

2024 Assessment Participation and Accountability



Overview

This resource describes assessment participation requirements and the role of participation in both state and federal accountability. This resource assumes knowledge about the [required state assessments](#), [federal accountability](#), and [state accountability](#) processes. See the links for additional information. Use this resource to help build understanding of the terminology and policies around participation that impact performance framework ratings and federal identifications.

What are the state and federal requirements for assessment participation?

Colorado Assessments & Participation Requirements

Colorado Annual Assessment Requirements

- Consistent with federal statute, state law requires assessments for evaluating students' mastery of and growth in the Colorado Academic Standards and evaluating the performance of districts and schools. State law requires annual state assessments for third- through eighth- grade students in English language arts and math, as well as science once in elementary, once in middle school, and once in high school. (C.R.S. 22-7-1006.3(1)(a)).
- While federal statute requires reading/literacy and math for one grade in high school, state law requires assessments for evaluating students' mastery of the Colorado Academic Standards and post- secondary readiness with a ninth grade assessment (C.R.S. 22-7-1006.3(2)(a)), a tenth-grade assessment (C.R.S. 22-7-1006.3(2)(a. 5)) and an eleventh-grade assessment (C.R.S. 22-7-1006.3(2)(b)).

State Law Regarding Parent Excusals from State Assessments

House Bill 15-1323 requires school districts to adopt a policy on how parents can excuse their students from a state assessment. Colorado Revised Statutes, 22-7-1013(8)(A-C) establishes how districts and schools shall implement this policy, summarized below:

- A. Districts and schools shall adopt and implement a written policy and procedure by which a student's parent may excuse the student from participating in one or more of the state assessments.
- B. If a parent excuses his or her student from participating in a state assessment, a district or school shall not impose negative consequences, including prohibiting school attendance, imposing an unexcused absence, or prohibiting participation in extracurricular activities, on the student or on the parent.
- C. A district or school shall not impose an unreasonable burden or requirement on a student that would discourage the student from taking a state assessment or encourage the student's parent to excuse the student from taking the state assessment.

Federal Participation Requirements

Federal law, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), like No Child Left Behind before it, requires a 95 percent participation rate. From SEC 1005 (c)(4)(E)(i,iii), States must:

- Annually measure the achievement of not less than 95 percent of all students, and 95 percent of all students in each subgroup of students, who are enrolled in public schools on the assessment, and
- Provide a clear and understandable explanation of how the State will factor “the 95 percent participation requirement” into the statewide accountability system.

How are assessment participation rates calculated for accountability purposes?

Total Participation Rates

Description of the Rate Calculation: Total participation rates combine all the assessment records for each subject area (English, math and science) across all grade levels within a given school or district. For multi-level schools and districts that serve high school, the PSAT/SAT Evidence-based Reading and Writing results are combined with the English language arts results. Parent excusals are counted as non-participants (they are included in the denominator). Total participation rates best reflect the actual percentage of students enrolled that participated in testing.

Use in Data Analysis and Improvement Planning: This participation rate should be considered when using assessment and growth data for improvement planning and/or other instructional purposes.

Use in State Accountability: Total participation is included on the performance frameworks to provide context for interpreting how representative the reported results are likely to be of the entire student population. Typically, districts or schools with less than 95% total participation in two or more content areas receive a “Low Total Participation” descriptor. Districts and schools with more than 95% total participation in two or more content areas receive a “Meets 95% Participation” descriptor. These descriptors do not impact the calculation of the frameworks. The rate can be viewed in Figure 1 and Figure 2 as the “Total Participation Rate.” In 2024, CMAS Science participation rates will be reported for informational purposes only. See the section on “considerations for the 2024-25 School Year” for more information.

Use in Federal Accountability: Federal statute (ESSA) requires assessment of a minimum of 95% of students in the required content areas and grades indicated above. CDE uses a two-phase ESSA identification methodology. In the first phase, schools are identified for ESSA support and improvement based on the available assessment results. In the second phase, schools with less than 95% total participation rates that are not already identified for support and improvement, will be included in a second round of identification analyses, wherein all non-participants in excess of 5 percent are counted as non-proficient records (assigned the lowest obtainable scale score available on each assessment) for the Academic Achievement indicator. Schools identified during the second phase have the phrase “Due to Participation Only” following their ESSA identification category.

Accountability Participation Rates

Description of the Rate Calculation: The rules for accountability participation rates are the same as those for the total participation rate except that parent excusals are removed from the numerator and denominator. As shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2 below, valid scores represent the numerator. Multilingual learners (MLs) who have been in the U.S. for less than one year also count as participants (they are included in the numerator and denominator) for the ELA test regardless of whether they received a valid test score. More information about the participation rules for students with a language proficiency designation of Non-English Proficient (NEP) or Limited English Proficient (LEP) with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education is available in the section on “Considerations for the 2024-25 School Year.”



