland Elementary District (13-03-23-000)

This includes information on LOCAL DEMOGRAPHICS. The ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS is also explained
DEMOGRAPHICS: Kirkland, AZ is a small town located in Yavapai County, AZ. Kirkland has a population of approximately 1255 people (as per: <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/95000US0404170-kirkland-elementary->

[district-az/](#) . Kirkland Elementary School District #23 is a very small rural school district w/ one public school (Kirkland Elementary School) established within its district boundaries. Median age of residents is 51.2 years and median household income approximately 57,333/year (per capita income is 34,500). The Kirkland School District serves its student population of PS-Grade 8. (Student enrollment at this time is approximately 70 for grades PS-8th). Each teacher typically teaches dual grade levels in one classroom. This year, class grade levels are as follows: PS, K/1, 2, 3/4, 5/6 and 7/8. (each classroom is taught by ONE teacher).

ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS: Any student that enrolls in Kirkland Elementary School District is not turned away. As with any public school, large or small, Kirkland ESD provides FAPE to all children who qualify for special education regardless of disability and/or needs. In addition, the Kirkland, AZ general population fluctuates, and student numbers vary each year. IEP teams for any sped. qualified student with a disability consider all pertinent criteria in making determinations about a student's eligibility for Alternate Assessment including required components:

Results of Individual Cognitive Ability Tests

Results of Adaptive Behavior Skills Assessment

Results of individual and group administered achievement tests

Results of informal assessments

Results of district-wide alternate assessments

Results of language assessments (EL)

Examples of curriculum

IEP goal progress

Extensive direct specially designed individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in the grade appropriate curriculum

Examples of curriculum and instructional objectives/work samples

Teacher collected data and documentation

PLAAFP

[Kyrene Elementary District \(07-04-28-000\)](#)

The percentage of students participating in Alternate Assessments is just over the 1% threshold for each assessment. We generally start the year under the 1% target. Over the course of the year, we did not have many student withdrawals, but we did have several newly enrolled students who were found to be eligible for Alternate Assessments.

At the same time, Kyrene is also experiencing declining enrollment. This trend is

contributing to a higher proportion of students with significant disabilities within our boundaries as compared to our overall population. These demographic shifts contributed to the nominally higher percentages.

[La Tierra Community School, Inc \(13-85-03-000\)](#)

We are a small charter school. During the 2024-2025 school year, La Tierra's 3rd-8th grade classes were not at capacity, which meant a fewer number of students in 3rd-8th who were of testing age. This lower number of enrolled students put us over the 1% threshold.

[Laveen Elementary District \(07-04-59-000\)](#)

The District remains a highly transient population with the rapid and continued growth of new homes being built within the district boundaries, leading to multiple transfer students. District procedure requires that transfer IEPs be completed by the receiving team; historically, it is found that the students do, in fact, continue to meet the eligibility requirements to be eligible for alternative assessments based on cognitive and adaptive scores.

It does appear that a high proportion of last year's 8th grade students – despite scoring lower on their ELA and math assessments – were able to meet the requirements of the science assessment in particular such that eligibility for alternate assessments will continue to be a focal point of training for IEP teams when completing transfer IEPs as well as annual IEPs for students who have a longstanding history of enrollment in the district.

[Legacy Traditional School - Avondale \(07-84-16-000\)](#)

Our school's alternate assessment participation rate is influenced by several unique factors. First, our overall tested population is small. In a small cohort, even a limited number of students participating in the alternate assessment significantly affects the overall percentage, making the proportion appear higher than it would in a larger population. Many of the students who participate in the alternate assessment have been continuously enrolled in our school. Their long-term enrollment reflects both family confidence in our strong special education program and our commitment to supporting students with complex needs over time. As these students progressed into tested grades, their continued eligibility appropriately resulted in participation in the alternate assessment.

Legacy Traditional School - Deer Valley (07-86-42-000)

We had a confirmed enrollment for the 2024-2025 school year of 507 students (currently at 566) As we are not currently operating at full capacity, we are able to enroll additional students, including those with specialized needs. Our location within a highly transient community results in a student population that frequently experiences school changes, which can interrupt instructional continuity and delay the identification of special education needs. Student mobility is further influenced by family relocations and the fact that our school serves students only through sixth grade. As a result, many students enroll after attending multiple schools, often with existing academic gaps. Over time, these gaps may become more apparent, leading to an increased likelihood of referral for special education services as student needs are more clearly identified.

Legacy Traditional School - Goodyear (07-86-35-000)

During the 2024–2025 school year, Legacy Traditional School – Goodyear saw enrollment and demographic shifts. This included an increase in SPED students while overall enrollment remained the same from 23/24 to 24/25. This increase suggests growth in the school’s Exceptional Student Services (ESS) program and reflects strong community confidence in the school’s ability to effectively serve students with significant cognitive disabilities. As more families of students requiring specialized services enroll, even a small numerical increase can result in percentages that slightly exceed the 1% cap due to the school’s overall student population size.

Legacy Traditional School - Mesa (07-86-41-000)

Response: Legacy Traditional School – Mesa is a single-site LEA with a relatively small total tested population in comparison to larger districts. Because the 1% cap is calculated using the total number of students participating in statewide assessments as the denominator, even a small increase in students enrolling with existing Alternate Assessment eligibility can cause the participation rate to exceed 1%. A root cause analysis indicates that exceeding the 1% threshold is not the result of systemic over-identification or changes in eligibility practices. Rather, the variance is attributable to enrollment patterns. During the 2024–2025 school year, new students enrolled in the LEA with previously established eligibility for Alternate

Assessments aligned to significant cognitive disabilities. The team reviewed each student's evaluation summary, the required MSAA eligibility criteria, and the student's present levels of performance, and determined that the documentation met expectations for MSAA classification. These enrollment changes, combined with the LEA's relatively small overall tested population, resulted in a percentage that exceeded the 1% threshold. The LEA serves a mixed demographic population with a full range of special education eligibility categories, including students with mild intellectual disabilities as well as students with significant cognitive disabilities. There have been no changes to eligibility criteria, and IEP teams continue to follow state guidance when determining participation in Alternate Assessments. In summary, the exceedance is attributable to:

- Small overall tested enrollment numbers

- Normal year-to-year enrollment fluctuations

- Newly enrolled students with established Alternate Assessment eligibility

- No systemic change in eligibility determination practices

The LEA will continue to monitor participation trends annually to ensure appropriate application of eligibility criteria.

[Legacy Traditional School - North Phoenix \(07-86-37-000\)](#)

Legacy Traditional School – North Phoenix is a grades 6–8 campus serving only middle school students. As a result, state Science assessment participation is limited to a single grade level. Because the tested population for Science is confined to one grade, proportional participation rates are more sensitive to fluctuations in enrollment than in ELA and Math, which include multiple grade levels. Even modest variations in the size of the tested grade cohort can result in participation percentages that exceed the 1% threshold. As a middle school program, our campus enrolls students whose eligibility determinations and instructional pathways were often established in earlier elementary settings. Students identified with significant cognitive disabilities frequently enter our campus with existing IEP teams and documented eligibility decisions aligned to alternate assessment criteria. Because we do not operate elementary grades, we do not influence early identification or early intervention patterns that may contribute to later eligibility determinations. In reviewing our participation data, we determined that the exceedance in Science was not the result of a systemic change in identification practices, as participation in ELA and Math remained below the 1% threshold. Instead, the exceedance reflects the structural characteristics of our grade configuration combined with fluctuations in enrollment within a single tested

grade level. Our root cause analysis indicates that the proportional increase was driven by the narrow tested population in Science rather than a shift in eligibility criteria, instructional practices, or assessment decision-making processes.

Liberty Elementary District (07-04-25-000)

The district exceeded the 1% participation threshold for Alternate Assessment due to a combination of community, demographic, and enrollment factors that influenced the composition of the testing population. The district serves students from a wide geographic area and offers specialized programs for students who require intensive academic, behavioral, communication, and adaptive supports. Because these programs are available within the district, families sometimes enroll specifically to access these services, including students transferring from other districts or placements. This results in a higher proportion of students with significant support needs compared to the overall student population. Local community conditions also play a role. The district serves many families experiencing economic hardship and housing mobility, and some students enter school with limited access to early intervention or preschool services. These factors can contribute to increased educational needs by the time students reach tested grades. The district also serves a substantial population of multilingual learners, some of whom require additional supports across multiple areas of functioning. Changes in overall enrollment also affected the participation rate calculation. During the reporting period, the number of students taking the general assessment shifted due to mobility and enrollment fluctuations across grade levels. When the total tested population decreases, even a stable number of students participating in Alternate Assessment can result in a higher percentage. In addition, program adjustments and staffing changes led to shifts in where specialized services were delivered across the district. This resulted in concentrations of students with intensive needs at certain grade levels and campuses, which affected participation rates. The district has reviewed these factors through a root cause analysis and recognizes the need to reduce participation in Alternate Assessment while ensuring that assessment decisions remain individualized and appropriate. Steps are being taken to strengthen guidance for IEP teams, provide additional training on eligibility criteria, and monitor future decisions to ensure alignment with federal and state requirements.

