

**Kentucky Alternate Assessment:  
Local District Justifications for Alternate Assessment  
Participation**

**2017-2018 School Year Assessment Data  
2018-2019 Reporting Year**



**Office of Special Education and Early Learning  
(OSEEL) July 15, 2019**

## Overview

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires Kentucky to ensure that the total number of students assessed in each subject using the Kentucky alternate assessment does not exceed 1.0 percent of the total number of all students participating in the statewide assessment – the Kentucky Performance Rating for Educational Progress (K-PREP). States that anticipate exceeding 1.0 percent participation in the alternate assessment must submit a waiver request to the U.S. Department of Education (ED) 90 days before the beginning of the alternate assessment testing window. Kentucky has requested and received a waiver from the U.S. Department of Education regarding the 1.0 percent cap on participation in the alternate assessments aligned with alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS).

Kentucky’s AA-AAAS participation rates for each subject area for the 2017-2018 school year are listed in *Table 1* below.

**Table 1: 2017-2018 Alternate Assessment Participation by Subject**

SUBJECT 2017-2018	NUMBER PARTICIPATING IN ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT	NUMBER PARTICIPATING IN STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT	PERCENT PARTICIPATING IN ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT
Reading (elementary/middle)	3,579	308,172	1.16 %
Math (elementary /middle)	3,579	308,172	1.16 %
Writing (elementary, middle, high)	1,915	150,284	1.27 %
Social Studies (elementary /middle)	1,262	102,975	1.23 %
Science (elementary /middle)	1,112	102,608	1.08 %
Reading (high)	634	48,005	1.32 %
Math (high)	611	47,972	1.27 %
Science (high)	653	48,033	1.36 %
Social Studies (high)*	N/A	N/A	N/A

\* U.S. History and Social Studies were not assessed in high school for the 2017-2018 school year as the social studies standards were under revision and no high school field test was available.

ESSA also requires each district or community school to submit an annual justification if the district anticipates alternate assessment participation rates will be greater than 1.0 percent in one or more subject areas.

The 2017-2018 assessment data was used to identify any district with an alternate assessment participation rate greater than 1.0 percent in one or more subject areas. KDE's Division of IDEA Monitoring and Results (DIMR) identified 144 districts and requested written assurances that all Individual Education Program (IEP) Teams, known in Kentucky as an Admissions and Release Committee (ARC), are following the [Kentucky Alternate Assessment Participation Guidelines Documentation Form 2018](#) when making assessment participation decisions. The KDE also required identified districts to submit information justifying the need to exceed the 1.0 percent threshold.

The following data includes justification responses for the 144 districts identified from the 2017-2018 assessment data as exceeding the 1.0 percent participation rate. A list of districts exceeding 1.0 percent participation in the alternate assessment is in [Appendix A](#).

Questions about the 1.0 percent justification responses, should be directed to the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) by phone at 502-564-4970 or by emailing the [KDE Alternate Assessment Inbox](#). Individual district justification responses may be available upon request.

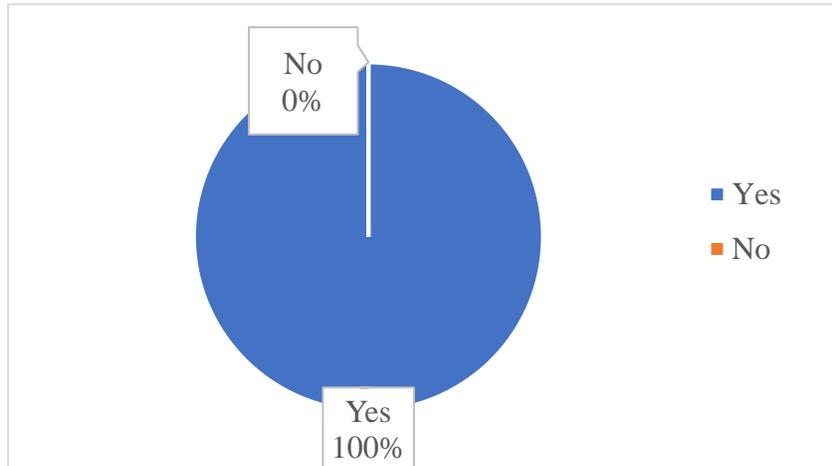
Additional information on the ESSA requirements for a state waiver request can be found in the [“Requirements for the Cap on the Percentage of Students who may be Assessed with an Alternate Assessment Aligned with Alternate Academic Achievement Standards \(AA-AAAS\)”](#), dated May 16, 2017, and provided by the U. S. Department of Education.

