

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

November 15, 2017

Penn*Link

TO: School District Superintendents
School District Special Education Directors
Charter School Chief Executive Officers
Charter School Special Education Directors
Intermediate Unit Executive Directors
Intermediate Unit Special Education Directors

FROM: Ann Hinkson-Herrmann, Director
Bureau of Special Education

SUBJECT: Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA) Eligibility Mandated Waiver
Application for the 2017-18 School Year

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) 1.0 percent cap requirements for local educational agencies (LEAs) administering the Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA) for students with significant cognitive disabilities continues to be in effect for the 2017-18 school year.

To assist LEAs with the 1.0 percent cap determination, the Bureau of Special Education (BSE) has developed the Mandated Participation Waiver Application in accordance with the regulatory requirement under the ESSA. LEAs must complete and submit the waiver application when anticipating higher enrollments of students identified with significant cognitive disabilities that would result in a PASA participation rate in excess of 1.0 percent of the total tested grades for the 2017-18 school year. LEAs that submitted a waiver for the 2016-17 school year must submit a new waiver if they anticipate going over the 1.0 percent cap again during the 2017-18 school year. Application information provided by LEAs will be considered by BSE when determining approval status. Any LEA submitting a waiver application may be subject to an on-site review by a BSE Special Education Adviser to obtain additional clarification on submitted information.

The 2017-18 PASA testing window for Reading/English Language Arts, Math, and Science will be February 19 to April 13, 2018.

It is imperative that waiver applications are received by BSE thirty (30) days before the initial testing date. To access the waiver application, please visit: [2017-18 PASA Mandated Waiver Application](#) and click on Downloads.

Completed waiver applications should be submitted to: ra-edpasawaiver@pa.gov.

Decisions regarding student participation in PASA are determined by the individualized education program (IEP) team in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004 regulations requiring every IEP team to decide which state assessment is most appropriate for the student. To participate in PASA, students must meet specific eligibility criteria established by BSE. The eligibility criteria serve as a guide to assist the IEP team with the decision-making process.

Further guidance to the field regarding ESSA and the 1.0 percent cap waiver will be provided through a training on November 20, 2017 entitled, "Getting Ready: PASA Annual Updates." This video conference will be held at all three PA Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) locations and various intermediate unit downlink sites. The materials from this training will be posted on the PaTTAN website at www.pattan.net. Guidance will include eligibility criteria for participation in the alternate assessment, alternate eligible content on which students are assessed, and the development and administration of the alternate assessment.

If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact Lisa Hampe, BSE Special Education Adviser, at lihampe@pa.gov; Lynda Lupp, Statewide Special Education Assessment Coordinator, at llupp@pattan.net; or John Gombocz, BSE Special Education Adviser, at jgombocz@pa.gov.