4. Action Plan (List the steps as measurable actions that directly address your unique issues related to the 1% Cap and can be completed within the annual timeline.) Action Plans should include, at a minimum, dependent on your LEA's Tier assignment: Tier

1 (LEA's with 1.0-1.50% over the Cap) training for these LEAs will focus on participation requirements for Alternate Assessments. To reduce participation in Alternate Assessment and ensure alignment with federal and state requirements, the LEA will implement the following actions to verify eligibility, strengthen decision-making processes, and provide ongoing oversight of assessment participation.

1. Conduct a comprehensive review of current eligibility. The LEA will review the existing list of students identified for participation in the Alternate Assessment to ensure that each student meets criteria for students with significant cognitive disabilities. For any student whose documentation does not clearly support eligibility, the LEA will convene the student's IEP team to review assessment participation decisions and revise the Alternate Assessment Eligibility/Participation determination as appropriate.
2. Provide targeted staff training. The LEA will deliver training to special education staff, administrators, and IEP team members regarding Alternate Assessment eligibility requirements, including decision-making criteria, required documentation, and the distinction between disability category and significant cognitive disability.
3. Establish internal pre-review procedures. The LEA will develop and implement procedures requiring case managers to submit student information to designated district-level special education staff for review and approval prior to proposing initial participation or renewal of Alternate Assessment at an IEP meeting. The pre-review process will promote consistent application of eligibility criteria across schools and support compliance with federal and state requirements and the 1% participation cap. Upon implementation, the LEA will provide training to all current special education staff on the new procedures and expectations. Training on Alternate Assessment eligibility and internal procedures will be incorporated into annual professional development and onboarding for new staff.
4. Monitor implementation and participation rates. The LEA will monitor assessment participation data and fidelity to procedures on an ongoing basis to ensure progress toward compliance with the 1% cap.

Litchfield Elementary District (07-04-79-000)

Over the last three school years, enrollment/participation in AASA and AzSci grade levels has declined in Litchfield Elementary School District (LESD). From Spring 2023 to Spring 2025, ELA participation dropped 1.6%, Math participation dropped 1.2%, and Science participation dropped 1.5%. As the "denominator" in the 1% formula, this drop in AASA/AzSci participation would have a justifiable impact on our district's ability to remain below the 1% threshold for alternate assessment. In

contrast, over that same 3 year period, enrollment of IEP students in LESD has risen 17%. Without consideration/context of our district and community, a 17% increase (approx. 306 students) would result in approximately 17 new students eligible for alternate assessment, based on previous data and percentages (approx. 5% of IEP students eligible for alt. assessments). With specific regard to data only, our district will be hard pressed to hit a goal percentage of 1.00% or lower, if we continue to add about 6 students to the “numerator” of the formula, while subtracting about 33 students from the “denominator”. Given the above numbers and data, it’s also important to consider the context involving the unique characteristics of our district. Objectively speaking, our district appears to be the only elementary school district in our region (west valley) that provides a description of the self-contained programs available within our district. As a result, we receive a high level of communication from parents living elsewhere (out of district or out of state), inquiring about moving into the LESD boundaries with a clear intention of having their student with significant needs enrolled in one of our programs. More specifically, our SAILS program (self-contained life skills) at Palm Valley Elementary has developed a reputation of success with inclusion and a wide range of community involved events and activities. Not only has their school been mentioned in many of the phone calls and emails we receive from out-of-district families, but we have specific data showing a significantly disproportionate number of students that have IEP’s with needs best met in the SAILS program, live within a 1.5 mile radius of this school. In fact, 50% of students in that specific life skills program live within that 1.5 mile radius. One logical conclusion from this data is that families appear to move to our district, and to those neighborhoods directly around the program that has the highest level of participation in the alternate assessment.

Mammoth-San Manuel Unified District (11-02-08-000)

Mammoth San Manuel Unified continues to have few identified students with significant cognitive disabilities within the testing grade levels, which will contributed to exceeding the 1% cap. These students have not been promoted out of the testing grade levels. Additionally, despite being provided with high quality instruction aligned with the general education grade level curriculum, these identified students have not sufficiently improved in their academic skills necessary to no longer qualify for Alternative Assessment. The population of students having significant cognitive disabilities within this rural school district may be die to the relatively low cost of housing within the community. It may be that the

low cost of housing enables families with disabled children to afford to have one parent stay home fulltime to provide parental supervision. The school district's very small student population, where only 211 students fall into testing years, makes it very likely that eligible students taking the test will exceed the 1% cap.

Identification of students for participation in Alternative Assessment was determined to have been appropriately determined according to state regulations. However, the documentation of the determining factors was found to need improvement in the documentation of these justifications for participation within the Alternative Assessment Eligibility Form.

Marana Unified District (10-02-06-000)

Our district currently exceeds the 1% threshold primarily due to our status as a regional hub for specialized programming. We host several Adaptive CLuster Programs/Intellectual Disabilities Cluster Programs (ID Programs) that serve not only our local students but also attract families from surrounding areas seeking these intensive, restrictive instructional settings. Disproportionate Enrollment: As of January 2025, students enrolled in our ID Cluster Programs represent 2.14% of our testing population (grades 3-8 and 11). This is a specialized demographic that inherently carries a higher concentration of students with significant cognitive disabilities compared to a standard population distribution. Trend Analysis: We have observed a steady increase in this specific population, rising from 1.9% to 2.14% over the last year. This growth is attributed to localized housing shifts and the reputation of our specialized services, rather than a change in our identification criteria. Restrictive Setting Correlation: While not every student in these programs participates in the alternate assessment, these programs represent the most intensive tier of support. The increase in our alternate assessment rate is directly proportional to the increased enrollment in these high-needs programs.

Maricopa Unified School District (11-02-20-000)

Maricopa Unified School District is a rapidly growing district, with the city itself being the fastest growing community in Arizona, and we welcome new students from out of district and out of state. Because of the location of Maricopa, when families enroll, their students either go to our schools or to one of our local charter schools. We do not have a significant number of students who open enroll in other districts due to our location. Further, the majority of our students who enroll in

charter schools do not have IEPs. Both of these factors increase our concentration of students who require alternative assessments.

Masada Charter School, Inc. (08-87-59-000)

Mesa Unified District (07-02-04-000)

The number of valid test scores for the district is lower in Science (n=3636) when compared to Math (n=4125) and ELA (n=3867) in 11th grade. We exceeded the 1% threshold in Science and did not exceed it for Math and ELA. This difference in valid testing scores for Science impacts the calculation of 1% tested for that subject area because the selected alternative assessment students are compared to the total tested population for each subject area. In looking specifically at Science scores for 11th graders, we had a total of 170 students whose Science scores were flagged as either DNR or incomplete. One school had 133 students of the 170 students in this group. Our data source is vendor testing files from state achievement assessments. Mesa Unified District's total special education population is slightly higher than other school districts across the state. In fiscal year 2025, the percentage of special education students statewide was 13.91%, while in Mesa it was notably higher at 17.72%. This in turn increases the number of students whose IEP teams need to review eligibility aligned to the three qualifying criteria to participate in an alternative assessment. Our data source is publicly available via October 1st Enrollment data. The district's slight overage of the 1% threshold is primarily attributable to overall enrollment decline coupled with relatively stable enrollment of students identified with significant cognitive disabilities. While total district enrollment has decreased in recent years, the number of students meeting criteria for participation in the alternate assessment has not declined proportionally. Because the 1% threshold is calculated based on the total tested student population, reductions in general education enrollment have resulted in a higher proportional representation of students participating in the alternate assessment, despite no substantial increase in the actual number of eligible students. Additionally, in Grade 11 science, general education participation rates were lower than anticipated due to cohort-specific testing patterns. The reduced number of general education students participating in the assessment decreased the overall tested population denominator, which in turn increased the percentage calculation for alternate assessment participation. This variance

contributed to the district slightly exceeding the 1% threshold.

Miami Unified District (04-02-40-000)

As a small rural district in Arizona, our total tested student population is relatively low. As a result, the addition of even one or two students who appropriately qualify for alternate assessment can significantly increase the percentage above the 1% threshold. While this factor alone does not fully account for the variance, there are additional contextual considerations. Our district does not have alternative placement settings available in the immediate area. Consequently, students with the most significant needs must attend our public schools. For many families, transportation barriers make it difficult to explore alternative educational placements, which are approximately an hour away. Additionally, our district has developed a strong reputation for providing quality special education services. As one of only four public or charter school options in the region, our open enrollment policy has resulted in a number of students from outside district boundaries choosing to attend our programs.

Mingus Union High School District (13-05-04-000)

We have had 2 years with an influx of students in the 11th grade who are eligible for the alternative assessment. Mingus has seen an increase in enrollment of students with IEP's because of inclusive practices. Families with students with low-incidence disabilities are enrolling their children at Mingus and keeping them enrolled because of the consistency of services provided. Mingus has been able to retain teachers, support staff, and related service contractors on a consistent basis. It has provided continuity in services and stability for families.

