

## 2025-26 Alternative Assessment Justification

### *Local Educational Agency (LEA) Justification and Assurances for Exceeding the 1.0 Percent Cap*

#### **Purpose**

In accordance with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(c), local educational agencies (LEAs) contributing to the state exceeding the 1.0 percent cap must submit a justification and assurances.

1. Select LEA Name and ID#

110 - Cheatham County

2. Enter the Last Name, First Name of the individual submitting this form.

Green, Sarah

3. Identify your role within the LEA. Special Education Director

- a. Special Education Director
- b. Special Education Coordinator
- c. Other

## ELA Participation Rates for School Years 2020-21 through 2025-26

4. **ELA Participation Rates 2020-21** *Note: Prior to the 2023-24 SY, Tennessee participated in the Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA) in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. Beginning in the 2023-24 SY, the Dynamic Learning Maps (OLM) embedded alternate assessment replaced the MSAA. \**

1.47

5. **ELA Participation Rates 2021-22** *Note: Prior to the 2023-24 SY, Tennessee participated in the Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA) in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. Beginning in the 2023-24 SY, the Dynamic Learning Maps (OLM) embedded alternate assessment replaced the MSAA. \**

1.37

6. **ELA Participation Rates 2022-23** *Note: Prior to the 2023-24 SY, Tennessee participated in the Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA) in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. Beginning in the 2023-24 SY, the Dynamic Learning Maps (OLM) embedded alternate assessment replaced the MSAA. \**

1.7

7. **ELA Participation Rates 2023-24** *Note: Beginning in the 2023-24 SY, the Dynamic Learning Maps (OLM) embedded alternate assessment replaced the MSAA. \**

1.51

8. **ELA Participation Rates 2024-25** *Note: Beginning in the 2023-24 SY, the Dynamic Learning Maps (OLM) embedded alternate assessment replaced the MSAA. \**

1.45

9. **ELA Participation Rates 2025-26** *\*2025-26 is an estimated participation rate using LEA assessment provisioning data. \**

1.41

## Math Participation Rates for School Years 2020-21 through

10. **Math Participation Rates 2020-21** *Note: Prior to the 2023-24 SY, Tennessee participated in the Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA) in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. Beginning in the 2023-24 SY, the Dynamic Learning Maps (OLM) embedded alternate assessment replaced the MSAA.* \*

1.51

11. **Math Participation Rates 2021-22** *Note: Prior to the 2023-24 SY, Tennessee participated in the Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA) in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. Beginning in the 2023-24 SY, the Dynamic Learning Maps (OLM) embedded alternate assessment replaced the MSAA.* \*

1.44

12. **Math Participation Rates 2022-23** *Note: Prior to the 2023-24 SY, Tennessee participated in the Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA) in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. Beginning in the 2023-24 SY, the Dynamic Learning Maps (OLM) embedded alternate assessment replaced the MSAA.* \*

1.72

13. **Math Participation Rates 2023-24** *Note: Beginning in the 2023-24 SY, the Dynamic Learning Maps (OLM) embedded alternate assessment replaced the MSAA.* \*

1.56

14. **Math Participation Rates 2024-25** *Note: Beginning in the 2023-24 SY, the Dynamic Learning Maps (OLM) embedded alternate assessment replaced the MSAA.* \*

1.31

15. **Math Participation Rates 2025-26** *\*2025-26 is an estimated participation rate using LEA assessment provisioning data.* \*

1.31

## Science Participation Rates for School Years 2020-21 through 2025-26

### 16. Science Participation Rates 2020-21 \*

1.35

### 17. Science Participation Rates 2021-22 \*

1.54

### 18. Science Participation Rates 2022-23 \*

1.65

### 19. Science Participation Rates 2023-24 \*

1.67

### 20. Science Participation Rates 2024-25 \*

1.82

### 21. Science Participation Rates 2025-26 \*2025-26 is an estimated participation rate using LEA assessment provisioning data. \*

1.47

## Number of Students Scoring

To calculate: Log into KITE - Reports - Alternate Assessment Reports - Year 2025  
- LEA Name and select the .PDF file. The first table in the report provides the number of students scoring Advanced by grade and subject. Calculate the total number of students scoring Advanced for each subject.

