

2023-2024 Alabama Public Notice and Public Comment for the One Percent Waiver Extension

Our School had 80% participation on the 2022-2023 ELA portion of the ACT Writing Plus. We had 5 students with disabilities who participated in this test. Of those 5, 1 student did not complete the writing portion of the test. This caused us to be over the 1% cap. We would like to receive a waiver.

Alabama's request for an extension waiver for the 2023-2024, should be denied again this year. Pursuant to the same reasoning, there should be improvements and progress in this issue . If additional waivers are granted it proves their efforts are counterproductive.

In the area of education, as a state we need to be proactive and progressive. Not defensive and reactive. We have to create policy, regulations and laws that move Alabamians ahead in the educational process for students from PREK-12 . When compared to other southeastern states in our country Alabama generally falls in the bottom three.

Change is necessary for improvement. Since Alabama has been requesting extension waivers starting in 2017-2018 school year, I say it's time to move forward and explore other options for improvement for the children.

Especially, if on a collegiate level we promote sports and strive to be number one. Why not start to strive to become number one in educational development, experience, engagement, leadership, and execution? Our children deserve nothing less.

We can start with creating policies that enhance the quality of education offered in our state and not penalizing families that are progressive enough to realize that brick and mortar of education isn't the bread and butter it use to be. Work with these families and we might learn from them and propel ourselves forward into the future.

This note is with regards to the state's intent to apply for an extension waiver for the 2023-2024 school year from the Secretary for the United States Department of Education around exceeding 1.0 percent of the total number of students in the State who will be assessed on the *ACAP Alternate*.

I, as a member **of the SEAP** in Alabama AND as a parent of a student with disabilities AND as an educator, oppose this request. My personal experience is that too many of our students are pushed towards these assessments when they do not fall into the lowest 1% of all students. Any child with a diagnosis of Down syndrome, for example, is often placed on this pathway - it, then, is often used as justification for excluding the student from the general education program.

So, I VEHEMENTLY oppose any extensions the state may seek on this matter.

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I work in a school system which serves a greater number of students with significant disabilities than is generally represented in the US population. It is unfair for pressure to stay below a 1% threshold for Alternate Assessment to jeopardize educators' abilities to do what is right for these students. It would further be morally unconscionable to restrict the funding needed to provide for these students. Granting a waiver seems to be the only way to address

these concerns at present, and as a citizen and an educator, I urge anyone with the power to make this decision to please do what is right for our students.

Thank you for taking time to seek an extension waiver for our state. It is almost impossible for a school district our size not to exceed the one percent requirement, due to the increasing number of students enrolling with significant cognitive delays.