Mohave Accelerated Learning Center (08-87-58-000)

Demographic data show a high percentage of families in our area live below the poverty line, and our community has limited early intervention programs and access to developmental screening. This lack of early support often results in students entering the school system with more pronounced learning and adaptive behavior needs. As a result, a greater number of students in our district meet the criteria for alternate assessment.

Mohave Valley Elementary District (08-04-16-000)

Mohave Valley Elementary School District serves 1,239 students within a K-8 rural district in Mohave County. Eight hundred and sixty-one of our 1,239 students are state-tested. The multidisciplinary team which includes the Director of Exceptional Student Support Services attends meetings where students meet eligibility to participate in the MSAA and each participation criterion descriptor is discussed and agreed upon by the multidisciplinary team. Special Educators attend professional development at the beginning of the year and monthly to stay abreast of the criterion needed for students to participate in MSAA. Students that previously were given the MSAA were all reevaluated to determine if the alternative assessment was necessary. We have lowered our percentage from 2.1 to 1.2 within a school year. Our staff continues to put effort into providing students with exceptionality programming based on the students' needs. Our local demographics are a low-income area that struggles with poverty, arrests, and domestic violence, drug and alcohol misuse and transit families.

Mohawk Valley Elementary District (14-04-17-000)

Mohawk Valley School is a small, rural school. During the 2024-2025 school year, Mohawk Valley School had a significant number of students found eligible to participate in the Alternate Assessment due to their cognitive and adaptive evaluation scores.

Currently, there are less than 150 students enrolled at Mohawk Valley School. A self-contained classroom was implemented during in 2023-2024 to address increasing student needs and the Star Autism Curriculum was implemented to enable the district to meet the needs of all students enrolled at Mohawk Valley School.

Students are not denied or discriminated against at Mohawk Valley School. There are no private or charter schools or alternative programs within the district boundaries or a reasonable distance of Mohawk Valley School.

Murphy Elementary District (07-04-21-000)

We had previously enrolled a few students with higher needs in our district for the previous school year. These students were identified as needing alternative testing, which ultimately increased our overall population of students taking the alternative assessments. We had a significant decrease of student enrollment for students

who take the general assessments, which impacted the overall percentage as well.

[New Learning Ventures, Inc. \(07-86-92-000\)](#)

Phoenix Modern is the only public school campus under our District. Our total enrollment for the 2024-25 school year for grades K-8 was 133 learners with only approximately 83-85 learners in grades 3-8 (eligible for state testing). Minimal learners were eligible for the Alternate Assessment. However, due to our small campus size and ratio of learners able to take state testing, threshold caps were surpassed. Our central Phoenix location is near several special education programs/schools and our small campus size leads to higher enrollment of children with disabilities and those that may be eligible for alternative assessment.

[North Phoenix Preparatory Academy \(07-85-84-000\)](#)

Since we are a small school district, any participation in alternate assessment causes us to be over the 1% threshold. The testing population is very low since we are a one district school, therefore having any participation in alternative assessments puts us over the 1% threshold.

[Page Unified School District #8 \(03-02-08-000\)](#)

Page Unified School District is a small PEA covering a large geographical area encompassing the Navajo reservation. This results in students being enrolled in PUSD that other schools on the reservation turn away due to unavailable services. This increases the percentage of students with more severe needs and services enrolled in the district.

[Painted Desert Demonstration Projects, Inc. \(03-87-53-000\)](#)

STAR School does not consistently exceed the 1% participation threshold for Alternate State Assessment based on identification practices; rather, our percentage is impacted by our small and recently declining enrollment. STAR School serves a highly unique and historically underserved population. Approximately 99% of our students are Navajo, and the majority come from low-income households and qualify for free or reduced-price meals. Our community faces significant socioeconomic challenges, including limited access to healthcare, early childhood intervention services, and specialized support resources. These

factors can contribute to higher rates of identified disabilities, particularly among students with significant cognitive disabilities who meet the eligibility criteria for alternate assessment. It is important to note that eligibility for the Alternate State Assessment is determined individually through IEP team decisions based strictly on state and federal guidelines. STAR School does not assign students to alternate testing for performance or accountability reasons. Each placement reflects documented, significant cognitive disabilities and aligns with IDEA requirements. Therefore, exceeding the 1% threshold is a function of small enrollment size and unique demographic factors rather than inappropriate identification practices.

Palo Verde Elementary District (07-04-49-000)

Palo Verde Elementary District exceeded the 1% participation threshold during the 2024– 2025 school year due to unique enrollment and grade-level cohort factors, not a systemic over-identification practice. During the monitoring year, the district experienced an increase in students who aged into grade levels that participate in alternate state assessments, including students who were newly evaluated and determined eligible for special education with a significant cognitive disability based on comprehensive multidisciplinary evaluations. These eligibility determinations were made in accordance with IDEA requirements and were not related to instructional placement, disability category alone, or assessment performance. The district did not experience a corresponding increase in overall enrollment of students participating in general state assessments, which contributed to a higher proportional representation of students participating in alternate assessments for this monitoring cycle. This circumstance reflects a cohort-based fluctuation rather than a change in district policy or practice related to alternate assessment eligibility.

Paloma School District (07-03-94-000)

A review of the LEA's alternate assessment participation data indicates that the LEA exceeded the 1.0% cap for students assessed with the state alternate assessment aligned to alternate academic achievement standards. While the numerical variance above the cap is minimal, the LEA recognizes that exceeding the threshold requires further analysis beyond participation totals.

The LEA conducted a comprehensive review of IEP documentation, eligibility determinations, cognitive data, adaptive behavior data, and present levels of performance to ensure that all students participating in the alternate assessment

met the state's participation criteria. This review confirmed that IEP teams applied the state-defined criteria and based decisions on significant cognitive disability, need for extensive, direct instruction, and substantial support across settings.

The analysis also examined:

Trends in alternate assessment participation across grade levels

Consistence in IEP team decision-making processes

Professional development provided to staff regarding alternate assessment eligibility criteria

Pre-referral and evaluation practices that may influence identification patterns

While eligibility decisions were found to be compliant with criteria, the review identified opportunities to strengthen guidance to IEP teams to ensure consistent interpretation of "significant cognitive disability" and to enhance documentation clarity within IEPs.

Based on this analysis, the LEA affirms that eligibility decisions were individually determined and aligned with requirements; however, the LEA acknowledges the need for enhanced oversight, documentation review procedures, and targeted staff training to prevent exceeding the 1% threshold in future administrations.

[Palominas Elementary School District 49 \(02-03-49-000\)](#)

Palominas did not increase the number of MSAA participants. However, the number of students tested/enrolled in grades 3-8 significantly decreased over the past year and continues to decrease. This affects the number of students that can be tested on the MSAA without exceeding the 1% threshold. The Palominas District also offers a program that benefits the needs of severely cognitively impaired students and parents are moving into the Palominas District in order to get the services they are looking for. The class is increasing in size yearly due to the unique programs and inclusive practices it offers. This class offers life skills, inclusion, cooking, assemblies, adaptive PE, speech, Occupational therapy, physical therapy in a small rural setting.

[Paradise Valley Unified District \(07-02-69-000\)](#)

PVUSD offers several specialized programs for students with significant support needs. Enrollment in these programs, particularly our programs that support students with autism and higher support needs continue to grow. A large amount of students in these programs qualify for alternative assessments based upon intellectual ability and adaptive needs. Additionally, our district is experiencing

declining enrollment for general education populations in almost all of our schools. While our general education population is declining, our special education population continues to grow. Currently, 17% of our district student population is eligible for special education services. Over the past few years, we have had high teacher turnover in special education, particularly in our specialized programs. This creates a need to annually address training for alternatively assessing students with a larger, and continually changing, group of teachers. Another factor that contributes to our special circumstances are that opportunities for direct training are minimal in our district. We do not have protected time for professional development. Due to our district professional development constraints, the Special Education department is only allowed to pull teachers for training two times per year. All other training must be provided after hours, which makes it difficult to capture all of the teachers who require training.

Parker Unified School District (15-02-27-000)

Parker Unified School District (PUSD) is in the small, rural community of Parker, Arizona. We are in La Paz County. According to Data USA, the population in Parker is 3,473 (not including Colorado Indian Tribes on the Reservation). Parker demographics include: Two or more races 33%; Native American 21%; White 31%; and Other 10.0%, 3% Asian, 2% Black. According to the Student Ethnic Distribution List, 52% of our students are Hispanic, 28% are American Indian, 13% are white, and 7% are Other.

Demographics for Parker Unified School District Student Body are: 53% Hispanic, 13% White, 1% Asian, 28% American Indian/Native American, 5% Other.

