

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#

330 - Hamilton County

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

Eargle, Michelle

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.* *

1.59

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.* *

1.42

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.* *

1.55

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

1.49

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

1.25

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

1.25

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.* *

1.59

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.* *

1.46

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.* *

1.58

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

1.53

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

1.13

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

1.13

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

16. Science Participation Rates 2020-21 *

1.63

17. Science Participation Rates 2021-22 *

1.55

18. Science Participation Rates 2022-23 *

1.51

19. Science Participation Rates 2023-24 *

1.49

20. Science Participation Rates 2024-25 *

1.33

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

1.22

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**. *

38

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

25

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? *

Hamilton County Schools ensures that IEP teams are informed of the criteria and expectations for alternate assessment participation through a combination of formal procedures, training, and structured pre-meeting review processes. IEP teams are trained to first consider participation in the general assessment and only consider alternate assessment if the student meets all three state-established criteria, beginning with Criterion One: the presence of a significant cognitive disability. This expectation is embedded in district assessment procedures and aligned with state rules requiring careful, data-driven decision-making. To ensure consistent application of these expectations, the district utilizes an Alternate Assessment Review Committee process. Prior to the IEP meeting, school teams present student data to a multidisciplinary committee that includes district leadership and assessment experts. The committee: -Reviews whether the student meets all three criteria, with a strong emphasis on Criterion One -Provides guidance, problem-solving support, and talking points for the IEP team -Ensures teams understand both eligibility expectations and the implications of participation, including impact on diploma pathways and postsecondary outcomes. The committee makes recommendations only, reinforcing that the IEP team retains decision-making authority, except in cases where the student clearly does not meet Criterion One (significant cognitive disability), in which case the committee will not support alternate assessment consideration. Additionally, teams are required to come prepared to articulate how the student meets each criterion and to demonstrate that implications have been discussed with families. This structured process ensures that only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are considered.

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

IEP teams utilize a comprehensive body of data to determine eligibility for alternate assessment, ensuring decisions are not based on a single data point. Primary data sources include: -Cognitive assessment data, ensuring a valid and reliable estimate of the student's intellectual functioning -Adaptive behavior assessments, including measures across conceptual, social, and practical domains -Evaluation reports and eligibility documentation aligned to intellectual

Process for Determining Alternate Assessment Eligibility:

Criterion One

disability criteria -Present Levels of Educational Performance (PLEPs) and IEP goal data -Progress monitoring data demonstrating the student's rate of learning and response to instruction -Instructional data, including evidence of access to and progress within standards-based instruction -Observation data and input from educators and specialists The district's IEP file review rubric reinforces that eligibility decisions must reflect a holistic analysis, including: - Consideration of exclusionary factors -Validation that cognitive scores accurately represent ability -Alignment between cognitive functioning and adaptive behavior deficits -Evidence that the student's needs are consistent with a significant cognitive disability, not solely low academic performance or other factors Additionally, the review committee process ensures that multiple data sources are examined collaboratively prior to the IEP meeting, reducing the risk of over-reliance on any single measure and strengthening the integrity of eligibility determinations.

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

Adaptive behavior data is a critical and required component in determining whether a student meets Criterion One and is considered alongside cognitive data to ensure a valid eligibility determination. IEP teams and the review committee analyze adaptive behavior data by: -Reviewing standardized adaptive behavior assessments that measure functioning across the conceptual, social, and practical domains -Comparing results from multiple raters (e.g., teacher and parent) to ensure consistency -Examining whether scores are significantly below same-age peers, indicating substantial limitations in daily functioning -Considering observational data and functional performance when discrepancies exist between raters The district's rubric requires clear evidence that: -Adaptive behavior deficits are consistent and significant, not situational -The student demonstrates limited independence in daily living skills -Adaptive functioning aligns with cognitive data to support the presence of a significant cognitive disability If adaptive data is inconsistent, teams must document which data sources most accurately reflect the student's functioning based on systematic observation and multiple data points. The review team ensures that both school-based and parent-reported adaptive behavior ratings are considered when determining whether the student meets Criterion One. These multiple perspectives provide a comprehensive view of the student's functioning across environments. In cases where there is a significant discrepancy between raters, the Alternate Assessment Review Committee recommends the collection of additional data sources (e.g., further standardized measures, structured observations, or functional data) to validate the student's level of adaptive functioning. This ensures that the determination of a significant cognitive disability is based on consistent, corroborated evidence and not a single data point, and that Criterion One is met with fidelity. Through both the pre-IEP review committee process and the IEP team discussion, adaptive behavior data is used not just as a compliance measure, but as a decision anchor, ensuring that only students with pervasive and significant functional limitations are considered for alternate assessment.

