

## 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#

300 - Greene County

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

Pruitt, Melinda

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. \**

2.06

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. \**

2.01

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. \**

2.25

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

2

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

1.7

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

1.65

## 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.* \*

2.09

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.* \*

2.07

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.* \*

2.25

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

1.91

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

1.61

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

1.55

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

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

2.04

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

2.31

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

2.07

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

1.8

### 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. \*

1.75

## 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**. \*

3

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

1

## 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? \*

Greene County Schools employs two school psychologist and contracts for one additional psychologist with an outside agency. The school psychologists have attended trainings and attended Community of Practice sessions to help learn better how to identify students with significant cognitive disabilities that may qualify for participation in the alternate assessment. The school psychologists work with all special education teachers and IEP teams to help identify students with significant cognitive disabilities. The school psychologists participate in the evaluation and reevaluation process, observe students, and attend IEP meetings to help explain testing results to parent(s)/guardians(s) and other members of the IEP team. The school psychologists follow the Alternate Assessment Participation Guidelines to determine if students meet qualification and ensure only students with significant cognitive disabilities be considered to participate in the alternate assessment. Special Education Teachers have attended trainings offered by the Special Education Supervisor covering guidelines for alternate assessment participation.

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

The school psychologist does a thorough review of the student's cognitive ability and adaptive skills preparing for the IEP Team meeting. During the IEP meeting, information is shared about the student's performance on daily work and classroom tests, cognitive ability, adaptive assessments, supports needed to modify instruction, student's needs for extensive direct instruction and extensive practice of skills. A discussion is held about state content grade-level standards and alternate standards and that participation in the alternate assessment will not lead to a regular high school diploma.

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

Adaptive behavior data is just one component of all the data the team reviews to determine eligibility for the alternate

## **Process for Determining Alternate Assessment Eligibility:**

### **Criterion One**

assessment. Adaptive behavior scores are used alongside cognitive assessments to determine whether a student has a significant cognitive disability. The student must show substantial limitations in adaptive functioning, not just low academic performance. These limitations must affect multiple environments (school, home, community).

## 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 IEP team would first need to determine if the student has had access to appropriate instruction. The IEP team would discuss whether the student has received standards-based instruction aligned to grade-level content (with supports as needed), had consistent attendance, and been taught by qualified staff. If instruction has been inconsistent, interrupted, or inappropriate, the team cannot attribute low performance to a disability yet. The IEP team would then look at response to instruction and interventions to help determine how the student performs when given evidence-based interventions and differentiated or specially designed instruction. If the student makes meaningful progress when instruction improves this suggests an instructional gap, not a significant cognitive disability. If the student shows minimal or no progress despite intensive, individualized supports this supports the presence of a significant cognitive disability.

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

The IEP Team reviews student data such as the cognitive assessments, achievements scores, adaptive behavior measures (like Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales or ABAS-3), student work, progress monitoring, and observations across settings, etc. to make a decision as to whether the skills are due to a significant cognitive disability and not an instructional disadvantage. A true significant cognitive disability shows consistent, pervasive limitations across all of these, not just in academics.



## 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? \*

Academic performance data: Progress monitoring (e.g., CBMs, skill tracking) Work samples over time Benchmark and formative assessments Rate of learning compared to peers Intervention and instructional data: RTI2 documentation (tiers, duration, frequency) Intervention logs (what was tried, how often, results) Fidelity of implementation data Cognitive and adaptive behavior data: Cognitive assessment results Adaptive behavior scales (e.g., Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales, ABAS-3) Evidence of significant limitations in everyday functioning Observational data: Teacher, specialist, and related service provider observations Documentation of prompting levels (e.g., verbal, gestural, physical) Notes on independence vs. reliance on support Service and support data: Type and amount of special education services Need for paraprofessional or adult assistance Use of assistive technology or specialized materials

#### 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 team starts with a review of the student's records and instruction history to determine what instruction the student has received (general education, interventions, special education), how intensive has that instruction been (group size, frequency, duration), and what supports/accommodations have already been provided. This establishes whether the student has already been given increasingly intensive opportunities to learn. The team then looks at how the student responds as instruction becomes more individualized. The team also asks if the student can perform skills independently, or only with support, does the student maintain skills over time, and can they generalize skills across settings, materials, or people.

#### 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 determines what is typically available in the general education environment, such as: differentiated instruction, small-group work, occasional reteaching, and standard accommodations (extended time, graphic organizers, etc.). These are supports that many students use successfully and do not, by themselves, indicate a significant cognitive disability. The IEP team would identify what the student needs beyond that baseline. Next, the IEP team documents supports the student requires that are more intensive (e.g., constant one-on-one instruction vs. occasional small group), more frequent (throughout the entire day, not just during a lesson), and more specialized (explicit, systematic instruction like task analysis or errorless learning).