USA Data shows 93% of Parker's population are citizens. The median household income for Parker, AZ, for 2025 was \$66,273.00 (Median income for men is \$53,672; women is \$40,197). Approximately 34% of the households with school age children have a single parent with a per capita income of \$32,368.00. 11% of households with children under the age of 18 function at the poverty level. The poverty rate in the Town of Parker is 12.71. Only 14.7% of adults living in La Paz County hold a Bachelor's Degree; 11.86% did not graduate high school. Our community partially rests within the boundaries of the Colorado River Indian Tribes (CRIT) reservation. First Things First (FTF) is a state agency in Arizona. Every two years a report is published addressing the needs and assets of the Colorado River Indian Tribes Region's children and families. The most recent data is available

in the 2024 Needs and Assets Report (2026 Data is not yet published) and USA Data for Arizona, 2025.

There are approximately 7,077 tribal residents in Parker with 233 children aged 0-5 living on the reservation. The mean household income for tribal residents in Parker is \$53,000.00. Approximately 53% of young tribal children live in poverty. 7% of tribal adults are unemployed. Of this 7%, 4 out of 5 have two children or more. The WIC program serves 77% of children from birth to age 4 in La Paz County. Data in this report indicates that only 44% of children between birth to age 5 live in a traditional household. Just over 20% of children are being raised by a single grandparent without a parent present in the home.

Ninety percent of a child's brain develops prior to age 5. Children participating in quality early learning experiences are more likely to demonstrate higher academic performance in school. 51% of children between the ages of three and four do participate in in nursery school and/or preschool. Parker Unified School District offers part-time preschool for 3 and 4-year-old students, four days/week. Currently there are 21 students in our 3-year-old preschool and 21 4-year-olds. Thirty-four students qualify for special education services including Developmental Delay; Severe Delay; Speech/Language Impairment; Autism. The cost is \$15/ one-half day, four days/week; parents must pay additional child care charges for one-half day and full day on Fridays. CRIT Head Start has 144, 3 and 4-year-old students enrolled, 19.% qualify for special education services. They are supposed to run five days/week however with the lack of teachers, they are often forced to close on Fridays. Early Learning Academy is a profit child care program that offers early literacy to children in Parker. They are only licensed to take 16 toddlers. The cost is \$220/week/child. Children that attend after school only cost \$154.00/week. A new child care facility, The Tiny Cactus has opened and it costs \$250.00 per week. Overall, child care costs account for 18% of the mean family income.

About half of the children living in Parker Unified School District boundaries are not exposed to literacy before the age of five. The total number of tribal children enrolled in preschool accounts for only 32% of tribal children that are three or four years old in Parker. 28% of children birth to age 2 are referred to AzEIP. 24% of those referred families did not proceed with a screening for eligibility. Since COVID, 2020, 75% of preschoolers have been diagnosed as Developmental Delay which is 32% higher than the state.

Lack of literacy impacts brain development which in turn causes our students in preschool and kindergarten to start their educational career already behind state expectations for the Arizona State Standards.

Of all the third graders tested for English Language Arts in Parker Unified School District's elementary school, 38% scored proficient or highly proficient (37% for math). This would support the need for more children participating in quality early learning programs.

A big concern for healthy child development is prenatal care. The most recent data provided from 2021 shows that only 45.6% of women in the CRIT Region began prenatal care in their first trimester compared to 71.7% in the state. The number of women that received no prenatal care increased by 2.4% between 2018 and 2022. 12% of mothers giving birth in the reservation are younger than 20 years old; 3% are younger than 18 years old. Data from 2020 shows that 68% of children in the CRIT Region were identified with developmental delays; 9% in preschool had severe delays; and 24% were identified with a Speech/Language Impairment. The number of children qualifying for AzEIP increased from 10 to 28 from 2019 to 2020.

Health issues also create hardships for Native American children attending Parker schools. Data shows that from 2018-2022, 45 new born babies were hospitalized due to the mother's drug use. 51.5% of mothers giving birth were considered obese. 1 in 5 mothers reported having postpartum depression.

Domestic violence contributes to poor performance in school. In 2024, FTF reported 139 children under the age of 18 were removed by Tribal Child Protective Services and were in and out of home placements; 33 were birth to age 5. In 2024, there were 136 domestic violence offenses. There were 101 cases of child neglect and 50 referrals for alcohol or substance abuse incidents.

Payson Unified District (04-02-10-000)

As we continue our analysis of special circumstances that affect our rate, three factors continue to be a part of our ongoing discussion: Enrollment continues to fluctuate and is being deeply affected by students leaving the district for ESA opportunities. From April 2025 to February 2026, our population of special education students decreased from 357 to 311. As more independent special education students leave the district, our students with significant cognitive disabilities remain, as our population of students with profound Autism increases. Autism 10.6% to 12.5 (39 students) Developmental Delay 14% to 11.9 (37 students) Mild-Moderate-Severe Disabilities 5.2% to 3.9% (15 students) Likewise, as previously reported, our Level C population serving students from grades 6-12 with Autism, Mild Intellectual Disabilities, and Multiple Disabilities has decreased since our last report in grades 6-12 as students become a part of a more Inclusive

environment. In grades 6-12, 18 students receive Level C services. Students in grades 3-5 with significant cognitive and adaptive disabilities continue to receive services in a more restrictive environment, as behavioral and social-emotional needs dictate, where students may receive services. Students are receiving Level C services at a higher rate in grades 3-5; 13 students. Nearly half of the students who qualify for the MSAA are enrolled in grades 3-5. Since these factors do not explicitly dictate why our 1% Threshold rose within the 2024-2025 school year, we took a closer look at how IEP teams are determining MSAA qualification using the three criteria for the MSAA. A deeper look into data points to three key factors defining special circumstances that inform our MSAA processes and the growth needed to refine our practices. Despite MSAA Guidelines dictating that IEP teams should be cautious about assigning students with significant cognitive disabilities to an alternate assessment in their early school years. PUSD is displaying the opposite; more students qualify in their early years and then evolve into being capable of accessing the standard general education assessments in grades 6-12. IEP teams focus heavily on Criterion One. Teams need to dedicate more time to thoroughly discussing Criteria 2 and 3, starting with a student's access to the general curriculum before determining the immediate need for Level C services. IEP teams from Kindergarten to Grade 2 need to begin assessment discussions in Kindergarten. We are finding that K-2 IEP teams who exempt students from assessments because they are nonverbal are not establishing a reliable form of communication in Kindergarten. A child's form of communication beyond verbal ability is not being considered as total communication in terms of accessing curriculum and assessments. Students are entering third grade without a reliable, consistent mode of communication. Our IEP teams tend to focus on Criterion One: Does the student have a significant cognitive and adaptive disability to justify the need for the MSAA? Teams have been looking beyond the formal data (i.e., IQ, Adaptive Scales) in the evaluation report and have taken a more holistic approach using informal assessments, including benchmarks. This additional data has broadened the discussion as teams begin to look beyond IQ. The following examples dictate these decisions: An elementary student with an IQ of 78 and an Adaptive Score of 38 was made eligible by the IEP team for the MSAA. Additional informal data led to a holistic determination of MSAA eligibility. The student with profound Autism and a Speech Language Impairment has significant difficulty accessing the general curriculum. Two elementary students with IQs of 69 and 70, and with Adaptive scores of 73 or above, qualified for the MSAA with the addition of informal data during the annual IEP meeting. Criterion 2 and 3 began with a Level C

focal point, versus a general education setting. The MSAA qualification was determined early in Grade 3. In addition to considering Criterion One, we have determined that IEP teams need to take more time to thoroughly discuss and consider Criteria Two and Three at the annual IEP meeting. Likewise, our LEA designees and special education teachers need a clearer, comprehensive understanding of what constitutes Criterion Two and Three. For instance, a few students continued to take the MSAA when their access to the general curriculum was not defined by Criterion Two and Three. A middle school student was receiving services at Level B; no more than 79% of the day and no less than 40% of the day. He was not receiving substantial support and modifications, significant adaptations, or an alternative standards-based curriculum to access and succeed with the general curriculum. He did not meet the criteria for MSAA Criterion Two and Three; therefore, the team should have discontinued MSAA eligibility. This change did not occur until he reached high school, where his IEP team reviewed MSAA eligibility. Our IEP teams districtwide do not necessarily have a thorough MSAA eligibility discussion at the annual IEP meeting. We have concluded that most consider the MSAA decision to be “one and done” and are not taking the initiative to determine eligibility on an annual basis using all three criteria. There needs to be more thorough, ample discussion around all three factors, not just IQ. Lastly, we have determined that special education teachers in grades Kindergarten to Grade 2 are not initiating assessment discussions that inform possible MSAA qualification upon a student entering Grade 3. Likewise, some students are entering Grade 3 without a reliable mode of communication when undertaking assessments. Students who are classified as nonverbal are being marked as exempt from assessments in grades K-2; therefore, they’re not adequately prepared to take any type of assessment beginning in Grade 3. Similarly, if a student’s IEP dictates that he/she will access general education assessments, special education teachers in Grade 3 are finding that a student may not necessarily have a reliable mode of communication for assessments.