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? *

Hamilton County Schools ensures that a student's performance is not the result of an instructional disadvantage through a systematic review of access to grade-level, standards-aligned instruction prior to any alternate assessment determination. IEP teams are required to document and consider: -The student's history of participation in standards-based instruction, including instruction aligned to Tennessee Academic Standards -Evidence that the student has received appropriate accommodations, modifications, and specially designed instruction within the general education curriculum -The intensity, duration, and consistency of instruction, ensuring it is comparable in opportunity to that of peers Through the Alternate Assessment Review Committee process, teams must present evidence that: -The student has had meaningful access to grade-level content, not a reduced or substitute curriculum -Instruction has included scaffolded supports and individualized strategies designed to promote engagement with standards -Lack of progress is not attributable to gaps in instruction, inconsistent implementation, or lack of access, but rather reflects the student's underlying cognitive and adaptive needs The district's file review rubric further reinforces that students must demonstrate limited progress despite appropriate, standards-aligned instruction and supports, ensuring that eligibility is not driven by instructional history or opportunity gaps. This layered process—combining IEP team analysis, review committee validation, and rubric-based evidence—ensures that alternate assessment decisions are based on true disability-related need rather than instructional disadvantage.

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

IEP teams utilize multiple sources of instructional, performance, and progress data to determine whether the student is learning content linked to state standards and whether their performance reflects a significant cognitive disability. Key data sources include: -IEP Present Levels of Educational Performance (PLEPs) documenting current academic functioning and access to standards -Progress monitoring data aligned to IEP goals and standards-based instruction -Classroom performance data, including work samples, curriculum-based measures, and teacher-developed assessments -Benchmark and district assessment data, including universal screeners and alternate benchmark measures where applicable -Evidence of the student's engagement in standards-based instruction, including the use of accommodations, modifications, and scaffolds - Documentation of instructional supports and specially designed instruction, including frequency, duration, and setting - Observation data reflecting how the student accesses and responds to grade-level content Additionally, the review committee requires teams to demonstrate: -That instruction is linked to grade-level standards, even when modified -That supports are designed to increase access, not replace content -That the student's learning profile reflects persistent and significant challenges despite appropriate instruction The district's rubric emphasizes the importance of: -Alignment between IEP goals and standards-based instruction -Evidence of ongoing progress monitoring and student response to instruction - Documentation that instructional strategies are systematically implemented and adjusted over time This comprehensive data

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. The set ensures that decisions are based on evidence of access, opportunity, and response to instruction, supporting accurate determination of eligibility for alternate assessment.

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? *

IEP teams utilize a comprehensive set of data sources to determine whether a student requires extensive, direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in the grade- and age-appropriate curriculum. These data include: -Present Levels of Educational Performance (PLEPs) that clearly document the student's current academic and functional performance -Progress monitoring data demonstrating the student's rate of progress over time, including responsiveness to instruction and interventions -IEP goal data, including evidence of skill acquisition, generalization, and maintenance -Classroom performance data, such as work samples, curriculum-based measures, and teacher observations - Documentation of prior and current accommodations, modifications, and interventions, including evidence of implementation and effectiveness -Behavioral and functional data (e.g., FBA/BIP data, if applicable) that impact access to instruction -Service delivery data, including frequency, duration, and setting of specially designed instruction Through the Alternate Assessment Review Committee process, teams must demonstrate that: -The student requires intensive, individualized instruction beyond what is typical in general education with supports -The need for supports is consistent across settings and over time -The student's progress is limited without substantial and sustained intervention The district's file review rubric reinforces that eligibility decisions must include clear evidence that the student requires extensive and substantial supports, supported by aligned PLEPs, goals, and documented instructional needs.

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? *

IEP teams determine the type and level of supports through an individualized, data-driven process grounded in the student's strengths, needs, and response to prior instruction. Teams: -Begin with general education as the first consideration, ensuring that supports are designed to promote access to grade-level standards in the least restrictive environment -Analyze data from previous interventions, accommodations, and modifications to determine what has been effective -Use progress monitoring and performance data to identify the intensity and type of supports required for the student to make measurable gains -Align supports directly to identified skill deficits and functional needs, ensuring they are specific, measurable, and tied to IEP goals For students whose LRE includes a highly modified special education setting, teams must demonstrate: -That supplementary aids and services in general education were considered and, when appropriate, attempted -That the selected setting and supports are necessary based on documented data, not based on disability category or program availability -That supports remain focused on increasing access and participation in standards-based instruction, even within a more restrictive setting The review committee process further validates that supports are appropriately matched to the student's needs and that decisions reflect individualized planning rather than default placement or programming.