Use in Data Analysis and Improvement Planning: This metric is not recommended for use in analysis or improvement planning. Total participation is the preferred metric as it is a better indicator of how representative the tested student population was of the entire school or district population.

Use in State Accountability: If the district or school has accountability participation rates below 95% in two or more content areas, typically the overall rating is reduced by one level. In 2024, CMAS Science participation rates will not be used in the calculation to lower school and district ratings. See the section on “Considerations for the 2024-25 School Year” for more information.

Use in Federal Accountability: This rate is not used in any federal accountability calculations.

Figure 1. Performance Framework Participation Table

Test Participation Rates and Total Participation Rate Descriptor*						
Subject	Total Records	Valid Scores	Total Participation Rate	Parent Excusals	Accountability Participation Rate	Rating
English Language Arts	17,713	16,542	93.4%	1,019	99.2%	Meets 95% Participation
Math	17,711	16,540	93.4%	1,033	99.2%	Meets 95% Participation
Science	5,867	4,391	74.8%	1,443	99.3%	Meets 95% Participation
Total Participation Rate Descriptor for Planning Purposes:						Low Total Participation

Total participation
 parent excusals are counted as non-participants.

Accountability Participation
 parent excusals are excluded from calculation.

These ratings reflect whether accountability participation rates meet or exceed 95%.

Figure 2. Participation Calculations

$$\text{Total Participation} = \frac{\text{Valid Records}}{\text{Total Records}}$$

$$\text{Accountability Participation} = \frac{\text{Valid Records}}{\text{Total Records} - \text{Parent Excusals}}$$

For more detail on participation rate calculations by assessment and level, see the [Framework Participation Rate Calculations Fact Sheet](#).

What happens if my school or district does not meet the 95 percent participation rate requirement?

State Policy Regarding Participation Requirements

School Performance Framework (SPF) / District Performance Framework (DPF) Policy Regarding Low Participation

Schools and districts are accountable for meeting minimum participation rates in the state assessments. If a school or district falls below the 95 percent accountability participation rate (i.e., for **reasons other than parent excusal**) in two or more content areas (English language arts/Evidence-based reading and writing, math, science), then the district’s accreditation rating or school’s plan type will be lowered by one level. In 2024, CMAS Science participation rates will not

be used in the calculation to lower school and district ratings. See the section on “Considerations for the 2024-25 School Year” for more information.

Schools and districts with low total participation rates **for any reason** will be noted in the school/district’s rating to indicate that the results may not be representative of the entire student population. The plan type is not impacted by this participation descriptor. For example, a school that earns a Performance Plan, but has a total participation rate of 52 percent will receive an informational descriptor of “Low Total Participation” on the first page of their performance framework. For all Performance Framework descriptors, see the box to the right.

CDE’s policy for the impact of low participation is based on State Board of Education Rule and the February 2015 State Board of Education motion that districts will not be penalized by a lowering of their accreditation rating should their student participation rates fall below 95 percent on the state assessments due to parental excusals. The [State Board of Education rules](#) (1 CCR 301-1 5.02) state: “Information concerning the percentage of students enrolled in the District’s or Institute’s Public Schools who are not tested on the Statewide Assessments will not be factored into the analysis of the District’s or Institute’s attainment on the Performance Indicators, but will be factored into the Accreditation category assignment.” Districts still must engage in good faith efforts to test all students in accordance with state and federal law and maintain documentation of parent excusals. For more information on coding parent excusals, see the section on “Considerations for the 2024-25 School Year.”

Assigning an Insufficient State Data Rating

The criteria for assigning Insufficient State Data (ISD) has been adjusted under state board rule and as recommended by the Technical Advisory Panel (TAP). An ISD plan type is automatically assigned if the total participation rate is at or below 25% for both English language arts/Evidence-based reading and writing and math. An ISD plan type is also applied if reportable data are not available for all applicable performance indicators (i.e., achievement, growth, and postsecondary and workforce readiness). For multi-level schools (i.e., combined elementary, middle and/or high schools) and districts, ISD is assigned if one or more EMH levels do not have reportable data for either achievement or growth. Schools and districts have the opportunity to request an ISD plan type if they have below 85% total participation on state assessments and can establish that the results are not representative of the full student population through the [request to reconsider process](#). More information about Insufficient State Data Ratings are available in the [Assigning Insufficient State Data Ratings fact sheet](#).

Federal Policy Regarding Participation Requirements

As required by the U.S. Department of Education in its interpretation of ESSA, Colorado must take into consideration and have a plan for addressing non-participants in the methodology used for identifying schools for support and improvement under ESSA (see above for calculations associated with participation). In Colorado’s two-phase identification methodology, after schools have been identified as Comprehensive (CS), Targeted (TS), or Additional Targeted (ATS) Support and Improvement based on available data, CDE re-runs the analyses to identify CS, TS, or ATS

Performance Framework Participation Descriptors

Meets 95% Participation (for Informational Purposes): Above the 95% total participation rate in two or more content areas.