## Questions and Responses

The KDE formed an Alternate Assessment and Diploma Advisory Group (AADAG) to assist the KDE with developing a statewide process for ensuring appropriate oversight of districts and how the state will respond to district exceeding the 1.0 percent cap. The advisory group consists of renowned experts in the field of low incidence disabilities from the Human Development Institute at the University of Kentucky, consultants who specialize in low incidence disabilities from the state's special education divisions of the regional educational cooperatives, and special education directors from local education agencies. KDE staff from the Office of Special Education and Early Learning and the Office of Assessment and Accountability participate in advisory group meetings. An external facilitator leads the meetings. As part of the process, the KDE and the AADAG have revised the justification form to include additional questions based on feedback from districts and stakeholder input.

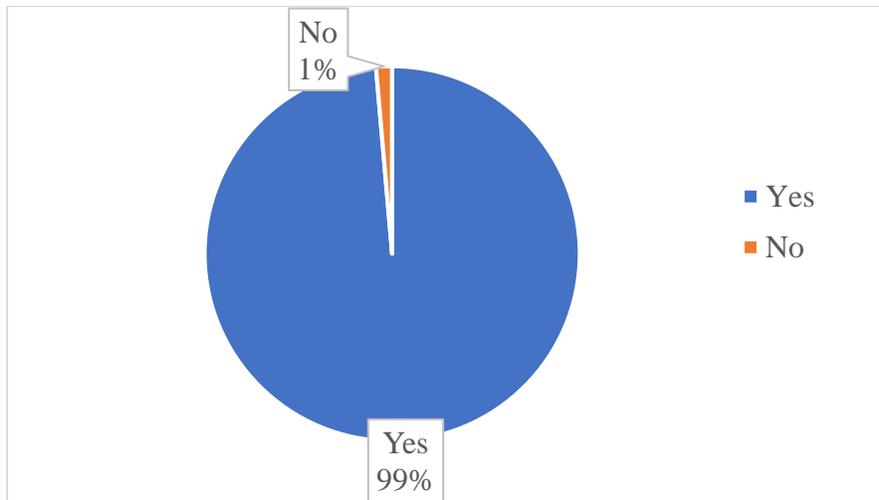
The justification form included nine questions for districts to answer. Each question was developed to inform the KDE of current district processes around alternate assessment participation and to provide an opportunity for districts to identify any factors contributing to the district exceeding 1.0 percent participation.

**Question 1:** Did all ARCs use the alternate assessment participation guidelines to make assessment participation decisions, as required by 707 KAR 1:320, Section 5 (11)?