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? *

IEP teams distinguish between disability-driven supports and those available within the instructional environment through a careful analysis of necessity, intensity, and individualization. Teams consider: -Whether the support is universally available or typically provided to peers within the instructional setting -Whether the student requires the

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.

support more frequently, with greater intensity, or in a more individualized manner than peers -Whether the support is essential for the student to access, engage in, and make progress in standards-based instruction, as opposed to enhancing convenience or preference Supports are determined to be disability-related when: -Data indicate that the student is unable to make meaningful progress without the support, despite access to high-quality instruction -The support is specifically aligned to the student's documented needs in the PLEPs and IEP goals -The support requires specialized instruction, training, or sustained adult facilitation beyond what is typically available in the general education environment The Alternate Assessment Review Committee reinforces this distinction by requiring teams to justify supports based on individual student data, ensuring that eligibility for alternate assessment is not influenced by the availability of specialized settings or services, but by the student's demonstrated need for extensive, individualized 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.

Hamilton County Schools analyzed alternate assessment participation in comparison to the district's overall population of students with disabilities to determine whether disproportionality exists within subgroups. This analysis indicates that: Hispanic students represent approximately 14% of the district's SWD population but 17% of students participating in alternate assessment Black students represent approximately 28% of the SWD population but 35% of alternate assessment participation White students are proportionally underrepresented in alternate assessment participation These findings indicate some disproportionality in participation among Hispanic and Black students. The district recognizes that, as a large school system with access to specialized programming and regional medical resources, Hamilton County may serve a higher concentration of students with significant and complex needs. However, the district also acknowledges that demographic and system factors alone do not justify disproportionality. To address this, Hamilton County Schools has implemented a centralized alternate assessment review committee process, strengthened training for IEP teams, and increased monitoring of subgroup participation to ensure that all eligibility decisions are based strictly on cognitive and adaptive data aligned to the three criteria, and not influenced by disability category, language status, or demographic characteristics.

*(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? *

Hamilton County Schools ensures that parents are fully informed of both the eligibility criteria and the implications of alternate assessment participation through structured IEP processes and required documentation. During any IEP meeting in which alternate assessment is discussed, the IEP team: -Reviews the three required criteria, including the requirement that the student has a significant cognitive disability, is receiving instruction linked to state standards, and requires extensive individualized supports -Provides parents with clear explanations of how their child's individual data aligns to each criterion In addition, the district requires the use of the "Implications for Participation in Alternate Assessment" document, which is: -Reviewed with parents during the IEP meeting -Provided to parents as part of the meeting documentation -Used to explicitly communicate that participation in the alternate assessment is aligned to a highly modified curriculum that does not lead to a traditional high school diploma and may impact postsecondary opportunities To further support informed decision-making, the Alternate Assessment Review Committee process ensures that school teams are prepared to clearly explain eligibility and implications to families prior to the IEP meeting. This includes providing teams with talking points and data summaries to support accurate and consistent communication. Through these practices, parents are provided with transparent, data-based information to understand both the eligibility requirements and the long-term impact of alternate assessment participation.

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

*Hamilton County Schools ensures that parents are active, informed participants in all IEP team decisions related to alternate assessment participation. Parents are included in the process by: -Being invited to and participating in the IEP team meeting, where assessment decisions are formally made -Receiving and reviewing evaluation data, present levels, and progress information used to determine eligibility -Engaging in discussion with the IEP team regarding how the student meets (or does not meet) each of the three criteria The district's process reinforces that: -The IEP team—not the review committee—makes the final determination, ensuring that parents are part of the decision-making body -Parents are provided opportunities to ask questions, share input, and express agreement or disagreement with the proposed assessment decision -Documentation, including the IEP and Prior Written Notice (PWN), reflects the team's discussion and the basis for the decision Additionally, by requiring that the implications of participation are reviewed and discussed, the district ensures that parents are not only included procedurally, but are able to participate in a meaningful, informed manner.

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? *Hamilton County Schools ensures that participation in the alternate assessment is reviewed at least annually and reconsidered whenever new or updated data warrants through a structured system of IEP review, required re-evaluation practices, and centralized oversight. At a minimum, the IEP team reviews assessment participation during the annual IEP meeting, where the team: Reexamines all three alternate assessment criteria using current evaluation, adaptive behavior, and progress monitoring data Reviews the student's access to and progress within standards-based instruction Determines whether the student continues to require extensive, direct individualized instruction and substantial supports To ensure decisions are based on current and valid data, the district has established additional requirements for students initially identified for alternate assessment at a young age. Specifically: Students whose

