

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#

440 - Jackson County

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

Todd Clinton

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. **

1.18

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. **

1.48

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. **

1.31

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

1.34

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

1.49

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

1.49

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.* *

1.05

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.* *

1.28

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

1.28

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

1.34

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

1.34

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

16. Science Participation Rates 2020-21 *

0.067

17. Science Participation Rates 2021-22 *

1.74

18. Science Participation Rates 2022-23 *

1.05

19. Science Participation Rates 2023-24 *

1.19

20. Science Participation Rates 2024-25 *

1.68

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

1.68

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**. *

1

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? *

The IEP team discusses All three criterion questions. Criterion 1: The student has a significant cognitive disability. Only students with the most significant cognitive disability should be considered for the alternate assessment. Criterion 2: The student is learning content linked to (derived from) state content standards. There is sufficient data to indicate the student is learning content linked to (derived from) state content standards. Criterion 3: The student requires extensive direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in the grade- and age-appropriate curriculum. a) requires extensive, repeated, individualized instruction and support that is not of a temporary or transient nature, and b) uses substantially adapted materials and individualized methods of accessing information in alternative ways to acquire, maintain, generalize, demonstrate and transfer skills across multiple settings.

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

The IEP team has uses multiple sources of information and data including IEP team input, IEP Goals, Progress monitoring data, current and past assesments, and services showing the need or not to address these deficits areas.

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

The IEP team has used multiple sources of behavior data, including IEP team input, IEP Goals, Progress monitoring data, FBA, and BIP when relevant, current and past assessments, and IEP services showing the need or not to address these deficit areas.

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 also ruled out exclusionary factors such as lack of appropriate instruction, limited English proficiency, excessive absences, environmental and/or cultural factors as the primary cause of the student's performance. The team uses multiple sources of data, IEP team input, and documentation such as attendance records, IEP services and progress monitoring data. To further ensure the student is growing based on their current services and instruction they are receiving the team reviews (academic achievement testing, classroom performance, and teacher observations across settings)

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

The team uses multiple sources of data, IEP team input, and documentation such as attendance records, IEP services and progress monitoring data. To further ensure the student is growing based on their current services and instruction they are receiving the team reviews (academic achievement testing, classroom performance, and teacher observations across settings)

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? *

Data the team uses includes: IEP progress monitoring data, IEP goal progress, current services and times, and Level of support in the general education classroom. Teacher input and how the student responds to modified content, generalization of academic and behavior skills. Such as how much re-teaching is needed, task analysis and academic scaffolds, etc.

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 IEP team reviews multiple sources of data and the team begins by reviewing students' strengths, present levels and current and past classroom and academic performance. The team reviews IEP progress monitoring data, IEP goal progress, current services and times, and Level of support in the general education classroom. When discussing LRE rate of progress helps guide decisions given the situation about of a highly modified special education setting for all or part of the day. Given this situation the team will have two different setting to be able to compare the data.

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 distinguishes between supports required due to the student's disability and supports that are available as part of the general instructional environment or other LRE by reviewing evaluation data, present levels of performance, the adverse educational impact statement in their current and past IEPs, and documentation of the student's need for specially designed instruction and related services. In students' current IEP students' adverse educational impact statement identifies how the student's disability affects involvement and progress in the general education curriculum. The team reviews cognitive, academic, adaptive, behavioral, communication, and/or medical data to determine how the disability impacts them across the school environment.

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.

Across the LEA, our current distribution of race/ethnicity for all students across demographics includes (White 93%, 0.5% Black, Asian 0.3%, 3.7%) For our Alternate Assessment participation by Race and Ethnicity for (2024-25 SY) we have 2 students, 16.67% with (Hispanic) race/ethnicity and 10 or 83.33% (White) race/ethnicity.

*(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 informed of the eligibility criteria and implications of alternate assessment participation through IEP Team meeting procedure used in JCS. The JCS procedure for this explains the IEP team's steps when considering alternate assessment, the team reviews the state participation criteria and supporting data during the IEP meeting. The criteria are explained in family-friendly language, and the team discusses the data used to support the decision. Parents are informed that participation in alternate assessment means the student will receive instruction based on alternate academic achievement standards that are substantially modified from grade-level expectations. The team explains the potential long-term implications, including the impact on graduation pathways and the likelihood that the student may not earn a traditional high school diploma. The IEP team revisits this decision at least annually to ensure parents continue to understand the student's participation and any changes in implications or graduation pathways.

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

***JCS** IEP procedure explains that parents are members of the IEP team and the casemanager ensures Parents receive advance notice of the IEP meeting and are informed that alternate assessment participation will be discussed. When possible, relevant information and data are shared with families prior to the meeting so they have time to review and prepare questions or invite others to the meeting. During the IEP meeting, evaluation results are explained in family/parent-friendly language, progress monitoring data, and the state alternate assessment participation criteria in family-friendly language. Parents are encouraged to ask questions, share their concerns, and provide input regarding their child's strengths, needs, communication, independence, and long-term goals. The team ensures parents understand the instructional changes and potential diploma implications before any decision is made. Decisions are made collaboratively, and parent input is considered in all parts of their students IEP.

35. Participation in the alternate assessment must be reviewed at least annually. Students may transition to the general assessments at any time, as determined by the IEP team.

What processes are in place to ensure these decisions are fully discussed and reviewed at least annually? *****Parents receive advance notice of the IEP meeting and are informed that alternate assessment participation will be discussed. When possible, relevant information and data are shared with families prior to the meeting so they have time to review and prepare questions or invite others to the meeting. During the IEP meeting, evaluation results are explained in family/parent-friendly language, progress monitoring data, and the state alternate assessment participation criteria in family-friendly language. Parents are encouraged to ask questions, share their concerns, and provide input regarding their child's strengths, needs, communication, independence, and long-term goals.

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.*

IEP teams develop goals that are ambitious, individualized, and reasonably calculated to enable progress in light of each student's unique circumstances and educational disability. The team uses: Present levels of performance, Evaluation data, Progress monitoring and intervention data, Parent input and student strengths. Professional development is provided to general and special education staff on during weekly coaching meetings in each of our 4 schools. This includes: Alternate academic achievement standards, Differentiated and specially designed instruction, Data collection and progress monitoring. Progress reports are generated at least quarterly and data collection method is determined by IEP team.

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 at this time.