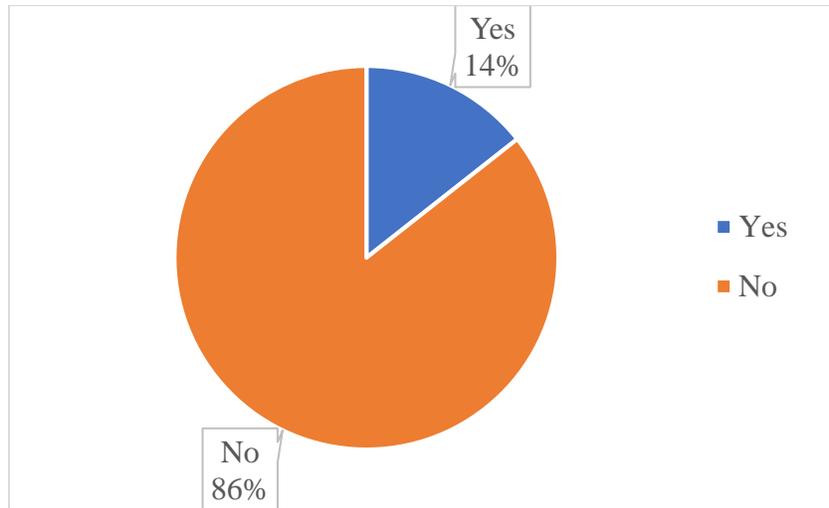
Of the 144 responses received, all 144 districts indicated they use the alternate assessment participation guidelines to make assessment decisions. Students must meet all eligibility criteria on the participation guidelines in order to participate in the alternate assessment.

**Question 2:** Is the district confident in the application of the new alternate assessment participation guidelines to make participation decisions according to 707 KAR 1:320, Section 5 (11)?



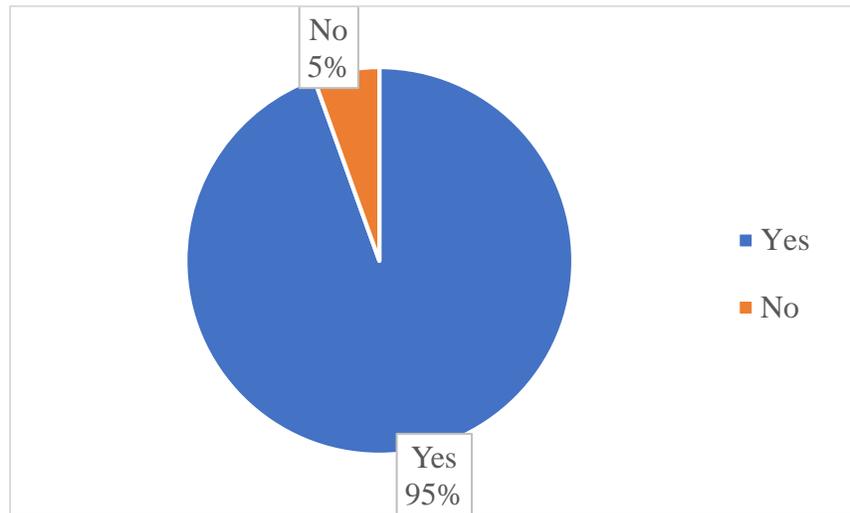
Of the 144 responses received, 1 district indicated it did not feel confident in the application of the new alternate assessment participation guidelines. The KDE will reach out to the district to determine additional training and support needs to improve use of the participation guidelines.

**Question 3:** Are there specific participation criteria, areas of the eligibility guidelines, or components of the Guidance for ARCs on Participation Decisions for Kentucky Alternate Assessment that require additional information and training for district staff?