Peach Springs Unified District (08-02-08-000)

During the fiscal year 2026, Peach Springs had approximately 90+ students participate in the state testing for ELA and Math and 30+ students participate in the Science test. Because of our school districts small population, it only takes a couple students with significant cognitive impairments to exceed the participation rate. Additionally, the re-opening of Music Mountain High School has provided an influx of new students, some with severe disabilities. The district respectfully

requests to set the goal percentage to 2%.

With regard to the Peach Springs community, it is rural, has limited resources, and like other communities has been impacted by drug and alcohol addiction. Much of the student population does not live with their biological parents and many students have been removed from their homes due to abuse and neglect. Family members, neighbors, and foster families are raising a large population of our students. The turnover rate for professionals in the education field is very high, citing elementary school leadership has changed hands nearly every year. The medical fields also have a high turnover rate and mental health services are split between Peach Springs and Kingman area specialists. This makes it challenging for families to receive consistent and adequate care that supports the development of students and families in need. Peach Springs Unified School District houses “Life Skills” classrooms that students with significant cognitive disabilities participate in if their IEP team has determined it to be an appropriate placement. This is one of the only programs in the community where students can receive the individualized instruction and therapies they need.

[Pensar Academy \(07-82-38-000\)](#)

Pensar Academy’s participation exceeding the 1 percent threshold is influenced by local programmatic and demographic factors. The LEA serves a higher proportion of students receiving Exceptional Student Services (ESS), resulting in a reduced margin relative to the 1 percent cap. Pensar Academy provides inclusive programming that supports a range of student needs, which contributes to a higher concentration of students requiring intensive supports. All assessment participation decisions were made by IEP teams in accordance with state and federal criteria.

[Peoria Unified School District \(07-02-11-000\)](#)

As our total enrollment in Peoria Unified decreases, our Special Education population is a stagnant number hovering around 5200 students over the last few years. This is what causes our Special Ed to Gen Ed percentage to appear to increase. 2023 – District Total: 37,040 students - 5281 Special ed services – 14.26%. 2024 – District Total: 34,989 students - 5192 Special ed services – 14.84% 2025 – District Total: 33,974 students - 5139 Special ed services – 15.13% With that slow shift in Special Ed percentage it may appear that more of our students are taking the alternative assessments however the amount has remained the same. One component that could be impacting our alternative assessment amounts is part of our district Strategic Initiatives to reduce the number of students

that are outplaced in Level D settings working to return them to in-district campuses. This could lend to an increase in our student population that qualifies for alternative assessment in the coming years as we continue to work on this initiative. Peoria Unified School District also provides educational services within a Level D School setting on one of our campuses – Sunflower School - which serves students who are medically fragile or have severe-profound disabilities. This school accepts students grades K-12. Our district also operates Level C specialized programs at 14 of our schools for students with mild-moderate cognitive and adaptive impairments, many whom meet the criteria for the alternative assessment. To reduce our Alternative Assessment participation below the 1% threshold, moving forward we plan to implement intentional professional development training for teachers and staff that work with students with disabilities that explicitly outlines the criteria for Alternative Assessment participation based on a student's current academic and cognitive data, modified instruction based on state standards, and the individualized needs of the student to make gains in their curriculum.

Phoenix Elementary District (07-04-01-000)

From SY 23-24 to 24-25 we had an increase of 16 students eligible for Alternate Assessment. We also had a decrease in students participating in the general education test activities. This is due to an increase of student enrollment for students with significant cognitive impairments and severe Autism. Due to the increase in enrollment, we added a specialized classroom in our program for students with cognitive disabilities and our program for students with Autism. Both of these programs have higher numbers of students that qualify for Alternate Assessment. In addition, our total student test taking population has decreased due to decreased general enrollment. In SY 23-24, we had 43 Alternate Assessment tests completed and 3, 244 general tests completed. In SY 24-25, we had a total of 59 Alternate Assessment tests completed and 3, 113 general tests completed. This is an increase by 37% of Alternate Assessment test takers and a decrease of 4% general test takers. Overall, our total special education population count increased in 2025 while our general education enrollment decreased reflecting the same patterns of our test takers.

Pinon Unified District (09-02-04-000)

Pinon Unified School District #4 is located in a remote/rural area of the Navajo

Reservation where the nearest school district is about an hour away with a local community school that consists of grade preschool to kindergarten. PUSD is the only school of choice that has grades preschool to 12th grade; therefore, enrolls a very high percentage of students with special needs. Hence the high percentage of students who take the alternative assessments.

[Prescott Valley Charter School \(07-85-16-000\)](#)

Prescott Valley Charter School is a small LEA with a relatively low tested population. Because of this, the presence of a small number of students who meet the eligibility criteria for alternate assessments can result in percentages that exceed the 1% threshold. In certain grade levels and content areas, the total number of students participating in statewide assessments may be relatively small. These circumstances are the result of enrollment patterns and cohort size rather than changes in participation practices. All participation decisions continue to be made through the IEP team process using the federally required eligibility criteria for alternate assessments.

[Quartzsite Elementary District \(15-04-04-000\)](#)

During fiscal year 2025, 91 students at Ehrenberg Elementary participated in the Mathematics assessment, 91 participated in the ELA assessment, and 27 participated in the Science assessment. In a school with a small student population, the presence of only a few students with significant cognitive impairments can substantially affect participation rates.

Ehrenberg, Arizona, is a small, sparsely populated suburban community in La Paz County within the Quartzsite School District. Ehrenberg Elementary serves students from the surrounding areas, including Parker and Lake Havasu City, and enrolls students who previously attended the closed Quartzsite campus on Quail Trail. This geographic dispersion makes it challenging for families to access consistent and adequate support services needed to foster the development of students with higher needs.

[Ray Unified District \(11-02-03-000\)](#)

The Ray Unified School District serves a total enrollment of 330 students. Because of our small overall enrollment, the 1% alternate assessment threshold represents only a small number of students districtwide. In a district of this size, the

enrollment of even one additional student with the most significant cognitive disabilities results in exceeding the 1% participation cap. Therefore, our percentage reflects the impact of a small denominator rather than a pattern of over-identification. In addition, our district has recently enrolled several students with significant cognitive disabilities whose educational needs require instruction aligned to alternate achievement standards. As a small district, individual enrollment changes have a proportionally larger impact on our data than they would in a larger LEA. Our local demographics also contribute to this fluctuation. As the only district serving this geographic area, we do not have neighboring public school options, which means resident students with significant cognitive disabilities enroll in and remain within our district programs. Because the total student population is small, natural variation in cohort composition from year to year can significantly affect participation percentages. There has not been a decrease in students participating in the general assessment; rather, the increase in alternate assessment participation reflects enrollment shifts within a small student population

Red Mesa Unified District (01-02-27-000)

The IEP team made a mistake when a student transferred into our District from an out-of-state District. The student did not qualify for an alternative assessment in the prior IEP, nor do they qualify currently for an alternative assessment. The ESS team misidentified a student's IEP from another state. Training will be provided to ensure this does not happen again.

Roosevelt Elementary District (07-04-66-000)

Between May 2024 and May 2025, the district experienced notable enrollment shifts that directly impacted the Alternate Assessment participation rate. General education enrollment decreased from 7,191 students to 7,049 students, reflecting a 1.976% decrease. During this same period, the district experienced a significant increase in special education students served in self-contained settings, with enrollment rising from 226 students to 301 students, representing a 33.186% increase. This substantial increase in students requiring highly specialized, self-contained programming—paired with a decrease in the overall general education population—resulted in a rise in the number and percentage of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Students in self-contained placements are more likely to meet eligibility criteria for Alternate Assessment participation based

on their individualized needs and access requirements. As a result, the district's Alternate Assessment participation rate exceeded the 1% threshold due to these enrollment changes rather than changes in identification practices or assessment decision-making procedures.

Roosevelt Elementary District (07-04-66-000)

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Rosefield Charter Elementary School, Inc. (07-85-08-000)

As a small K-5 public charter school in a mid-size suburban setting, with an overall enrollment (524 students), Imagine Rosefield accepts all students with disabilities when there are openings at a specified grade level. Imagine Rosefield resides in an affluent, large suburban neighborhood where families connect and share their experiences. Upon enrollment, parents are reporting that other local charters are referring them to Imagine Rosefield as not all surrounding charters accept all students with disabilities. Additionally, parents are also reporting that they choose to enroll with us after procedural or FAPE concerns arise when coming from surrounding, larger districts.

Round Valley Unified District (01-02-10-000)

Round Valley Unified School District exceeded the 1% participation threshold for

alternate assessments primarily due to the small overall enrollment of the district combined with the number of students requiring intensive special education supports. We are a small rural community with limited resources and students with significant support needs typically remain enrolled within the district rather than accessing programs in larger metropolitan areas. This results in a higher proportional representation of students receiving services aligned with alternate academic achievement standards when compared to the total tested student population. The district experiences enrollment fluctuations due to the small student population, which significantly affects participation percentages from year to year. When the total number of students participating in statewide assessments changes slightly, the percentage of students participating in alternate assessments may increase even when the actual number of participating students remains relatively stable.

