

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#

160 - Coffee County

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

Charlie Westmoreland

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.* *

0.48

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.* *

0.87

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.* *

1.16

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

1.43

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

0.74

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

0.74

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.* *

0.49

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.* *

0.91

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.* *

1.17

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

1.41

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

0.65

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

0.65

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

16. Science Participation Rates 2020-21 *

0.69

17. Science Participation Rates 2021-22 *

0.89

18. Science Participation Rates 2022-23 *

1.02

19. Science Participation Rates 2023-24 *

1.11

20. Science Participation Rates 2024-25 *

1.09

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

1.09

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**. *

5

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

4

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? *

Team members that are responsible for assessment procedures and guidelines for SWDs have received the TDOE Alternate Assessment Guidelines Recording that describes the eligibility criteria. The most significant cognitive ability will be (3) standard deviations below the mean; this is represented by a 55 IQ. The data used is a current IQ score, classroom-based assessment, state assessments, attendance, progress monitoring, benchmark assessment, adaptive behaviors (with needs to be significant in all adaptive areas). The successor level for DLM is also reviewed for advancement beyond the target level for participation in TCAP or EOC depending on the student's grade-level. Multiple forms of formative and summative data are used for determining Alternate Assessment participation. All decisions are TEAM decisions, and will be based on what is best for students to access the general curriculum as their non-disabled peers in the LRE.

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

The data used to ensure access to grade-level, standards-aligned instruction is RTI TIER 3 interventions that are linked to grade-level expectations. Front-loading of standards is the practice the district is promoting/implementing aligned to HQIM and IPG implementation through all grade bands (excluding Pre-K). Aimsweb is the district benchmark and progress monitoring platform, as well as iReady, Spire, C4L (Pre-K), Mastery Connect, etc... The IPG is primarily focused on ELA, and ensures the use of HQIM for RTI3 and inclusion settings for the upcoming school years. Coffee County Schools is promoting an increase of inclusive practices for SWDs that promotes exposure to grade-level standards in the LRE. Special Educators have opportunities for collaboration with General educators as shared planning to ensure content is rigorous and standards are aligned with direct special education services.

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

The data used is a current IQ score, classroom-based assessment, state assessments, attendance, progress

Process for Determining Alternate Assessment Eligibility:

Criterion One

monitoring, benchmark assessment, adaptive behaviors (with needs to be significant in all adaptive areas). The successor level for DLM is also reviewed for advancement beyond the target level for participation in TCAP or EOC depending on the student's grade-level. Multiple forms of formative and summative data are used for determining Alternate Assessment participation.

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? *

The most significant cognitive ability will be (3) standard deviations below the mean; this is represented by a 55 IQ. The data used is a current IQ score, classroom-based assessment, state assessments, attendance, progress monitoring, benchmark assessment, adaptive behaviors (with needs to be significant in all adaptive areas). The successor level for DLM is also reviewed for advancement beyond the target level for participation in TCAP or EOC depending on the student's grade-level. Multiple forms of formative and summative data are used for determining Alternate Assessment participation. A student may participate in a highly modified SPED setting based on the most significant cognitive criteria, adaptive, behaviors, medically fragile, and the inability to interact with peers in a large setting. The IEP team will review all options for each student and develop an educational plan that promotes general education settings first followed by supports. All supports should be developed for promoting participation in the LRE. Bi-weekly progress monitoring is facilitated for SWDs. Coffee County Schools ensure all options for accommodations and modifications are considered, and resources are considered for successful implementation. This ensures SWDs have full access with non-disabled peers in their LRE.

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

The data used is a current IQ score, classroom-based assessment, state assessments, attendance, progress monitoring, benchmark assessment, adaptive behaviors (with needs to be significant in all adaptive 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? *

All data is used including but not limited to psychoeducational reports, adaptive ratings, classroom performance, behavior data, medical information etc.

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? *

Multiple forms of formative and summative data are used for determining Alternate Assessment participation. A student may participate in a highly modified SPED setting based on the most significant cognitive criteria, adaptive, behaviors, medically fragile, and the inability to interact with peers in a large setting. The IEP team will review all options for each student and develop an educational plan that promotes general education settings first followed by supports. All supports should be developed for promoting participation in the LRE. Bi-weekly progress monitoring is facilitated for SWDs. Coffee County Schools ensure all options for accommodations and modifications are considered, and resources are considered for successful implementation. This ensures SWDs have full access with non-disabled peers in their LRE.

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? *

The IEP team will review all options for each student and develop an educational plan that promotes general education settings first followed by supports. All supports should be developed for promoting participation in the LRE. All supports are implemented as determined by the student's individual needs. Once supports are determined, they are connected to all educational requirements as their typical peers.

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.



*(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? *

IEPs are annually reviewed at a minimum, and all guidelines are followed for parent/caregiver participation. In meetings where modified curriculum is discussed as an option, parents/caregivers are informed about potential graduation diploma paths. This is discussed as early as initial eligibility and subsequent meetings thereafter if data continues to support alternate assessment participation. Parents/caregivers are provided a thorough explanation, and written references, if requested, to ensure they are aware of all options. One thing to note; there is never a predetermination of student outcomes. All students are gen. ed. first; then services are provided based on individual needs. All IEP paperwork (PWN, IEP narratives, etc...) includes documentation about the impact of modified curriculum and participation in the alternative assessment.

34. How are parents included in the IEP team decision-making process?

*Parents/caregivers are included through every aspect of the IEP process.

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? *IEPs are annually reviewed at a minimum, and all guidelines are followed for parent/caregiver participation. Parents/caregivers are fully informed of the IEP process, and concerns/questions are addressed immediately. All meetings are followed by a PWN that is signed by the parent/caregiver and uploaded on TNPulse.

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.*

Coffee County Schools ensures to provide data-driven, and individualized instructional practices for SWDs. Coffee County Schools provides to ALL students multi-tiered supports via the RTI framework, research-based core instruction, and data-informed interventions for SWDs. Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are developed with measurable (MAGs/objectives) designed to ensure academic and social progress for SWDs. All placement decisions will be based on the students needs. If a student requires more intensive support; this may/will take place in the environment that promotes student learning in all aspects of the educational setting. As with all placement decisions, students come first and will receive support before they fall through the cracks of pushing for all general education settings. Some students will require programming that is tailor made for their needs and not the needs of a percentage on a report. Standards-based instruction is the goal for ALL students, but sometimes there are skills that needs to be taught in order for SWDs - to essentially - have the pieces filled in.

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. *
- Coffee County Schools need best practices for implementing accommodations and modifications in the general education setting that allows access to grade-level content for student with significant learning deficits.