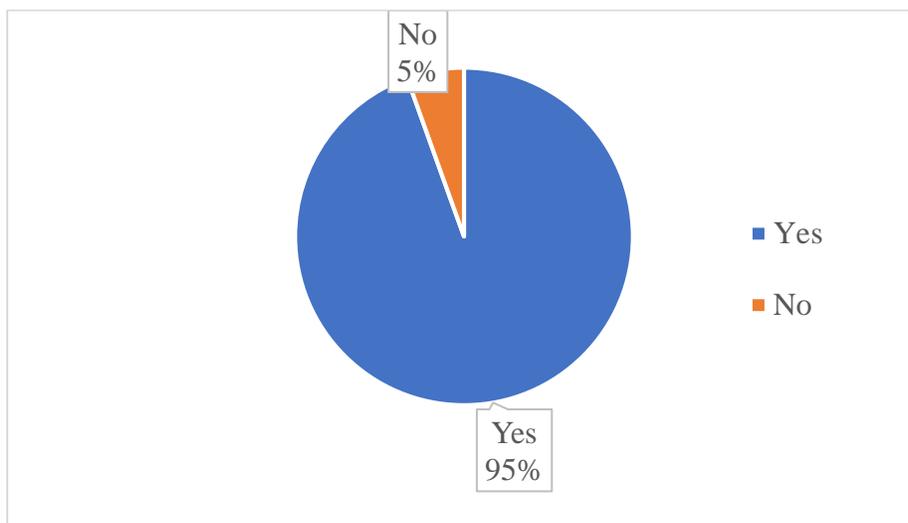
Of the 144 responses received, 19 districts indicated a need for additional information and training specific to each participation criteria indicated on the *Kentucky Alternate Assessment Participation Guidelines* form. The KDE will reach out to the district to determine additional training and support needs to improve use of the participation guidelines. The KDE will collaborate with the AADAG to update and create additional training modules and guidance based on the feedback.

**Question 4:** Does the district have documented evidence that all ARC Chairpersons in the district have completed the *Participation Guidelines Online Training Modules*?



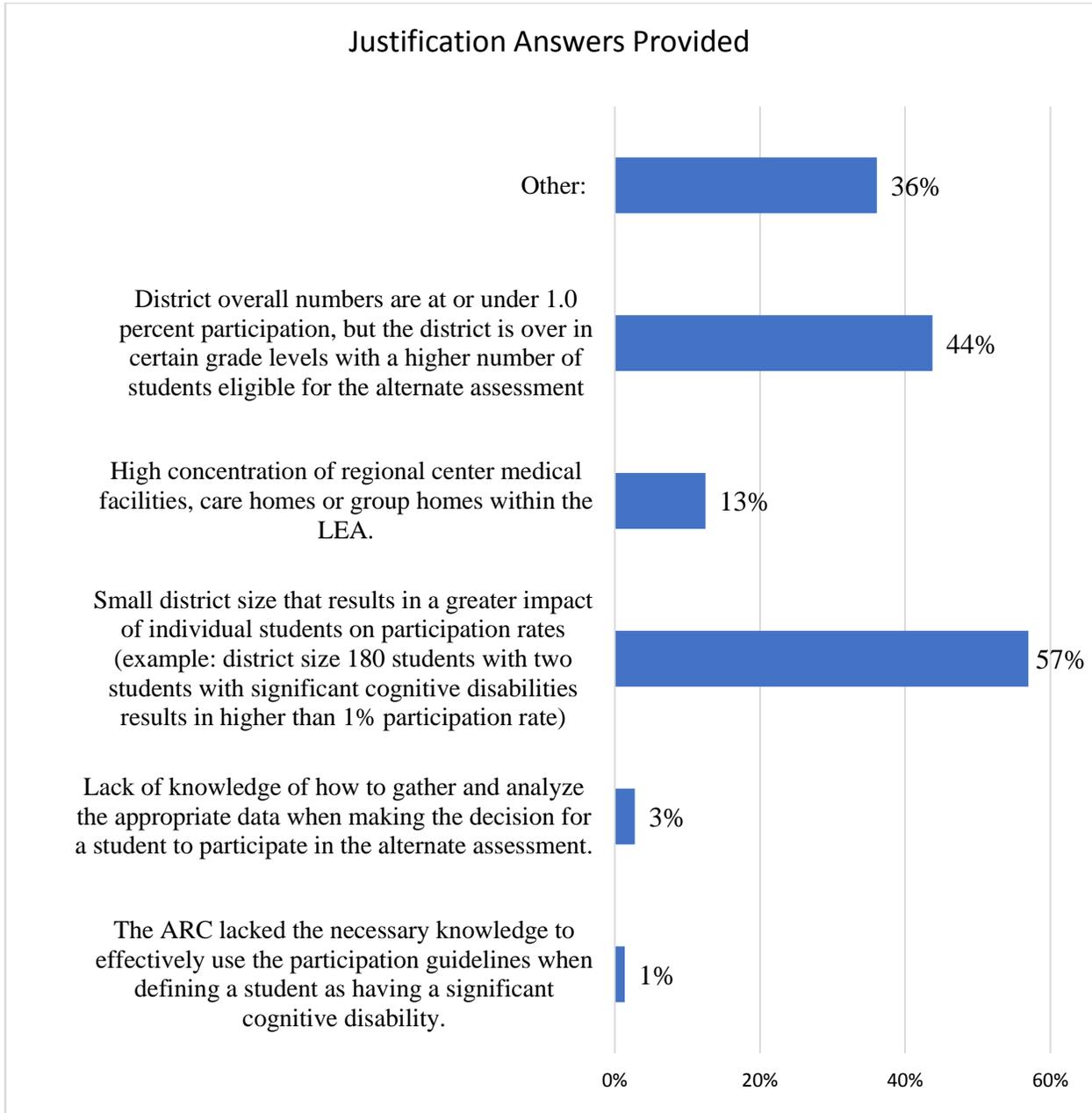
Of the 144 responses received, seven districts reported they do not have documented evidence that all ARC Chairpersons in the district have completed the required modules. The KDE will reach out to the 7 districts to train them on how to document and track completion of the modules using the Learning Management System and completion certificates.