22. In school year 2024-25, list the total number of students scoring  
**"Advanced"** for **ELA**. \*

1

23. In school year 2024-25, list the total number of students scoring  
**"Advanced"** for **Math**.

2

## Process for Determining Alternate Assessment Eligibility:

### Criterion One

In this section, describe the processes in place to ensure the IEP team is making informed, data-based decisions aligned to the alternate assessment participation criteria. Please note that completion of the Alternate Assessment Worksheet in TN PULSE alone is not sufficient evidence.

**Criterion One: The student has a significant cognitive disability. Only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities should be considered for the alternate assessment.**

You must also describe the process for reviewing alternate assessment eligibility for any student scoring Advanced in at least one subject. Advanced performance scores may indicate that the student's skills exceed the eligibility criteria and should prompt a review of the student's continued participation in the alternate assessment.

In the questions below, describe the process used to ensure the IEP team considers only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities (approximately 1.0 percent of the student population).

24. How are IEP teams informed of the criterion and expectations for determining if the student meets expectations for participation? \*

Our school teams, principals and assessment specialists are all informed of the criterion and expectations for participation via on going trainings. We did an initial training using the video from Alison Gauld titled: Alternative Assessment The Federal Cap of 1% and Implications of Participation.

25. What data are used to make the determination (e.g., cognitive and adaptive behavior data)? \*

In general, there are multiple data sources for cognitive to include but not limited to Individual Cognitive Ability Test, non-verbal Cognitive Ability Test, Adaptive Behavior Skills Assessment,

26. How is adaptive behavior data incorporated into the decision-making process? \*

It is embedded in the first tier of the criterion and measured by standardized scores and norms.

## Process for Determining Alternate Assessment Eligibility: Criterion Two

In this section, describe the processes in place to ensure the IEP team is making informed, data-based decisions aligned to the alternate assessment participation criteria. Please note that completion of the Alternate Assessment Worksheet in TN PULSE alone is not sufficient evidence.

**Criterion Two: The student is learning content linked to (derived from) state content standards. All students, regardless of the assessment or the least restrictive environment (LRE) should receive standards-aligned instruction that is rigorous, meaningful, and sufficient in duration to increase student outcomes. Special education services are provided in addition to, not in place of, standards-based instruction.**

In the questions below, describe the evidence used to ensure the student was provided access to grade-level, standards-aligned instruction. This should include an explanation of the process used to ensure the student received instruction aligned to grade-level standards at an appropriate level of rigor, intensity, and duration comparable to their peers.

27. How does the IEP team ensure the student's performance and skill level are due to a significant cognitive disability rather than an instructional disadvantage? \*

As a district we have a robust (electronic) data wall for our schools that we monitor. We meet with the building level instructional leaders every three weeks to target trends and make instructional shifts accordingly. We complete fidelity checks within RTI A and B MTSS through all the tiers to ensure baseline norms are consistent. When the team has a concern regarding a student there is a rigorous process to ensure that the educational environment is ruled out prior to moving forward with more restrictive settings. Within our classroom walks we monitor the use of HQIM using the IPG tool. We monitor trends within that and the cycle of instruction using student work analysis to ensure that the HQIM is being implemented with fidelity for all students, across all settings. In addition to all the above, we have had a large focus on acceleration for all and co teaching.

28. What data are used to make an informed determination? \*

We use data from a variety of sources to include but not limited to: Aims web (universal screeners), benchmark, Savvas, Unique learning, TN Ready, Cognitive and achievement testing, Language testing, ABAS- adaptive, ADOS, Heggerty-passpowers, in addition to the observations in all areas.

## Process for Determining Alternate Assessment Eligibility: Criterion Three

In this section, describe the processes in place to ensure the IEP team is making informed, data-based decisions aligned to the alternate assessment participation criteria. Please note that completion of the Alternate Assessment Worksheet in TN PULSE alone is not sufficient evidence.

### **Criterion Three: The student requires extensive direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in the grade- and age-appropriate curriculum.**

In the questions below, describe the process used to determine that the student requires extensive, direct individualized instruction and substantial supports.