Sacaton Elementary District (11-04-18-000)

Sacaton Elementary School District #18 serves a uniquely complex and highly mobile student population located on and adjacent to the Gila River Indian Community. Several interrelated structural and demographic factors significantly affect the district's alternate assessment participation rate.

Saddle Mountain Unified School District (07-02-90-000)

Our district continues to experience growth, resulting in the enrollment of approximately 75 new special education students. This trend reflects the rapid expansion of our community, which spans over 500 square miles and continues to undergo significant residential development. As new housing developments emerge, we are seeing consistent daily enrollments that contribute to increased participation across all assessments, including alternate assessments.

Although our district is classified as rural, it is located just 50 miles west of Phoenix. There are no specialized institutions, residential facilities, or magnet programs within the district or surrounding area that would typically draw a disproportionate number of students requiring alternate assessments. However, we are aware of anecdotal reports suggesting that families may be relocating to our district due to a favorable reputation in special education, possibly promoted through informal online platforms such as parent blogs, though these sources have not been officially verified.

The overall rise in student enrollment has contributed to a corresponding increase

in the number of students qualifying for alternate assessments based on significant cognitive disabilities. These factors, in combination, have resulted in our district exceeding the 1% threshold.

Safford Unified District (05-02-01-000)

22% of Safford USD students, Preschool-12th grade, are currently receiving Special Education services. As of October 1, 2025, there were 561 K-12 students in our district with an IEP. Of those 561 students, 66 (11.8%) are students who spend 60% or more of their day in a Special Education setting, receiving services from special education teachers, paraprofessionals, and related-service providers in order to meet their extensive needs and allow them the most success in school. Another 24 (4.2%) are students who spend 22-59% of their day receiving special education services and supports. This number continues to rise, and Safford USD staff are always making decisions that are driven by student need while placing students in their Least Restrictive Environment. This will continue to be the goal. Safford USD has an amazing Special Needs Preschool program and works closely with AZEIP coordinators and families to ensure that students are being identified early and receiving services as soon as possible. The number of special needs preschool students continues to rise, and the needs of the students continue to increase. The SUSD Special Needs Preschool is currently providing services to 20 students with eligibility of Preschool Severe Delay. If these students remain in the Safford School District, the potential for an increase of needs K-12 is possible. Finally, Safford USD is the largest town in our county, and we continue to attract the most students with high needs. We offer great programs and an inclusive environment to our students. Our numbers have steadily increased annually and the projection for the future is Safford USD will continue to increase with high need students.

San Simon Unified District (02-02-18-000)

Our school district is K-12th grades with a total enrollment of 86 students in a rural farming community. The community, as well as the school population, continues to gradually decline due to lack of jobs in the area.

Santa Cruz Valley Opportunities in Education, Inc. (12-87-26-000)

Montessori de Santa Cruz is a small rural LEA serving a limited student population.

Due to the size of the LEA, small fluctuations in enrollment and assessment participation can have a significant impact on reported Alternate Assessment participation percentages from year to year. b. The LEA serves students from multiple surrounding communities and provides an individualized educational environment that may attract families seeking specialized educational supports. As a result, the LEA may experience enrollment patterns that differ from larger districts. Additionally, changes in overall enrollment among students participating in general assessments can substantially affect participation rate calculations in a small LEA. c. As part of a root cause analysis, the LEA reviewed its Alternate Assessment participation practices, eligibility determination procedures, IEP team decision-making processes, and documentation requirements. The review did not identify evidence of systemic over-identification or inappropriate qualification practices. The LEA found that participation decisions were supported by existing evaluation data and documented eligibility criteria and were made through established IEP team processes. d. The LEA determined that its participation rate is primarily impacted by its small student population and enrollment variability rather than local eligibility determination practices. The LEA will continue to monitor participation rates, eligibility documentation, and IEP team decision-making processes to ensure ongoing compliance with state and federal requirements.

[Santa Cruz Valley Unified District \(12-02-35-000\)](#)

The district's special education population has grown in the number of student that are eligible which has increased the alternate assessment participation. Students that are in programs that are in a more restrictive (e.g. life-skills and/or self-contained) have automatically assigned to take the alternate assessment. IEP teams are not consistently reviewing student's evaluation data such as academics, IQ, or adaptive behavior to make assessment determinations.

[Science Technology Engineering and Math Arizona \(10-85-14-000\)](#)

Our district is a small charter school with only one school that serves students in kindergarten through eighth grade. Because our district is a small charter school, we have a smaller number of special education students. Therefore, the number of students that participate in the MSAA easily impacts the 1% threshold requirement. Additionally, students enrolling in our school have increasingly higher needs that qualify them for the MSAA. High needs student enrollment has increased due to agency referral after students working with the agency enrolled in our school a few

years ago.

[Sedona-Oak Creek JUSD #9 \(13-02-09-000\)](#)

SOCUSD did not have a strong continued training program prior to January 2025. Students were inaccurately identified as needing the Alternate Assessment which has contributed to this years inflated numbers. A three-day training was conducted over the summer in properly identifying students who required an alternate assessment. The team has done a lot of work to improve procedures and overall academic supports.

[Self Development Academy-Phoenix \(07-82-56-000\)](#)

We are a small district with one site. Due to our small numbers and special educational needs, having a small number of students participate in the alternative testing put us over the 1% threshold.

[Self Development Charter School \(07-87-96-000\)](#)

We are a small district with one site. Due to our small numbers and special educational needs, having a small number of students participate in the alternative testing put us over the 1% threshold.

[Seligman Unified District \(13-02-40-000\)](#)

During the fiscal year 2025, Seligman Unified District had approximately 80 students participate in state testing. When a school has a small population, it only takes a couple of students with significant cognitive impairments to exceed the participation rate. Seligman is a rural community with limited access to early childhood and professional care. The number of students with extreme cognitive and medical challenges being referred has increased over the last 6 years. Seligman's unemployment rate is larger than the state's average. Many families are impacted by economic challenges and do not have the means or the support to access the level of care their students need outside of the school environment.

[Show Low Unified District \(09-02-10-000\)](#)

The district is relatively small and has experienced an increase in student mobility,

including a growing number of students moving into district boundaries due to economic hardship and homelessness. A high percentage of these new enrollments arrive with existing special education eligibility, including some who qualify for alternate assessment. As students enroll, the Special Education Director carefully reviews all records, data, and IEPs provided by the sending district. When a student is identified as eligible for alternate assessment, the IEP team conducts a thorough review of the existing IEP along with any new data collected to ensure the eligibility determination remains accurate and appropriate. Additionally, the district's specialized programs have attracted out-of-district students through open enrollment. Some of these students also meet eligibility criteria for alternate assessment, contributing to an overall increase in the district's percentage. For all new students—whether through residency changes or open enrollment—the district ensures that eligibility for alternate assessment is carefully reviewed and validated prior to the required student identification timeline.

Skull Valley Elementary District (13-03-15-000)

During the Covid 19 outbreak a few years ago, most schools closed due to direction from the CDC, Arizona State, and the United States Government. Skull Valley did not close. As a result, students with special needs, students needing preschool, and students without parents home during the day brought their kids to Skull Valley School District. The epidemic changed the way Skull Valley School functions today. The demographic changed from 15 students to 45-50 students in a couple years. Special Education numbers changed from 20% to almost 45%. Participation went up as a result of these external and internal factors.

Skyline Gila River Schools, LLC (07-85-66-000)

Skyline Gila River is a small, grades 6–12 campus serving a predominantly Native American student population, with approximately 98% of students residing within the Gila River Indian Community. The LEA exceeded the 1% alternate assessment participation threshold due to enrollment patterns and structural factors, rather than changes in assessment eligibility practices or local decision-making. The school's feeder pattern is unique. All primary feeder schools are located on the Gila River Indian Reservation, and only one operates as a public school district subject to full state and federal special education compliance requirements. As a result, students enrolling in Skyline Gila River frequently arrive with limited or non-standardized special education documentation. Upon enrollment, the LEA must

conduct comprehensive reviews, reevaluations, and revisions to ensure compliance with IDEA and Arizona Department of Education requirements. This process reflects the LEA's responsibility to align existing eligibility determinations with federal standards and does not result in an increase in identification for alternate assessment.

The LEA also serves students who historically enter Skyline Gila River with significant variability in prior instructional access before enrollment. Many students enroll performing well below grade-level expectations, a pattern that predates recent years and reflects longstanding differences in educational access and instructional continuity across feeder systems. This variability impacts instructional planning, service delivery models, and placement considerations within the LEA. These factors influence how the LEA structures supports and programs but do not determine eligibility for alternate assessments. Consistent with ESSA requirements, academic performance alone is not used to determine participation in the MSAA.