**Question 5:** Has the district verified all ARC chairpersons have completed the required modules?



Of the 144 responses received, eight districts reported they have not verified all ARC chairpersons have completed the required modules. Three districts indicated they are in the process of collecting documentation to verify module completion. Five districts did not include an explanation for why they are unable to verify completion of the modules. The KDE will reach out to the eight districts to train them on how to document and track completion of the modules using the Learning Management System and completion certificates.

**Question 6:** Please identify any factors justifying your district exceeding 1 percent of your student population, who are students with significant cognitive disabilities, participating in the Kentucky Alternate Assessment (select at least one and all that apply). Districts were provided five pre-determined factors and the opportunity to write in any other factors not listed.



<b>Justification Answers Provided</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>
The ARC lacked the necessary knowledge to effectively use the participation guidelines when defining a student as having a significant cognitive disability.	1%	2
Lack of knowledge of how to gather and analyze the appropriate data when making the decision for a student to participate in the alternate assessment.	3%	4
Small district size that results in a greater impact of individual students on participation rates (example: district size 180 students with two students with significant cognitive disabilities results in higher than 1 percent participation rate)	57%	82
High concentration of regional center medical facilities, care homes or group homes within the LEA.	13%	18
District overall numbers are at or under 1.0 percent participation, but the district is over in certain grade levels with a higher number of students eligible for the alternate assessment.	44%	63
Other (please specify)	36%	52

\*Other justifications that were provided by districts are listed below.

Of the 144 districts responses received, 52 districts provided other reasons, beyond those provided, for exceeding 1.0 percent participation. The KDE data analysis found four common themes within the other responses provided; which include: enrollment, eligibility, a need for training and socio-economic issues.

<b>Other (please specify) Justification Answers Provided - Common Themes</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents</b>
Enrollment	26	17.81%
Eligibility	16	10.96%
Need for Training	10	6.85%
Socio-Economic	7	4.79%

### **Enrollment**

- Decrease in overall student enrollment in the district over the last few years.
- Non-resident students are open enrolled into the district.
- High population of students who have been enrolled in multiple schools per school year.
- Higher enrollment of students with moderate to severe disabilities population because more specialized programs and resources are available in the district.
- 1 percent cap calculation based on each subject area as opposed to an overall population participation affected the numbers.

