

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#

275 - Gibson Co Sp Dist

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

Reasons, Chasity

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.* *

1.3

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.* *

1.4

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.* *

0.96

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

1.22

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

0.99

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

1.14

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.* *

1.31

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.* *

1.41

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.* *

0.97

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

1.22

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

0.89

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

1.3

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

16. Science Participation Rates 2020-21 *

1.4

17. Science Participation Rates 2021-22 *

1.07

18. Science Participation Rates 2022-23 *

1.06

19. Science Participation Rates 2023-24 *

1.19

20. Science Participation Rates 2024-25 *

1.1

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

1.5

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**. *

2

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? *

For a student to be considered eligible for the alternate assessment, he/she must have a significant cognitive disability that results in substantial sub-par performance in grade level achievement even with modifications and accommodations. The student must also exhibit adaptive skills that are significantly deficient and require extensive supports, supervision, and individualized instruction across multiple settings when compared to grade level peers. Training is provided each school year for special education teachers and school administrators. The SpEd supervisor must review all new candidates with the SpEd case manager before it is discussed in the IEP meeting. IEP teams are informed about the criterion in the meeting by the trained SpEd case manager. Data used to make the determination come from a current psychological report containing cognitive assessment, educator observations across different environments for both academics and adaptive behaviors, parent input, benchmark assessments, and previous academic achievement assessments if available.

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

Data used to make the determination come from a current psychological report containing cognitive assessment, educator observations across different environments for both academics and adaptive behaviors, parent input, benchmark assessments, and previous academic achievement assessments if available.

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

incorporated into the decision-making process? The student must also exhibit adaptive skills that are significantly deficient and require extensive supports, supervision, and individualized instruction across multiple settings when compared to grade level peers.

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 student has been provided access to grade level content in the least restrictive environment with accommodations as appropriate. If the student was unable to benefit from this instruction, then modifications and additional supports/scaffolds are provided. If the general education setting is not beneficial or the student is unable to be fully included due to disruptive behaviors, the IEP team determines if an FBA/BIP is needed. If communication is a barrier, the IEP considers alternative communication strategies/devices.

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

Data from multiple benchmarks testing, psychological cognitive testing, observations across environments, and previous academic achievement testing are also considered. If the students is unable to access instruction in the general education environment, then the sped teacher, with collaboration with the content teacher, will provide instruction aligned with grade level standards with accommodations and modifications.

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? *

Teams use performance data, progress monitoring data (formative and summative), and trial and error data to determine supports that best benefit the student. If behaviors have prevented access to general education, then the team works the BIP and tries to reintroduce more beneficial gen ed time as appropriate.

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? *

Least Restrictive Environment is the first placement if possible. If the student is unable to benefit from the general education classroom with extensive supports/scaffolds and modifications, then the IEP team considers an LRE in a specialized setting for some parts or most parts of the day. If behaviors are a barrier, the team considers an FBA/BIP to enable the student to spend beneficial time in the gen ed environment as much as possible.

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 starts with present levels and identifies specific barriers to the student's disability. Then the student looks at instructional/environmental that could be given as Tier I support. Additionally, the IEP team will determine if specifically designed instruction is needed for the student to access the standards being taught. The LRE is determined by the IEP team.

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? *

Special Education case managers are trained to review the alternate assessment decision each year at the annual IEP meeting. The signature pages for the alternate assessment placement guide teams to discuss the process and the possible consequences annually. Parents are asked to participate in the discussion. The decision is captured in the meeting notes and on the PWN to be sure parents are informed, even if they are not present in the meeting. For some students with new psychological reports for Intellectual Disability, the team discusses and may defer the decision for a year or two to see how the student performs on the regular TCAP test with peers, if appropriate.

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

Parents are invited to IEP meetings. Reminders are sent home to remind parents about upcoming meetings. Parents are meaningful partners that give input throughout the meeting to put in the IEP. Teachers are encouraged to not use educational jargon but instead make sure parents understand what is being discussed. Parents are encouraged to actively participate. A PWN is sent home after the meeting to ensure that the parent understands what actions will be taken.

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? *The IEP team reviews data at the annual IEP meeting to determine if alternate assessment is needed. Data reviewed includes progress monitoring, grades, standards progress, CASE data, and teacher input. The team ensures that the student still meets the three criterion for Alternative 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.*

Through a combination of strong core instruction, tiered supports, individualized planning, and continuous data review, the LEA ensures that all students receive instruction that is appropriately ambitious, data-driven, and designed to promote meaningful academic progress, consistent with federal requirements. The district ensures that students receive grade level standards based instruction.

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. * none