Additionally, Skyline Gila River functions as a consistent provider of specialized instructional programs for students with significant support needs within the community. Families often enroll students who have previously received intensive services, contributing to a higher concentration of students who meet the federally established criteria for alternate academic achievement standards. These enrollment trends, rather than changes in local assessment practices, account for the LEA exceeding the 1% participation threshold.

The LEA ensures that all decisions regarding participation in the MSAA are made by IEP teams using federally required criteria aligned with ESSA and IDEA and are reviewed annually. The LEA continues to monitor assessment participation, provide professional development to staff, and ensure that all students are afforded access to the general education curriculum and the most appropriate statewide assessment.

[Sonoita Elementary District \(12-04-25-000\)](#)

Sonoita Elementary School District #25 is a single-site district with less than 120 students in grades K-8 and less than 90 students in grades that participate in state testing. Due to our small enrollment, the district exceeds the 1% cap for the Alternate Assessment even though the number of students taking MSAA is very small. Our MSAA participation is not increasing; the same students have taken the MSAA since they were in third grade. We have reevaluated the students to ensure the MSAA is an appropriate assessment based on their cognitive ability.

St Johns Unified District (01-02-01-000)

St. Johns Unified School District is unique because it carries an “A” rating; outlying property is very affordable; and receiving government assistance is known to be easiest in our Apache county. As a result of these factors, we have a significant amount of people moving to our district parameters that are low income and come with children with cognitive disabilities. Our school is also known for having an effective autism program. As a result of our reputation, we have had a significant amount of families move into our school district parameters with children with significant autism. Our challenge for meeting the goal percentage is that we are an effective school district with a high number of individuals with significant cognitive delays.

Stanfield Elementary District (11-04-24-000)

Upon examining all profile data for students enrolled with Stanfield Elementary School District that participated in the Alternate Assessment, they all met the cognitive/adaptive criteria, received a modified curriculum, and intensive special education services. As a result, the students' skill levels were significantly discrepant from the grade-level standards for each student rendering participation in the general assessment inappropriate. The Stanfield Elementary School District is a small, rural farming/dairy community that is required to serve the population that enrolls within our system and makes every effort to meet their educational needs. There are also no other school options for parents (private or charter schools) in our school district boundaries. We also have one highneeds therapeutic foster home that takes in children that have significant disabilities via DCS that are eligible for the alternate assessment due to their cognitive and adaptive scores which adds to our population that wouldn't naturally be within our school boundaries. Each year, our percentage is dependent on the student enrollment for those that qualify for the Alternate Assessment. We are not able to reject students that enroll in our district in order to keep our alternate testing population at 1%. Our district continues to see a significant decline in general student enrollment but a significant increase in students enrolling with severe disabilities. We are at our lowest enrollment numbers that the district has seen; however, our special education numbers have continued to grow which increases our percentage identified with special education needs.

Tolleson Elementary District (07-04-17-000)

The Tolleson Elementary School District serves a population that spans from preschool -8th grade. The District is a Title One District with approximately 86% of our families qualifying under these criteria. The Special Programs Department has done extensive training on the criteria to qualify for the alternate assessment. IEP teams are diligent to analyze the criteria at every IEP meeting to ensure the student qualifies. Even with this training and ongoing monitoring, the District remains slightly about the 1% cap. We attribute this to an increase of children enrolling in our district with moderate to severe disabilities and who meet the criteria for the alternate assessment.

Tolleson Union High School District (07-05-14-000)

After reviewing our list of eligible students, we determined we appropriately tested all students and have evidence that supports that each student meets the eligibility criteria. We continue to experience an increase in student mobility in and out of our district and our programming for students with disabilities. Additionally, we are continuing to experience an increase in high needs group homes in our district boundaries and students entering through the BID process in foster care. We are experiencing an increase in students with significant needs/disabilities which has resulted in an increase in our students attending private placement schools. We have also seen an increase in students moving into our district with medically complex issues and significant cognitive disabilities which has prompted the need to open an additional classroom for students with these needs. Our district also allows for open enrollment at all of our schools which leads to greater variability with students transferring into the district. Being a union high school district, our students take the alternate assessment just one time in 11th grade. The size of the cohort can vary from year to year which results in slight variations of the percentage tested on the alternate assessment. Lastly, as a high school district, students with significant cognitive disabilities have been identified prior to entering high school. We are not overidentifying students but simply serving the students that feed into our schools.

Toltec School District (11-04-22-000)

The primary reason for the increased participation rate in the alternative assessment is this school year, we've seen an overall decrease in our total student

enrollment; however, the number of students receiving special education services has increased. Another significant factor is the specialized program in our district offers. Our Autism Program is a resource that some surrounding districts do not provide. Because of this, families are choosing to enroll their children in our district so they can access the level of support their child needs.

Topock Elementary District (08-04-12-000)

As a small, geographically isolated rural district, we serve as the primary educational provider for students with significant cognitive disabilities within a wide surrounding area. Families often choose to remain in the district because of established relationships, continuity of services, and limited alternative placement options. Additionally, due to the absence of nearby specialized programs or private placement facilities, the district operates self-contained and resource-based programs designed to meet the needs of students with intensive disabilities. Limited access to early intervention services, healthcare resources, and specialized medical providers in rural communities may also contribute to higher identification rates of students with significant support needs.

During the review period, the district experienced minor fluctuations in enrollment. While overall enrollment declined slightly, the number of students eligible for alternate assessment remained stable or increased. This proportional shift resulted in the district exceeding the 1% threshold.

Tuba City Unified School District #15 (03-02-15-000)

Tuba City Unified School District #15 is one of the larger school districts in Coconino County and provides a broad range of special education programs and services for students with diverse disabilities and educational needs. Located in a remote rural area of the Navajo Nation, the nearest neighboring school district is approximately an hour away in all directions. As the primary district of choice in the region serving students from preschool through 12th grade, TCUSD #15 enrolls a high percentage of students with significant special education needs. As a result, the district also has a higher percentage of students participating in alternate assessments.

One factor contributing to the district exceeding the 1% threshold is the number of students with significant disabilities supported by documented medical diagnoses

from pediatric specialists, which often result in reevaluations and redeterminations of eligibility. All students currently participating in alternate assessments meet the criteria for significant cognitive disabilities. Due to the severity and complexity of these disabilities, reducing the district's alternate assessment participation rate remains challenging.

An additional contributing factor has been the absence of an ESS Supervisor over the past three years, which resulted in inconsistencies in professional development related to alternate assessment eligibility criteria and the 1% threshold requirements. Consequently, many case managers and special education teachers did not receive consistent training regarding appropriate eligibility determination and participation guidelines for alternate assessments.

Union Elementary District (07-04-62-000)

Union Elementary School District slightly exceeded the 1% alternate assessment threshold due to a combination of student needs, program design, and enrollment shifts. The district serves a high-poverty Title I population with increased rates of developmental delays and students requiring intensive supports. In recent years, UESD expanded in-district programs for students with significant cognitive disabilities, resulting in more students with the most intensive needs being served within the district rather than in out-of-district placements. Additionally, normal enrollment fluctuations among students participating in general assessments impacted the overall percentage.

All alternate assessment participation decisions are made by IEP teams using state guidance and multiple data sources. The district reviews participation data annually, provides staff training on appropriate eligibility criteria, and will continue monitoring to ensure decisions remain aligned with state expectations. The slight exceedance reflects appropriate identification of students with significant disabilities rather than over-identification.

Vail Unified District (10-02-20-000)

Vail Unified School District continues to grow as a district and community. As we have experienced physical growth, our reputation continues to expand outside of our boundaries. Known for our inclusive practices, we often field calls from families outside of Arizona that have researched school districts, and Vail is often one of the recommended within Arizona. The growth of Vail has increased the number of

families with students with disabilities we serve, with our number of students growing exponentially. In June of 2019, our total number of students who received special education was 1686. In June of 2021, our total number of students who received special education services was 1723. In June of 2022, our total number of students was 1859, and by our fall 2023 census, our total number of students was 1920. As of July 2025, our total number of students was 2403. The population growth in our community and the advertisement of our inclusive practices have led to an increase in the number of students we serve with special education needs, which additionally contributes to our growing number of students participating in the alternate assessment. Following the action plan submitted in 2025, we have maintained our percentage of students participating in MSAA Math and decreased the percentage of students participating in MSAA Science from the 2023-2024 school year to the 2024-2025 school year.

[Valentine Elementary District \(08-03-22-000\)](#)

We are a small, one school district serving a very rural area. The only way we will be able to not be flagged again is if we have no students taking the alternative assessment now or at any time in the future. The testing pool of students for grades 3 through 8 will never be larger than 90 students based on the building occupancy limitation of a 114 student capacity per the School Facilities Board determination.

[Vernon Elementary District \(01-03-09-000\)](#)

As a small, rural school district with an enrollment of 117 students, even a small increase in the number of students with significant cognitive disabilities significantly affects our percentage of students taking the Alternate Assessment. We have experienced recent growth in our student population, including an influx of students with complex needs such as Autism and severe speech impairments. Many of our families face geographical barriers to early intervention and medical services. Therefore, our IEP team is often the first to identify and provide intensive support for these students upon school entry. We work hard to ensure that eligibility and assessment determinations are made with the utmost accuracy and care.