## Eligibility

- High number of eligible students with significant cognitive disabilities (due to appropriate eligibility and due to small population size).
- Calculation formula discrepancy (Child Find data discrepancy).

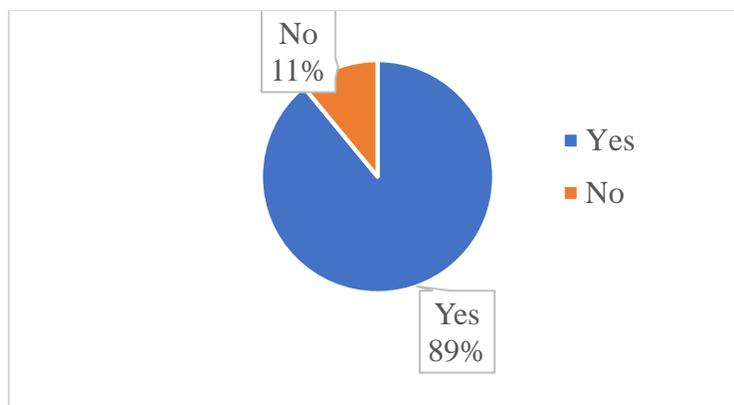
## Need for Training

- District is completing record reviews and other trainings to improve eligibility determination process and practice.

## Socio-Economic

- Socio-economic issues i.e. low poverty levels in district, high levels of substance abuse leading to increase in children born with significant disabilities.

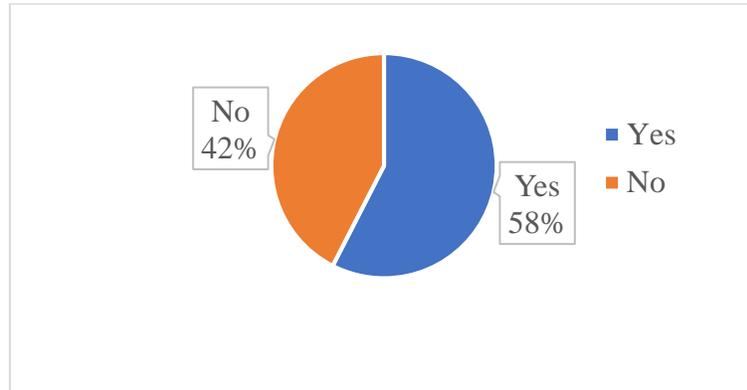
**Question 7:** Does the district have a process in place to monitor alternate assessment participation? If yes, please explain the process.



Of the 144 district responses, 11 districts indicated they do not have a process in place to monitor alternate assessment participation. Four districts indicated future plans to develop a systematic process in monitoring participation and eligibility decision making. Two districts indicated due to their small population size, the Director of Special Education and school psychologist are able to monitor all alternate assessment participation decisions being made. Five districts selected no, with no explanation, indicating they do not have a process in place. One district explained a process they have in place to monitor participation through folder audits.

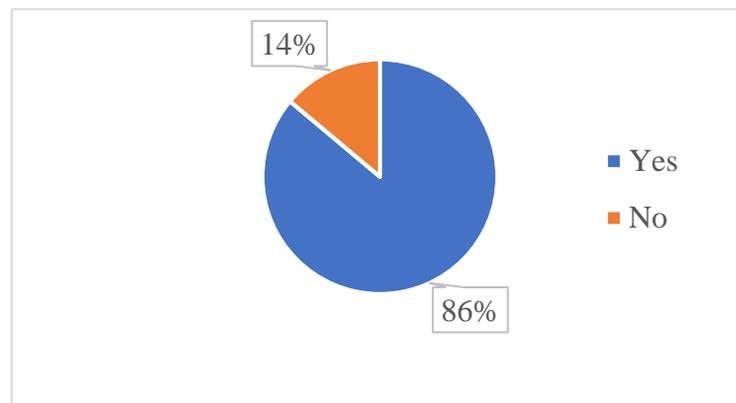
The KDE strongly recommends districts establish a process to review and monitor the identification of students taking the alternate assessment. The KDE has recommended a list of some steps a district can take to develop a process to monitor the identification of students for the alternate assessment. Those recommendations are included in the [Participation Guidelines for the Kentucky Alternate Assessment Review Document](#).