## 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.

Greene County Schools monitors the number of students that are eligible under each disability category on an annual basis. Although certain categories may increase or decrease for various reasons, we will continue to certify, serve, and assess students according to the individual needs of our current students. The 2024-2025 data shows a slight decrease in participation in ELA (-0.30%), decrease in Math (-0.30%), and slight increase in Science (+0.02%). The District is committed to hold high expectations while evaluating all data and making the best decisions for our students and their future plans. While we did make improvements in two subjects (almost three since 0.02% is insignificant) in our county, we are above the State Rate in all three categories; ELA, Math, and Science. Our three highest distribution rates are Autism, Intellectual Disability, and Multiple Disabilities. We are encouraging our special education teachers to self-monitor records on all alternate assessment students to ensure that participations guidelines have been followed and determinations were appropriate for each student. The district has also asked all school psychologists to complete a self-monitoring on each student in their quads for assurance that each participate on the alternate assessment follows the participation guidelines and determinations were appropriate for each student. If there is any discrepancy, the school psychologist and the special education teachers were to discuss the plan and determine if a new evaluation should be completed or a new IEP Meeting should be held with the parent.

*(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? \*

The school psychologist shares all data with the IEP Team meeting, including, the student's performance on daily work and classroom tests, cognitive ability, adaptive assessments, supports needed to modify instruction, student's needs for extensive direct instruction and extensive practice of skills. A discussion is held about state content grade-level standards and alternate standards and that participation in the alternate assessment will not lead to a regular high school diploma. After all three criteria are shared and discussed, the parent is part of the decision-making on whether the student will participate in the alternate assessment.

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

Parents and students (when appropriate) are given a 10-day written notice or invitation to a meeting when an IEP Team meeting is scheduled. Parents are encouraged to attend and participate in all IEP meetings. Drafts of the IEP are sent to the parent 48 hours before the meeting. All data is discussed in the IEP Team meeting concerning the student's performance on daily work and classroom tests, cognitive ability, adaptive assessments, supports needed to modify instruction, student's needs for extensive direct instruction and extensive practice of skills. A discussion is held about state content grade-level standards and alternate standards and that participation in the alternate assessment will not lead to a regular high school diploma. If the parent chooses not to participate in the IEP Team meeting, all documents are sent to the parent after the meeting, to include the IEP, Greene County Schools Minutes, Prior Written Notice, and any other documents needed for a particular student.

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? \*IEP meetings are held annually to review and revise the IEP accordingly. The school psychologist reviews student data annually to determine participation in the alternate assessment and in order to mark the student eligible for participation in alternate assessment in TN Pulse.

## 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.\*

Greene County Schools implements a comprehensive framework of policies, procedures, and instructional practices designed to ensure all students receive high-quality instruction aligned with the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the standards established in *Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District*. This framework emphasizes equity, accountability, and continuous academic progress for every student, including those with disabilities. All instruction is aligned to state academic standards and informed by evidence-based practices as required under ESEA. Curriculum guides, pacing standards, and instructional resources are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure rigor and accessibility for diverse learners. For students with disabilities, IEPs are developed and implemented in compliance with *Endrew F.*, ensuring that each student receives an educational program reasonably calculated to enable meaningful progress in light of their individual circumstances. IEP teams use comprehensive evaluation data to establish present levels of performance, develop measurable annual goals aligned to grade-level standards, determine appropriate accommodations, modifications, and services, and review and revise IEPs regularly based on student progress. The LEA uses the RTI2 framework to provide layered academic and behavioral supports to provide Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III supports. Student progress is monitored frequently, and instructional decisions are adjusted based on data. Multiple sources of data (formative assessments, benchmark assessments, state assessments, and progress monitoring tools) are used to identify student needs, inform instruction and interventions, and evaluate program effectiveness. Data teams meet regularly to analyze results and plan responsive instruction. Special Education Teachers and the special education instructional coach monitor student progress toward academic and IEP goals on an ongoing basis. Progress reports are shared with families at regular intervals. If a student is not making expected progress, instructional strategies, supports, or placement are reviewed and adjusted. The LEA provides ongoing professional learning aligned with ESEA requirements. Families are actively involved in educational planning and decision-making processes. The LEA ensures meaningful participation in IEP meetings, clear communication regarding student progress, and access to resources and supports. The LEA conducts regular internal reviews and participates in state monitoring processes to ensure compliance with federal and state requirements. School improvement plans incorporate ESEA and Division of Special Education and Student Supports goals, and adjustments are made based on performance data and stakeholder feedback.

## 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. \* Greene County Schools would like for someone to share how the scores of students with IEPs affects the regular education teacher's TEAM evaluation and scores. In particular, when a special education student is on alternate assessment and then a decision is made to move to the regular assessment, how does the scores affect the regular classroom teacher's evaluation?