Low Total Participation (for Informational Purposes): Below the 95% total participation rate in two or more content areas.

Decreased due to Participation: Below the 95% accountability participation rate in two or more content areas.

Helpful Terminology

Participants: Students who were eligible to test that were counted as participating in state assessments.

Non-participants: Students who were eligible to test that were not counted as participating in state assessments (e.g., student absence,



schools due to participation only. ESSA identification, including identification due to participation, was paused during the pandemic and resumed in fall 2022.

How do test administration codes impact participation calculations for the state performance frameworks?

Impact of District Submitted Test Administration Codes on Participation Calculations

The inclusion/exclusion of a student score in both total and accountability participation calculations is dependent on the test administration codes submitted by the district. The table below shows all possible test administration codes and how the student would be included in both total and accountability participation calculations. Note that records coded as “parent excuse” are included in total participation rates as non-participants, but are not included in the accountability participation rate (used when determining if a school’s or district’s rating would be lowered).

Test Administration Code	Impact on Total and Accountability Participation Calculations	Included in Total Participation Rate:		Included in Accountability Participation Rate:	
		Numerator (NM)	Denominator (DN)	Numerator (NM)	Denominator (DN)
No Code: Student Received Valid Test Score and is included in School and District Aggregations	Counts as participant for both participation calculations	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
First Year in US Multilingual Learner* without a valid score on CMAS English language arts or PSAT/SAT Evidence-based Reading and Writing assessment	Only for ELA accountability participation rate, if student is classified as Non-English Proficient (NEP) and enrolled in Colorado school for less than 12 months, count as participant	No	Yes	Yes*	Yes
Took Other Assessment or Duplicate Registration/Attempt	Excluded from both participation calculations	No	No	No	No
Withdrew from District During Assessment Window	Excluded from both participation calculations	No	No	No	No
Medical Exemption	Excluded from both participation calculations	No	No	No	No
Part-Time Public and Part-Time Homeschool Student	Excluded from both participation calculations	No	No	No	No
Absent	Counts as non-participant for both participation calculations	No	Yes	No	Yes



Test Administration Code	Impact on Total and Accountability Participation Calculations	Included in Total Participation Rate:		Included in Accountability Participation Rate:	
		Numerator (NM)	Denominator (DN)	Numerator (NM)	Denominator (DN)
Test Interrupted and Not Completed	Counts as non-participant for both participation calculations	No	Yes	No	Yes
Student Test Refusal	Counts as non-participant for both participation calculations	No	Yes	No	Yes
Non-approved Accommodation	Counts as non-participant for both participation calculations	No	Yes	No	Yes
Misadministration	Counts as non-participant for both participation calculations	No	Yes	No	Yes
Parent Excuse	Counts as non-participant for Total Participation rate and excluded entirely from Accountability participation rate	No	Yes	No	No**

* First Year in U.S. Multilingual Learner: Starting in Spring 2018, students enrolled in a U.S. school for less than 12 months and classified as Non-English Proficient (NEP), based on W-APT/WIDA Screener and a local body of evidence, may be exempt from the first year of the CMAS ELA or PSAT/SAT EBRW assessment. However, NEP students enrolled in grades 3 or 4 whose native language is Spanish and who have received instruction in Spanish in that school year are required to take CSLA. NEP students not testing their first year in U.S. should have their English language arts records coded with Not Tested Reason = 02. Districts should also complete State Use Field 1 (Date most recently enrolled in U.S. coming from a non-U.S. school/country). Records coded in this way for eligible students will count as a participant for English language arts. See the section “considerations for the 2024-25 School Year” for more information on NEP or LEP students who have limited or interrupted formal education.

** In the total participation rate calculations, records coded as “parent excuse” will be included in the base count and count as non-participants, but are not included in the accountability participation rate (used when determining if a school’s or district’s rating would be lowered). For more information on coding parent excusals, see the section on “Considerations for the 2024-25 School Year.”

How do non-participants impact achievement and growth calculations on the state performance frameworks?

When calculating achievement, students who did not test (for any reason, including parent excusals) are not included in the denominator of the state achievement calculation (i.e., the student will not count as a “0” or receive the lowest score). Only students with two consecutive years of assessment scores can be included for student growth calculations, and non-participants are not included. For instance, if a student did not test in Spring 2023 but did test in Spring 2024, he/she would not have a reportable growth result for 2024 performance frameworks because he/she does not have two consecutive years of assessment scores.