**Question 8:** Does the district have a process in place to identify and address disproportionality in alternate assessment participation? If yes, please explain your process.



Of the 144 district responses, 83 districts indicated they do have a process in place to identify and address disproportionality and 61 districts indicated they do not have a process in place. The KDE will review responses to determine specific training support around addressing disproportionality in alternate assessment participation.

**Question 9:** Has the district reviewed and analyzed data on students eligible for alternate assessment based on disability? If yes, provide an analysis of these data. If no, please explain why data has not been reviewed or analyzed.



Of the 144 district responses, 19 districts indicated they have not reviewed or analyzed the data. Two districts described a process they have in place. Two districts are in the process of developing a district level process for reviewing and analyzing data. Five districts currently have a process in place to review and analyze data at the school-level. Due to the small population size, three districts explained they are able to review participation of every student individually. Six districts did not provide an explanation.

## Appendix A

Alternate Assessment Participation – Districts assessing more than 1.0 percent of its assessed students in any subject with an alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS).

Districts	Districts Exceeding 1.0 percent Participation in at least one subject for SY 2016-17	Districts Exceeding 1.0 percent Participation in at least one subject for SY 2017-2018	Districts Exceeding 1.0 percent Participation in at least one subject for SY 2018-19 <sup>1</sup>
<b>State Target</b>	1.0%	1.0%	N/A
Adair County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Allen County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Anchorage Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Anderson County	Yes	No	N/A
Ashland Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Augusta Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Ballard County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Barbourville Independent	Yes	No	N/A
Bardstown Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Barren County	Yes	No	N/A
Bath County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Beechwood Independent	Yes	No	N/A
Bell County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Bellevue Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Berea Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Boone County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Bourbon County	Yes	Yes	N/A

<sup>1</sup> District-level school year 2018-2019 assessment data will be available November 2019.

Districts	Districts Exceeding 1.0 percent Participation in at least one subject for SY 2016-17	Districts Exceeding 1.0 percent Participation in at least one subject for SY 2017-2018	Districts Exceeding 1.0 percent Participation in at least one subject for SY 2018-19 <sup>1</sup>
Bowling Green Independent	Yes	No	N/A
Boyd County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Boyle County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Bracken County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Breathitt County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Breckinridge County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Bullitt County	Yes	No	N/A
Burgin Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Butler County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Caldwell County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Calloway County	Yes	No	N/A
Campbell County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Campbellsville Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Carlisle County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Carroll County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Carter County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Casey County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Caverna Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Christian County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Clark County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Clay County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Clinton County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Cloverport Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A

Districts	Districts Exceeding 1.0 percent Participation in at least one subject for SY 2016-17	Districts Exceeding 1.0 percent Participation in at least one subject for SY 2017-2018	Districts Exceeding 1.0 percent Participation in at least one subject for SY 2018-19 <sup>1</sup>
Corbin Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Covington Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Crittenden County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Cumberland County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Danville Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Daviess County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Dawson Springs Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Dayton Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
East Bernstadt Independent	No	No	N/A
Edmonson County	Yes	No	N/A
Elizabethtown Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Elliott County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Eminence Independent	Yes	No	N/A
Erlanger-Elsmere Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Estill County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Fairview Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Fayette County	Yes	No	N/A
Fleming County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Floyd County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Fort Thomas Independent	Yes	No	N/A
Frankfort Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Franklin County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Fulton County	Yes	Yes	N/A