alternate assessment eligibility was determined prior to second grade must be re-reviewed through the Alternate Assessment Review Committee before continuing participation. If prior evaluation data was based on preschool assessments or indirect measures (e.g., parent rating scales such as the DP-4), the district requires: A direct cognitive assessment, when appropriate. Updated adaptive behavior assessments from both school and home. When language impacts assessment validity, nonverbal cognitive assessments may be required. Indirect measures are only used when a student is unable to participate in any direct assessment, ensuring that decisions are based on the most accurate estimate of ability possible. In addition to annual IEP review, the district utilizes ongoing monitoring and targeted review processes: Periodic checks are conducted on students participating in alternate assessment to ensure continued alignment with eligibility criteria. Students are flagged for mandatory review when data suggests potential misalignment, including: Students with eligibility categories not typically associated with significant cognitive disability (e.g., SLD only). Students demonstrating higher performance levels, including Advanced scores on alternate assessments. In these cases, the school team is required to return to the review committee (peer review process) to reevaluate the appropriateness of participation. If concerns are validated, the district requires that an IEP team be convened to formally reconsider the student's assessment placement. The district reinforces that: Participation in alternate assessment is not permanent. Decisions must be actively reviewed and adjusted based on updated data. Through the combination of annual IEP review, required reevaluation practices, and targeted review committee oversight, Hamilton County Schools ensures that alternate assessment participation is continuously monitored, intentionally revisited, and aligned to each student's current needs.

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.* Hamilton County Schools ensures that students participating in alternate assessments are provided access to standards-based instruction and make appropriate academic progress through a comprehensive system of instructional expectations, data-driven IEP development, progress monitoring, and ongoing district oversight. Access to Standards-Based Instruction (ESEA Alignment): The district maintains a "Tier 1 First" approach, ensuring that all students, including those with significant cognitive disabilities, are first considered for participation in general education instruction aligned to Tennessee Academic Standards. For students participating in alternate assessment, instruction is required to be linked to grade-level standards, with appropriate accommodations, modifications, and scaffolds to support access. Special education services are provided in addition to—not in place of—standards-based instruction, ensuring students engage in rigorous and meaningful academic content. District guidance and monitoring processes reinforce that: -Instruction must remain aligned to grade-level standards, even when content is modified -Students must have ongoing opportunities to engage in academic content across core subjects -Placement decisions do not limit access to standards-based instruction Individualized, Ambitious IEP Development (Endrew F. Alignment): IEP teams develop individualized, data-driven goals based on Present Levels of Academic and Functional Performance, ensuring that each student's program is reasonably calculated to enable progress appropriate in light of the child's circumstances. Goals are designed to: -Address critical skill deficits, including communication and literacy -Support increased access to and participation in standards-based instruction -Promote measurable growth over time, with clear alignment to student needs The district emphasizes that expectations for students with disabilities remain high and meaningful, and that IEPs must reflect more than minimal progress. Progress Monitoring and Data-Based Decision Making: Hamilton County Schools requires ongoing progress monitoring aligned to IEP goals, with data collection frequency matching the requirements outlined in the IEP. Through the use of TN PULSE and district expectations: -Student progress is regularly documented and reviewed -Instructional adjustments are made based on student response to intervention and instruction -IEP teams use data to determine whether students are making appropriate progress and to revise programming as needed District Monitoring and Accountability Systems: The district has implemented multiple layers of oversight to ensure fidelity of implementation: -A structured IEP file review process, including regular reviews across schools, to ensure alignment between PLAFPs, goals, services, and progress monitoring -Use of a file review rubric to evaluate the quality of standards-based instruction and evidence of student progress -Ongoing training and support for educators and administrators focused on standards-aligned IEP development, accommodations, and instructional practices Alignment to Alternate Assessment Participation: Through the Alternate Assessment Review Committee process and ongoing monitoring, the district ensures that only students who meet all three criteria participate in alternate assessment and that these students: -Receive instruction aligned to state standards -Demonstrate a need for extensive, individualized supports -Are making progress consistent with their individualized goals and instructional program The district also reviews student performance data, including students demonstrating higher levels of achievement, to ensure continued participation in alternate assessment remains appropriate.

Ensuring Students Are Making Academic Progress

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. * In many states they define what the most significant cognitive disabilities are with a specific standard score. I understand that there needs to be some room for teams to consider a student's unique needs. However, districts are struggling against IEP teams who are making alternate assessment placements on kiddos who are cognitively functioning in the mid to high 60s. If that can't happen that it would be helpful if somehow TN PULSE could flag any input for alternate assessment when there is a score that is outside of the required criteria. Even better, if Teachers and psychologists were prevented from finalizing IEPs when there are scores that are at least outside of a typical SEM in cognitive or adaptive.