The following paragraph outlines the instances when a student record is excluded from state and federal achievement and growth calculations. These include: students who are not continuously enrolled from October Count through the testing window, students who have been expelled during the school year (school calculations only), students with invalid grade level information, students associated with detention facilities, students associated with home options programs, students who tested off-grade, students with invalid district/school associations, Multilingual Learners enrolled in a U.S. school for less than 12 months (CMAS English Language Arts and PSAT/SAT Evidence-based Reading and Writing only), students who are ineligible to test due to their English Language proficiency status (English Language Proficiency assessment only), students with no or invalid test scores (e.g. parent excusal, student absence), or students with no

student growth percentile. The test administration and student demographic codes that determine whether a student record is included in achievement and growth calculations are provided during the test administration window or during the Student Biographical Data (SBD) review. See the [SBD and accountability fact sheet](#) for more information about SBD and uses in accountability.

What are some considerations for the 2024-25 school year?

CMAS Science

The CMAS science assessment reflected the revised 2020 Colorado Academic Standards for the first time in Spring 2022, however, scale scores and performance levels were not initially available. For this reason, science achievement results were not factored into the 2022 nor 2023 Frameworks. Instead, achievement results will be re-introduced for points in 2024 performance frameworks. For the official 2024 plan types, a school or district's participation rating will only be lowered if both a) English language arts/Evidence-based reading and writing and b) math accountability participation rates are below 95%. Science participation results will be shared for informational purposes only and not used in the accountability participation calculation. For more information on anticipated performance framework changes, see the [2023 Informational Results for Performance Frameworks fact sheet](#).

Newly Arrived Multilingual Learners (MLs)

Multilingual learners (i.e., students classified as Non-English Proficient or Limited English Proficient) new to US schools within the last 12 months are exempt from having to take the state English language arts assessment in their first year, but still count as participants for ELA participation calculations for state and federal accountability. For MLs who also have limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) and enrolled after October 1, district assessment coordinators should contact [Heather Villalobos Pavia](#) with the Assessment Division with questions regarding testing expectations for these students for spring 2024. Students new after October 1 and documented as SLIFE will count as participants for Math and Science participation calculations for state accountability and will not result in a rating decreased due to participation. More information about the inclusion of newly arrived MLs in accountability calculations is available in the [Newly Arrived Multilingual Learner fact sheet](#).

Coding Parent Excusals

Parent excuse codes are used when a parent excuses their child from participating in state content assessments. For accountability purposes, these parent excuse codes are used to remove records from the accountability participation rate calculation that determines whether a school or district's rating is decreased due to participation. Below are several considerations to ensure students are accurately recorded as a parent excuse in accountability data files.

Parent excuse codes will only be processed by the Assessment Division if:

- **CMAS ELA/Math/Science (Elementary and Middle School only):**
 - The student did not start testing.
 - The student tested in Unit 1 but did not start testing in Units 2 or 3.
 - The student tested in Units 1 and 2 but did not start testing in Unit 3.
- **CMAS Science (High School only):**
 - The student did not start testing.
 - The student tested in Unit 1 but did not start testing in Unit 2.
- **CO PSAT and SAT (High School only):**

- The student's record is recorded as a Parent Excusal in the Special Reporting Use/Reason Not Tested Code field, either within the Test Day Toolkit or during the PSAT/SAT [Student Biographical Data Collection](#) process.
- **Special Circumstances:**
 - A parent excuse is received while a student is participating in an assessment and the student needs to be pulled out of testing:
 - **CMAS:** If a student is on the final unit of the assessment, districts should apply a misadministration code to the student's record, complete a Testing Irregularity or Security Breach Form (located in Appendix D of the [CMAS/CoAlt Procedures Manual](#)), and notify [CDE's Assessment Division](#).
 - **PSAT/SAT:** Report the student in the Irregularities page of the Test Day Toolkit and record the student as a Parent Excusal either in Test Day Toolkit or during SBD.

This [guidance document](#) from the Assessment Division includes additional detail on the steps to process a Parent Excuse code for both CMAS and PSAT/SAT.

NOTE: Parent excusals should not be solicited, including after absences for non-related issues. If the student is absent for the entire testing window, absence should be coded.

Additional Resources and Assistance

For more detailed information about some of these processes and requirements, go to:

- General Information about performance frameworks, including links to resources: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/performanceframeworks>
- General information about the request to reconsider process, including links to resources: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/requesttoreconsider>
- General information about the Unified Improvement Planning process, including information about planning requirements and links to resources: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/uiip>
- General information about the accountability clock, including links to resources: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/performance turnaround>
- General information about ESSA identifications: https://www.cde.state.co.us/fedprograms/essa_csi_tsi

If you have questions about the contents of this fact sheet or need further assistance: Contact your assigned support coordinator or email accountability@cde.state.co.us.