



## State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

PO Box 500

TRENTON, NJ 08625-0500

CHRIS CHRISTIE  
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO  
Lt. Governor

DAVID C. HESPE  
Commissioner

March 8, 2016

TO: Chief School Administrators  
Charter and Renaissance School Project Lead Persons

FROM: John Worthington, Acting Director  
Office of Special Education Programs

SUBJECT: Statewide Assessment and Graduation Requirements for Students with Disabilities

The purpose of this memo is to provide additional guidance and clarification about Individualized Education Program (IEP) decision making related to graduation requirements, statewide assessment and students with disabilities.

### **I. IEP Decisions: Participation in Statewide Assessment**

The *Every Student Succeeds Act*, the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004* and *N.J.A.C. 6A:14-4.10(a)*, require that **all** students participate in the statewide assessment system. The purpose is to ensure that achievement of the New Jersey Core Standards is measured for **all** students. The vast majority of students with IEPs will take the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessments. These students will be able to participate with appropriate PARCC accommodations as determined by the IEP team and documented in the IEP. The PARCC assessments also include a variety of “accessibility features” that all students can access during assessments. For more information on accommodations and accessibility features, please refer to the *PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual* at <http://parcc.pearson.com/manuals-training/>.

The PARCC college-ready standards have been evaluated in comparison to other assessments by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) and found to be at a level comparable to Smarter Balanced standards and also at a level comparable to NAEP basic standards in English language arts (ELA) and NAEP proficient standards in mathematics. The PARCC college-ready standards were also found by AIR to be comparable in difficulty to the ACT Aspire college-ready standards for grade-four ELA, and well above ACT Aspire standards for grade-four mathematics and grade-eight ELA and mathematics. For more information visit: [National Benchmarks for State Achievement Standards Study](#) .

Students with the most significant intellectual disabilities who meet specific eligibility criteria will take the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) assessment instead of the PARCC assessments. The IEP team determines whether a student will take the PARCC or the DLM. For more information visit: [http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/sites/default/files/documents/dlm\\_participation\\_guidelines.pdf](http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/sites/default/files/documents/dlm_participation_guidelines.pdf) .

**II. IEP Decisions: Graduation Requirements**

Beginning at age 14, in accordance with *N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.7(e)9*, the IEP must include a statement of the state and local graduation requirements that a student is expected to meet to receive a diploma. One requirement is *N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(c)*, which, along with *N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.7(e)9*, permits districts to specify alternate graduation requirements for students with disabilities. All students must participate in the statewide assessment system. However, the IEP team may determine a student is not required to meet the high school assessment proficiency requirements in order to graduate with a regular diploma. When the IEP team determines a student will be exempted from or will meet a modified graduation requirement, including an exemption from passing the Sstatewide assessment, the IEP must include a rationale for the exemption or modification and the alternate proficiency to be achieved by the student.

**III. Statewide Assessment and Graduation Requirements**

Assessment to be administered, as determined by the IEP team.	Does the IEP contain an alternate graduation requirement for statewide assessment proficiency?	Required Actions for Graduation.
PARCC	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student is required to take and pass the PARCC assessments; and</li> <li>• If the student did not pass the PARCC, he/she must pass one of the alternate competencies for graduation or the student must participate in the portfolio appeals process.</li> </ul>
PARCC	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student has met this graduation requirement.</li> </ul>

Please refer to the October 6, 2015 and November 5, 2015 broadcast memos on the NJDOE website at <https://education.state.nj.us/broadcasts/> for more information on graduation requirements, alternate competencies, and the appeals process.

Should you have any questions, please contact Kimberly Murray, Manager in the Office of Special Education Programs at 609-292-7605.

JW/KM

- c: Members, State Board of Education
- Commissioner David C. Hespe
- Senior Staff
- Diane Shoener
- Peggy McDonald
- Kimberly Murray
- Executive County Superintendents
- Executive Directors for Regional Achievement Centers
- Executive County Business Officials
- County Supervisors of Child Study
- Garden State Coalition of Schools

NJ LEE Group