Districts	Districts Exceeding 1.0 percent Participation in at least one subject for SY 2016-17	Districts Exceeding 1.0 percent Participation in at least one subject for SY 2017-2018	Districts Exceeding 1.0 percent Participation in at least one subject for SY 2018-19 <sup>1</sup>
Fulton Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Gallatin County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Garrard County	Yes	No	N/A
Glasgow Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Grant County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Graves County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Grayson County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Green County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Greenup County	Yes	No	N/A
Hancock County	Yes	No	N/A
Hardin County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Harlan County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Harlan Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Harrison County	Yes	No	N/A
Hart County	Yes	No	N/A
Hazard Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Henderson County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Henry County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Hickman County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Hopkins County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Jackson County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Jackson Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Jefferson County	Yes	Yes	N/A

Districts	Districts Exceeding 1.0 percent Participation in at least one subject for SY 2016-17	Districts Exceeding 1.0 percent Participation in at least one subject for SY 2017-2018	Districts Exceeding 1.0 percent Participation in at least one subject for SY 2018-19 <sup>1</sup>
Jenkins Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Jessamine County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Johnson County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Kenton County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Knott County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Knox County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Larue County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Laurel County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Lawrence County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Lee County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Leslie County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Letcher County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Lewis County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Lincoln County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Livingston County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Logan County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Ludlow Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Lyon County	Yes	No	N/A
Madison County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Magoffin County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Marion County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Marshall County	Yes	No	N/A
Martin County	Yes	Yes	N/A

Districts	Districts Exceeding 1.0 percent Participation in at least one subject for SY 2016-17	Districts Exceeding 1.0 percent Participation in at least one subject for SY 2017-2018	Districts Exceeding 1.0 percent Participation in at least one subject for SY 2018-19 <sup>1</sup>
Mason County	Yes	No	N/A
Mayfield Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
McCracken County	Yes	Yes	N/A
McCreary County	Yes	Yes	N/A
McLean County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Meade County	Yes	No	N/A
Menifee County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Mercer County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Metcalfe County	Yes	No	N/A
Middlesboro Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Monroe County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Montgomery County	Yes	No	N/A
Morgan County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Muhlenberg County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Murray Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Nelson County	Yes	No	N/A
Newport Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Nicholas County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Ohio County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Oldham County	Yes	No	N/A
Owen County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Owensboro Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Owsley County	Yes	Yes	N/A

Districts	Districts Exceeding 1.0 percent Participation in at least one subject for SY 2016-17	Districts Exceeding 1.0 percent Participation in at least one subject for SY 2017-2018	Districts Exceeding 1.0 percent Participation in at least one subject for SY 2018-19 <sup>1</sup>
Paducah Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Paintsville Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Paris Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Pendleton County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Perry County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Pike County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Pikeville Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Pineville Independent	Yes	No	N/A
Powell County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Pulaski County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Raceland-Worthington Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Robertson County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Rockcastle County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Rowan County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Russell County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Russell Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Russellville Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Science Hill Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Scott County	Yes	No	N/A
Shelby County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Silver Grove Independent <sup>2</sup>	Yes	Yes	N/A

<sup>2</sup> Silver Grove Independent Schools has merged with the Campbell County School District effective for the 2019-2020 school year.

Districts	Districts Exceeding 1.0 percent Participation in at least one subject for SY 2016-17	Districts Exceeding 1.0 percent Participation in at least one subject for SY 2017-2018	Districts Exceeding 1.0 percent Participation in at least one subject for SY 2018-19 <sup>1</sup>
Simpson County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Somerset Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Southgate Independent	No	No	N/A
Spencer County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Taylor County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Todd County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Trigg County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Trimble County	Yes	No	N/A
Union County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Walton-Verona Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Warren County	No	No	N/A
Washington County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Wayne County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Webster County	Yes	Yes	N/A
West Point Independent	No	Yes	N/A
Whitley County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Williamsburg Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Williamstown Independent	Yes	Yes	N/A
Wolfe County	Yes	Yes	N/A
Woodford County	No	No	N/A