

## 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#

460 - Johnson County

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

South, Emogene

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.* \*

1.22

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.* \*

1.25

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.* \*

1.54

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

1.36

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

1.57

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.* \*

1.23

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.* \*

1.26

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.* \*

1.57

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

1.42

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

1.37

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

1.49

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

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

1.06

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

1.3

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

1.31

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

1.5

### 20. Science Participation Rates 2024-25 \*

2.04

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

1.42

## 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**.

0

## 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? \*

Only students with a high level of severity associated with the cognitive disability are considered. In addition, only students who are learning content linked to Tennessee Academic Standards; and who require extensive, directly individualized instruction and substantial support to achieve measurable gains in the grade- and age-appropriate curriculum are considered. The student's IEP team considers all assessments, as well as daily work samples, and input from all team members. In every case, students who are made eligible for alternative assessment are in CDC classroom placement, or they receive similar services at their home school that does not have a separate CDC program. The Special Education Supervisor works closely with each IEP team to determine that eligibility criteria is met.

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

The learning objective, core content and expected outcomes for our students that participate in the alternate assessment are aligned to state and grade level standards but are modified due to the impact of the significant cognitive disability. Students with significant cognitive disabilities participate in the Unique Learning System. It is a one of a kind solution designed specifically to help students with special learning needs master their state's grade level standards. Teachers deliver differentiated, standards aligned content enhanced by powerful assessments, data tools, and research and evidence based instructional support.

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

The learning objective, core content and expected outcomes for our students that participate in the alternate assessment are aligned to state and grade level standards but are modified due to the impact of the significant cognitive disability. Students with significant cognitive disabilities participate in the Unique Learning System. It is a one of a kind solution designed specifically to help students with special learning needs master their state's grade level standards. Teachers deliver differentiated, standards aligned content enhanced by powerful assessments, data tools,

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

### **Criterion One**

and research and evidence based instructional support.

## 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 uses several data tools to outline the student's skills and ensure that the skill deficits are from the cognitive disability and not due to instructional disadvantages. One tool the team utilizes is observations from teacher and parents to make sure that the student is an active learner and participates in instruction linked to grade-level standards and addresses knowledge and skills that are appropriate and challenging for this student. Another tool used is AimsWeb. Students receive three benchmarks a year and are progress monitored to look at deficit skills along with areas of growth. The team also looks at the IEP goals and short-term objectives to make sure that the goals are linked to the skills required for the students to increase access, participation, and independence in all environments, including grade-level instruction

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

The team reviews the student's psychological evaluation reports, results of individual cognitive ability tests, adaptive behavior skills data, results of individual or group-administered achievement assessments, individual reading assessments, findings of communication or language proficiency assessment, teacher collected data from classroom observation, progress monitoring data, and IEPs.



## 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? \*

A student with a significant cognitive disability who meet the requirements for alternate assessment requires substantial modifications, adaptations, or supports to meaningfully access the subject area content and requires intensive individualized instruction to acquire and generalize knowledge. To make this determination the IEP team utilizes several different sources of data. The team reviews the student's psychological evaluation reports, results of individual cognitive ability tests, adaptive behavior skills data, results of individual or group-administered achievement assessments, individual reading assessments, findings of communication or language proficiency assessment, teacher collected data from classroom observation, progress monitoring data, and IEPs.

#### 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? \*

Each year, the team analyzes the students needs using data collection that includes teacher, parent, and related service providers. The look at both the student's strengths and weaknesses and how well they are benefiting from different types of support in their specialized classes. The team maintain open communication between the special education teacher, general education teachers, parents, and all other stakeholders to coordinate supports that are needed consistently across all environments. This gives a true picture of specific modifications, accommodations as well as other supports the students needs to participate meaningfully in the classroom.

#### 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 maintain open communication between the special education teacher, general education teachers, parents, and all other stakeholders to coordinate supports that are needed consistently across all environments. This gives a true picture of specific modifications, accommodations as well as other supports the students needs to participate meaningfully in the classroom.

## **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.

Our plan for reducing/eliminating disproportionality is tied to students matriculating to the point that they have completed their state assessments, plus we will be more stringent in making new students eligible for alternate assessments. Every special education teacher and IEP team has copies of Alternate Assessment Participation Guidelines: Decision Making Tools for IEP Teams and the Alternate Assessment IEP File Review Rubric to use to guide their decision making.

*(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 Special Education Supervisor and the School Psychologist will participate in IEP meetings at which alternate assessment will be discussed to ensure that the parents and other IEP team members fully understand the requirements and implication of participation to ensure that the most appropriate decisions for each individual student are made.

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

Parents are part of the IEP decision making team. Parents are also asking for their input and observation of their child's progress and ability.

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? \*

This decision is discussed each year during the annual IEP.

## 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.\*

The learning objective, core content and expected outcomes for our students that participate in the alternate assessment are aligned to state and grade level standards but are modified due to the impact of the significant cognitive disability. Students with significant cognitive disabilities participate in the Unique Learning System. It is a one of a kind solution designed specifically to help students with special learning needs master their state's grade level standards. Teachers deliver differentiated, standards aligned content enhanced by powerful assessments, data tools, and research and evidence based instructional support. Students are progress monitored to help ensure 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. \*
- No support is being requested from the department at this time.