

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#

220 - Dickson County

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

Johnson, Malissa

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.* *

0.91

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.* *

1.03

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.* *

1.4

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

1.36

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

1.47

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

1.3

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.* *

0.92

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.* *

1.06

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.* *

1.44

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

1.32

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

1.34

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

1.25

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

16. Science Participation Rates 2020-21 *

1.18

17. Science Participation Rates 2021-22 *

1.06

18. Science Participation Rates 2022-23 *

1.28

19. Science Participation Rates 2023-24 *

1.43

20. Science Participation Rates 2024-25 *

1.56

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

1.45

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**. *

9

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

3

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? *

In Dickson County, the review of the criteria and expectations for determining if the student meets expectations for participation is led by one of our school psychologists at least annually, or anytime there is a need to revisit the discussion regarding ALT Assessment. The psychologist engages the IEP team in a discussion around the student's eligibility and all relevant data. Additionally, information regarding the Alt Assessment is reviewed with all special education staff during our annual training days.

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

Many sources of data are included in the determination process: A review of all past evaluations, all cognitive and adaptive measures are utilized to determine whether the student scores consistently low compared to same-age peers (multiple raters).

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

Adaptive measures (social, conceptual, and practical domains) are utilized to determine whether the student scores consistently low compared to same-age peers (multiple raters). The student's adaptive behavior scores and observations reflect an ability to independently demonstrate daily living skills.

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 team considers other factors that may have impacted performance on the cognitive assessment to make sure that all decisions for ALT participation are sound. There is evidence in the student's data to show a significant cognitive disability. The assessment specialist has documented observations across settings to show which scores were most consistent with the student's adaptive behavior. The team ensures that the student participates in daily standards-based instruction in ELA, math, science, and social studies with significant support, accommodations, and modifications to engage in the learning.

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

Data from all prior evaluations (cognitive, adaptive, social, etc), ongoing progress monitoring, benchmarks, and observations are included in the decision-making process.

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? *

Current comprehensive data with well-defined present levels are reviewed. The data support the LRE that is defined for each subject level and class. The accommodations and/or modifications are appropriate for the subject and show how they are needed to support meaningful participation.

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? *

The data support the LRE that is defined for each subject level and class. The accommodations and/or modifications are appropriate for the subject and show how they are needed to support meaningful participation. Services and supports are clearly outlined, and the team discusses how the student utilizes and benefits from the support.

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 discusses and differentiates between supports that fall under the universal design for learning and those that fall under specifically designed instruction, and then further adjusts supports for the student's individual readiness and level of progression.

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? *

Parents are essential members of the IEP process. Eligibility criteria are explained carefully during IEP meetings. The assessment specialist utilizes and explains the IEP File Review Rubric to explain all aspects and implications of decisions made regarding ALT Assessment decisions.

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

Parents are essential members of the IEP process. Eligibility criteria are explained carefully during annual IEP meetings, or more often as needed. The assessment specialist utilizes and explains the IEP File Review Rubric to explain all aspects and implications of decisions made regarding ALT Assessment decisions. Parents are provided the opportunity to provide meaningful input and ask questions regarding ALT Assessment.

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? *

Parents are essential members of the IEP process. Eligibility criteria are explained carefully during annual IEP meetings, or more often as needed. The assessment specialist utilizes and explains the IEP File Review Rubric to explain all aspects and implications of decisions made regarding ALT Assessment decisions. Parents are provided the opportunity to provide meaningful input and ask questions regarding ALT Assessment.

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.*

Dickson County Schools is committed to developing and implementing Instructionally Appropriate IEPs that are based on up-to-date student data, assessments, and progress monitoring. There is a strong focus on standards-based instruction in the student's least environment. IEP teams work together to ensure that members have meaningful input and make decisions regarding goals and services so that students make appropriate progress toward goals. Routine reviews of student data and progress ensure that adjustments are made to the student's IEP in a timely manner.

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. * Our district appreciates having access to annual training and training resources from the Department of Education. We will access these opportunities as often as possible to maintain up-to-date training and mindsets.