

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#

510 - Lewis County

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

Davis, Dana

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.* *

0.89

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.* *

0.62

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.* *

0.96

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

1.53

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

1.98

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

1.93

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.* *

0.63

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.* *

0.59

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.* *

0.96

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

1.51

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

1.72

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

1.93

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

16. Science Participation Rates 2020-21 *

0.63

17. Science Participation Rates 2021-22 *

0.75

18. Science Participation Rates 2022-23 *

0.84

19. Science Participation Rates 2023-24 *

1.36

20. Science Participation Rates 2024-25 *

2.46

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

1.93

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**. *

6

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

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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 are informed of the criteria and expectations through a structured, data-driven review process supported by district personnel. The district's school psychologist collaborates with the IEP team to analyze data on cognitive functioning and adaptive behavior. The team is expected to conduct a comprehensive review of evaluation data, including cognitive assessments, academic achievement, and adaptive behavior scales. They are guided by clear expectations that cognitive assessments must show significantly below-average intellectual functioning consistent with significant cognitive disabilities. Additionally, adaptive behavior data must align with criteria for a significant cognitive disability, and parent input about the student's functioning in home and community settings is included to provide a complete picture. Finally, the Special Education Director reviews all data with the team to ensure that only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are considered, reinforcing the criteria and expectations for participation decisions.

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

The determination is based on multiple sources of data, including cognitive assessments, academic achievement data, and adaptive behavior scales. Cognitive functioning data must show significantly below-average intellectual functioning, while adaptive behavior data are used to assess whether the student's skills align with criteria for a significant cognitive disability. In addition, parent input regarding the student's adaptive behavior in home and community settings is considered to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the student's abilities.

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

Adaptive behavior data is incorporated as a key part of the IEP team's comprehensive review of the student's evaluation data. The team uses adaptive behavior scales to determine whether the student's adaptive functioning aligns with the criteria for a significant cognitive disability. Adaptive behavior data from the student's home and

Process for Determining Alternate Assessment Eligibility:

Criterion One

community as well as school data is used in the decision making process.

Process for Determining Alternate Assessment Eligibility: Criterion Two

In this section, describe the processes in place to ensure the IEP team is making informed, data-based decisions aligned to the alternate assessment participation criteria. Please note that completion of the Alternate Assessment Worksheet in TN PULSE alone is not sufficient evidence.

Criterion Two: The student is learning content linked to (derived from) state content standards. All students, regardless of the assessment or the least restrictive environment (LRE) should receive standards-aligned instruction that is rigorous, meaningful, and sufficient in duration to increase student outcomes. Special education services are provided in addition to, not in place of, standards-based instruction.

In the questions below, describe the evidence used to ensure the student was provided access to grade-level, standards-aligned instruction. This should include an explanation of the process used to ensure the student received instruction aligned to grade-level standards at an appropriate level of rigor, intensity, and duration comparable to their peers.

27. How does the IEP team ensure the student's performance and skill level are due to a significant cognitive disability rather than an instructional disadvantage? *

The IEP team ensures the student's performance and skill level are not due to an instructional disadvantage by confirming that the student has access to appropriate, standards-based instruction and by closely monitoring their response to that instruction. All students are taught content linked to state standards, with instruction scaffolded and adapted to meet individual needs, whether in the general education setting or through additional supports.

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

The IEP team uses multiple sources of data to make an informed determination, including progress monitoring data such as curriculum-based measurements and alternative assessment results to track achievement on standards-aligned goals. They also use classroom observations and participation data to evaluate the student's engagement and ability to access and respond to instruction. In addition, feedback from parents, teachers, and other IEP team members is considered as part of the decision-making process.

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 determination is supported by multiple data sources that show the student's need for intensive support. These include progress monitoring data, such as curriculum-based measurements and alternative assessment results, which track the student's achievement on standards-aligned goals. Classroom observations and participation data are also used to evaluate the student's engagement with instruction and ability to access the curriculum. Additionally, feedback from parents, teachers, and other IEP team members contributes to understanding the level of support the student requires to make measurable gains.

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 determines the type and level of supports using multiple sources of data to identify the student's individual needs, consider the full continuum of services, and select supports necessary for meaningful progress. Placement decisions are made in alignment with LRE requirements and are based on the student's need for specially designed instruction. Even when a student's LRE is a highly modified special education setting, decisions are individualized, data based and focused on ensuring appropriate access to instruction and progress toward IEP goals.

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 disability required supports from general instructional supports by determining whether the student needs supports beyond those universally available to peers in order to access instruction and make progress due to the impact of the disability. Supports that are individualized, specialized, or required at a greater intensity based on data are documented as disability related and included in the IEP.

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 district's participation is not disproportionate.

*(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? *

Since parents are a crucial part of the IEP team, they are included in every step of the decision-making process. When a student is found eligible for the alternate assessment, diploma options and their implications are discussed in depth with parents to ensure they fully understand their child's post-secondary options.

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

Parents are active members of the IEP team and are involved in all decisions regarding their child's special education services. They share important information about their child's strengths, needs, and progress, help identify priorities, and participate in developing goals, accommodations, and services. Parents are encouraged to ask questions, offer input, and give consent for decisions, ensuring that the IEP reflects their child's unique needs and family perspectives.

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? *Participation in the alternate assessment is reviewed at least annually as part of the student's IEP review process. During each annual IEP meeting, the team, including parents, reviews current evaluation data, classroom performance, progress on IEP goals, and state assessment participation criteria. The IEP team discusses whether the alternate assessment remains appropriate or if the student could meaningfully participate in the general assessment with or without accommodations. Documentation of this discussion and the team's decision is included in the IEP, ensuring the determination is fully considered, revisited annually, and adjusted at any time if the student's needs or skills change.

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 LEA ensures that students receive instruction aligned with the requirements of

ESEA and the *Endrew F.* decision through clearly defined policies, procedures, and instructional practices. All students with disabilities receive specially designed instruction that is standards-aligned, evidence-based, and reasonably calculated to enable meaningful progress in light of their individual circumstances. IEP teams use multiple sources of data, including evaluations, progress monitoring, and classroom performance, to develop measurable goals and determine appropriate services, accommodations, and supports. Ongoing progress monitoring is conducted throughout the year, and data are reviewed regularly to adjust instruction as needed. Professional development is provided to staff to support high-quality instruction, inclusive practices, and data-driven decision making. Collectively, these practices ensure continuous review of student progress and instructional effectiveness, resulting in appropriate academic growth for all students.

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. * Our district would benefit from training to help staff better support these students. With additional support, students could remain in the general education classroom for more of the school day. Increased access to Tier 1 instruction would also support consideration of a transition to the general education assessment.