29. What data are used to support this determination? \*

The data used to support this is cognitive and adaptive standard measures, progress monitoring, response to intervention and the instructional cycle of teach, assess, reteach, regression data.

30. How do IEP teams determine the type and level of supports needed, including for students whose least restrictive environment (LRE) is a highly modified special education setting for all or part of the day? \*

While it is always a team's decision, the general rule is that we operate on the least dangerous assumption. The majority of our preschoolers go into a general education classroom; even with lower adaptives and cognitive scores. We have stressed that we cannot rule out lack of exposure to language and educational expectations without allowing time for acclimation. Teams revisit students as appropriate if supports in general education are not allowing for meaningful progress despite their circumstances. We have a robust data collection required for any more restrictive setting that would limit access to typical peers to ensure that the benefit outweighs the change.

31. How does the IEP team distinguish between supports required due to the student's disability and supports that are available as part of the instructional environment? \*

As mentioned above, we use data collection and analysis to determine if the supports are able to be a universal design in learning that allows for multiple language learner, SWD and so forth to benefit, without over scaffolding and creating learned helplessness. Student specific supports are required to be specially designed instruction.



## **Disproportionality**

Using data by primary eligibility (disability) category and demographic groups, describe LEA patterns of participation in the alternate assessment, including any disproportionate participation and a plan for reducing or eliminating disproportionality. Include a description of the LEA population demographics as compared to statewide demographics.

32. Describe any identified disproportionality in alternate assessment participation and the LEA's plan to address and reduce disproportionate participation, as applicable.

We track our data with regard to disproportionality, and it mirrors pretty similar to our distribution. We are a very rural district that is primarily white in relation to other neighboring districts such as Clarksville or Nashville. We have had an uptick in Hispanic students, however still very primarily white.

*(For example, if the LEA student population is evenly distributed among White, Black, and Hispanic students, the alternate assessment participation data should reflect a similar distribution across those groups.) \**

## **Informed Parent Participation**

Students who participate in alternate assessments are significantly less likely to earn a traditional diploma due to the highly modified content and potential for lower expectations.

In the questions below, describe the processes and practices used to ensure parents are fully informed of the eligibility requirements and implications of alternate assessment participation.

33. How are parents informed of the eligibility criteria and implications of participation? \* Parents are explained explicitly the impact on diploma options in regard to participation. This is communicated at IEP meetings when discussing LRE options relative to the participation and ultimately the impact on diploma options.
34. How are parents included in the IEP team decision-making process? \*Parents are a required and active member of our IEP teams. We do not operate in silos but as a team bringing our unique perspectives to the table in order to make informed and data-based decisions as a team.
35. Participation in the alternate assessment must be reviewed at least annually. Students may transition to the general assessments at any time, as determined by the IEP team.

What processes are in place to ensure these decisions are fully discussed and reviewed at least annually? \*We include annual PD for our LEAs, special education team and general education teachers regarding the participation criteria, and impact on diploma options with the expectation it is reviewed annually. .

## Ensuring Students Are Making Academic Progress

In *Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District*, the U.S. Supreme Court clarified that an IEP must be "reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress appropriate in light of the child's circumstances." Additionally, the U.S. Department of Education denied the state's 2024-25 waiver request, noting that it did "not find that approving the waiver will advance student academic achievement, as required in section 8401(b)(1)(C) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)."

Thus, LEAs that contribute to the state exceeding the 1.0 percent cap must provide assurances that students participating in alternate assessments are provided access to and engagement in standards-based instruction and are making appropriate academic progress.

36. Describe the policies, procedures, and practices used in your LEA to ensure students are provided instruction that meets the requirements set forth by ESEA and *Endrew F.*, and that students make appropriate academic progress.\*

The special education district team maintains a student electronic data wall tracking all students with an IEP. We track trends and use the data rich tool to guide the instruction cycle, changing goals, interventions, etc while also consulting with general education teachers in all environments to ensure students make meaningful gains despite their circumstances.

## Support Requested

37. Please describe any support needed from the department to assist in meeting the requirements outlined in this form. All reasonable requests will be considered. \*

Thank you for all you do! We are working from the babies through transition, Prek with aaln and NIET with high school co teaching coaching grant. Our district has shifted all focus to sped, we are excited to see the outcomes.