

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#

370 - Hawkins County

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

Jackson Angela

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. **

1.11

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. **

1.45

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. **

1.48

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

1.63

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

1.16

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

1.1

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.* *

1.09

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.* *

1.45

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.* *

1.47

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

1.61

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

1.02

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

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

16. Science Participation Rates 2020-21 *

1.31

17. Science Participation Rates 2021-22 *

1.24

18. Science Participation Rates 2022-23 *

1.42

19. Science Participation Rates 2023-24 *

1.54

20. Science Participation Rates 2024-25 *

1.24

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

1.2

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**.

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? *

IEP teams meet annually to determine if a student demonstrates a significant cognitive delay and should participate in the TCAP Alternate Assessment. Hawkins County meets annually with special ed teachers to ensure that our teachers understand the Federal Participation Guidelines. We begin our PD session by informing teachers the legal mandates behind TCAP-Alt Assessments. On August 26, 2024, teachers met to discuss each Criterion. The district utilizes the power point presentations provided by the state department and other resources such as the diploma options. Training is offered for both general ed. administrators, and special ed teachers. Training included using the states' Federal Participation Guidelines: Criteria One, Criteria Two, and Criteria Three. Training includes discussing and understanding how to appropriately identify students who has a significant cognitive disability and requires extensive direct individualized instruction based on the following data options: teacher observations, Aims web, N2Y data, Psychological evaluations, Edmark data, adaptive behavior scales, and other progress monitoring data individualized for each student.

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

IEP team members review cognitive and adaptive behavior along with classroom performance data and data provided through specific programs that provide progress monitoring data and or benchmark data. Teachers, principals, school psychologists, related service staff, along with parents make the final determination.

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

Teams looks at results of adaptive behavior skills, teacher collected data, and curriculum-based measures to determine if student has significant difficulty demonstrating independence in daily living skills, social interactions, and communication across settings.

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 looks to make sure that students have access to appropriate, effective core instruction that is linked to grade level standards, delivered by qualified educators. Progress monitoring benchmark data is reviewed to determine if students are making progress once the instruction takes place. If the student shows minimal, slow, or no progress despite intensive support, this points toward a significant cognitive disability rather than an instructional disadvantage.

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

Teams will look at cognitive assessments, adaptive behavior assessments, classroom performance and work samples, observations across settings, and teacher and parent input.

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? *

The team looks at the types of accommodations and modifications the student needs to access the grade level content. Supplemental Aids and support are also determined based on individual student needs. This information is gathered through data from classroom performance, work samples, benchmark data, observations across settings, parent input, and teacher input. The team determines if the student's needed accommodations, modifications, services, and supports are extensive and beyond what can be provided within the general education setting. After looking at this, the team along with the parents determine the LRE placement. In doing so, the team considers the impact for participation in graduation options and post-secondary opportunities.

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 must first identify the student's specific needs and barriers and then match supports directly to those needs. The team must determine if these supports can be appropriately provided in the general education setting first. Data will be used to determine the necessary intensity of the supports and services. If this cannot happen in the general education setting, the team will recommend moving to a more restrictive setting.

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 team would need to ask and discuss does the student need the support because of their disability in order to progress toward the goal(s) or is this something that all students would need or can use. Another response would be is it individualized.

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.

Hawkins was not identified of being disproportionate. If we were to be disproportionate, we would conduct a review of records, our policies and procedures and testing protocols.

*(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 invited and encouraged to attend IEP meetings. Graduation and diploma requirements as well as an individualized course of study are reviewed at the annual IEP meetings. Parents are informed that participation in the alternate assessment reduces the likelihood that a student will graduate with a regular diploma. The three criteria for participation in the alternate assessment are discussed and the team determines participation. Hawkins County Schools offer a Parent Resource Fair annually to connect parents and students to resources and agencies for postsecondary support. This information and resources equip parents in being active participants in the decision-making process.

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

Parents are invited to IEP meetings and are encouraged to participate in all decisions. Visuals are shared with parents that outline graduation requirements and the diploma options. Parent input is sought after throughout the IEP development. The three criteria for participation in the alternate assessment are reviewed at least annually to ensure that the most appropriate assessment decision is made. Parents are also made aware of the implications of participating in the alternate assessment and are informed that the decision must be made annually with a full data review.

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 three criteria for participation in the alternate assessment are reviewed at least annually to ensure that the most appropriate assessment decision is made. Parents are also made aware of the implications of participating in the alternate assessment and are informed that the decision must be made annually with a full data review.

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.* Hawkins County Schools has board policies regarding Special Education Services and the provision of FAPE. Procedures are in place for Continuum of Services, FAPE, IEP Process, Selecting State and District Accommodations, Disproportionality, Evaluation Procedures for Initials and Reevaluations, and Need for Intensive Intervention.

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. *
- We continue to request Professional Development for teachers and administration regarding the criterion for participation in the alternate assessment and ways to better support students with the most significant cognitive needs.