[West Gilbert Charter Elementary School, Inc. \(07-89-35-000\)](#)

As a very small K-8 public charter school in a fringe rural community, with a low

overall enrollment (378 students). Imagine West Gilbert Elementary, Inc. accepts all students with disabilities when there are openings at a specified grade level. The demographics of this neighborhood include farming families and communities including a diverse enrollment of students with disabilities. 74.1% of the overall enrollment include minority students, and 55% are economically disadvantaged. Additionally, school choice gives families the opportunity to enroll in schools outside of the district home school, but still close to home. Imagine West Gilbert Elementary, Inc. competes with a neighboring district that covers 1200 square miles in Arizona and is one of the largest employers in Buckeye. Many families report they prefer smaller student to teacher ratios for their child, have been unhappy in their home school district, and choose to enroll with us, especially families with students who have more significant needs when transitioning from a developmental preschool to kindergarten.

[West Gilbert Charter Middle School, Inc. \(07-89-74-000\)](#)

As a very small online, K-8 public charter school, with a low overall enrollment (81 students), Imagine West Gilbert Middle School, Inc. accepts all students with disabilities when there are openings at a specified grade level. 79% of the overall enrollment include minorities. Additionally, school choice gives families the opportunity to enroll in schools outside of the district home school in an online platform where parents can support their children with more significant disabilities in the home environment while receiving a FAPE online. Families report they prefer smaller student to teacher ratios for their child, have been unhappy in their home school district, and choose to enroll with us.

[Western School of Science and Technology, Inc. \(07-82-21-000\)](#)

Western School of Science and Technology exceeded the 1% cap for alternative state testing participation, with a final percentage of 1.2% for FY 2024. The school had a higher percentage of students enrolled in programs that provide an alternative curriculum, contributing to this increase. The exceeding of the 1% cap occurred as the school experienced growth in the number of students with more significant disabilities enrolling.

As a public charter school located within a metropolitan area, Western School of Science and Technology has experienced fluctuations in overall enrollment. including a reduction in the number of nondisabled peers. This shift in enrollment has had a greater proportional impact on the special education population and

continues to influence both the school's overall special education percentage and its 1% cap.

Additionally, staff turnover and ongoing staffing needs have resulted in new teachers serving in special education classrooms, as well as across the broader educational system. These transitions require increased professional development, particularly for staff responsible for developing and implementing IEPs.

Western School of Science and Technology will continue to monitor its processes, procedures, and understanding of alternative assessment eligibility. The school will also continue to review data regularly and identify training and professional development needs to strengthen practices and ensure appropriate participation decisions.

[Willcox Unified District \(02-02-13-000\)](#)

The goal is a reduction in the number of students participating in alternate assessments by at least 1/3 (decrease from 18 students to less than 12). Based on our student population we believe this goal is attainable for us. As a small, rural district, a relatively small number of students has a large impact on our percentages. Considering the size of our district, we have a larger than 1% representation of students with significant cognitive disabilities who function at a level more than three standard deviations below the mean, without even considering alternate assessments for students functioning between two and three standard deviations below the mean. We are the main high school for two K-8 districts, and one of the main high schools for a third K-8 district. Since several districts around us have 100 students or less, we are able to provide a wider range of special education services and supports. These factors impact the number of special education students we serve, especially at the high school level.

[Williams Unified District \(03-02-02-000\)](#)

All of the students who took part in the alternative assessment had either an Intellectual Disability, or Autism with a significant need documented in IQ and Adaptive Behavior evaluations or Autism rating scales. We have more students than one would expect enrolled within our district that have significant disabilities. This is in part because of the rural nature of the district. Parents have reported that they choose to live in a rural community, oftentimes on a larger plot of land. When they researched schools in the area they chose Williams because they heard positive information about Special Education Programs in the Williams Unified

School District. With our larger population of students that have Intellectual Disabilities, or Autism that significantly impacts students' academic progress we see an impact on our Alternative Assessment participation rate due to significant student needs.

Window Rock Unified District (01-02-08-000)

WRUSD alternative assessment participation rate is over 1% due to lack of understanding by our ESS team. Each IEP team within WRUSD reviewed the state and district assessment page in e-IEPPRO, but the team did not fully consider the student work samples, IEP data, and standardized scores when completing the alternative assessment paperwork.

Winslow Unified District (09-02-01-000)

WUSD currently exceeds the 1% threshold for participation in the Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA) primarily due to our role as a regional hub for specialized programming. We serve a disproportionately high percentage of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, many of whom have been placed in our district specifically to access our intensive life-skills and medically fragile support programs.

Our current data indicates a high density of students presenting with extremely low adaptive behavior scores and significant deficits across multiple domains, including communication, self-care, and social-emotional regulation. These students require extensive, direct, and individualized instruction and support that is not of a temporary or transient nature.

We have conducted a thorough internal audit of the IEPs for all students identified for MSAA. This review confirmed that:

Evidence-Based Selection: Every student meets the state-defined criteria for 'significant cognitive disability' as evidenced by both cognitive and adaptive testing.

Exclusionary Factors: Participation is not based on excessive absences, English Language Learner (ELL) status, or a specific disability category (e.g., Autism) alone.

Informed Consent: IEP teams have engaged in documented discussions with parents regarding the implications of the alternate assessment on the student's path toward a standard diploma.

While our numbers exceed the threshold, we remain committed to a rigorous 'Learner-First' identification process to ensure that only those students for whom the general assessment is not appropriate—even with accommodations—are

placed on the MSAA.

Yarnell Elementary District (13-03-52-000)

This includes information on LOCAL DEMOGRAPHICS. The ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS is also explained

DEMOGRAPHICS: Yarnell, AZ is a small town located in Yavapai County, AZ.

Yarnell has a population of approximately 548 people (as per:

<https://www.arizona-demographics.com/yarnell-demographics> . Yarnell SD is a very small rural school districts w/ one public school (Model Creek School) established within its district boundaries. Median age of residents is 69.5 years and average income approximately 42,057/year. The Yarnell School District serves its student population of PS-Grade 8. Each teacher typically teaches dual grade levels in one classroom. So, this means PS/K, 1st/2nd, 3/4, 5/6 and 7/8 etc.... (each pair of grades) is taught by ONE teacher in one classroom.

ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS: Any student that enrolls in Yarnell School District is not turned away. As with any public school, large or small, Yarnell SD provides FAPE to all children who qualify for special education regardless of disability and/or needs. In addition, Yarnell general population fluctuates and student numbers vary each year. The IEP team for any sped. qualified student with a disability considers all pertinent criteria in making determinations about the student's eligibility for Alternate Assessment including required components:

- * Results of Individual Cognitive Ability Tests
- * Results of Adaptive Behavior Skills Assessment
- * Results of individual and group administered achievement tests
- * Results of informal assessments
- * Results of district-wide alternate assessments
- * Results of language assessments (EL)
- * Examples of curriculum
- * IEP goal progress
- * Extensive direct specially designed individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in the grade appropriate curriculum
- * Examples of curriculum and instructional objectives/work samples
- * Teacher collected data and documentation
- * PLAAFP

Yuma Elementary District (14-04-01-000)

Yuma Elementary District Yuma Elementary School District (YESD) has exceeded the 1% threshold of students participating in the alternative assessment. For the upcoming school year, we have set a goal to reduce this participation rate to 1.75%. As of March of last school year, YESD had 1,722 students receiving special education services. Of these students, 26% receive a high level of support (Level B, C, or D) as determined by their IEP teams. These students qualified for special education services and demonstrated low cognitive, academic, communication, and adaptive functioning during evaluations. YESD has also observed a trend of increasing enrollment in private schools since the implementation of new ESA (Empowerment Scholarship Account) rules. While YESD's overall student enrollment has plateaued, the number of students with disabilities within the district continues to rise. This is largely due to private schools within our boundaries—serving approximately 2,000 students—being unable to provide the same level of specialized services and support. Of those 2,000 private school students, only 35 have identified disabilities. This stark contrast significantly impacts YESD's alternative assessment percentages, as public schools like YESD continue to serve the vast majority of students with the most intensive needs. YESD remains committed to accepting and supporting all students, regardless of their abilities. Our district offers specialized programs, trained therapists, and robust support systems designed to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities—services often not available in private settings.

Yuma Union High School District (14-05-70-000)

YUHSD considered migrant population, foster care and McKinney-Vento. Additionally, there are no changes in enrollment, community or programs or unique circumstances to report.

YUHSD finds there are more incoming freshmen eligible for the alternate assessments. Our school teams have been reviewing incoming freshman evaluations and IEP's and are finding some students do not meet the criteria for participation in the alternate assessment. The teams concludes elementary schools are finding more students eligible for participation in the alternate assessment.