

## 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#

680 - Perry County

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

Richardson, Jennifer

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.* \*

1.72

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.* \*

1.92

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.* \*

0.95

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

1.29

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

0.82

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

1.06

## 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.* \*

1.72

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.* \*

1.91

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.* \*

0.91

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.* \*

0.71

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

1.06

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

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

1.86

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

1.9

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

1.26

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

1.52

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

1.29

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

2.67

## 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**. \*

2

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? \*

IEP teams are informed of TCAP Alternate participation expectations through mandatory state guidance, formal decision-making tools, required IEP documentation procedures, and ongoing training that emphasize the three eligibility criteria and the federal 1% participation requirement. Decisions are individualized, data-based, and documented in compliance with IDEA and ESSA.

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

IEP teams use multiple data sources to determine TCAP Alternate participation, including cognitive assessment results, adaptive behavior data, academic achievement and progress-monitoring data, PLAAFP information, instructional and curriculum data, observational data across settings, and parent input. Decisions are based on data collected over time and document that the student has a significant cognitive disability and requires extensive, individualized supports.

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

Adaptive behavior data are used to confirm the impact of the student's cognitive disability on daily functioning. IEP teams review standardized adaptive behavior assessments, functional skill data, and observations across settings to determine whether the student requires extensive, individualized supports for communication, self-care, socialization, and independence. This data helps verify that the student's needs are pervasive and consistent, supporting eligibility for TCAP Alternate participation.

## 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 that a student's performance and skill level are due to a significant cognitive disability rather than an instructional disadvantage by reviewing multiple sources of data over time and confirming the student has received appropriate instruction from appropriately licensed teachers. Academic and functional data, progress-monitoring results, and PLAAFP information are examined to determine the student's response to instruction. In addition, all CDC teachers hold proper 461 Comprehensive Special Education licensure, ensuring students receive instruction delivered by qualified personnel. The team documents that the student's limited progress persists despite appropriate, evidence-based instruction and supports, confirming the needs are related to a significant cognitive disability and not lack of instruction or opportunity.

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

IEP teams use multiple sources of data to make an informed determination, including cognitive assessment results, adaptive behavior data, academic achievement and progress-monitoring data, PLAAFP information, IEP goal progress, instructional and intervention data, teacher observations, and parent input. Data are reviewed over time to ensure the student has received appropriate instruction and that limited progress is due to a significant cognitive disability rather than an instructional or environmental disadvantage.

## 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? \*

To support Criterion Three, the IEP team reviews multiple data sources demonstrating the student's need for extensive, direct individualized instruction and substantial supports. These data include progress-monitoring results and IEP goal data showing limited measurable gains despite intensive instruction; instructional and intervention data reflecting the level, frequency, and intensity of supports provided; PLAAFP information documenting significant instructional modifications; teacher observational data across settings; and work samples demonstrating ongoing dependence on adult support. Together, these data confirm that the student requires extensive individualized instruction to make progress in the grade- and age-appropriate curriculum.

#### 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 needed by reviewing multiple sources of data, including PLAAFP information, progress-monitoring data, IEP goal progress, instructional and intervention data, teacher observations, and parent input. The team analyzes how the student performs with varying levels of support and documents the intensity, frequency, and duration of supports required for the student to make progress. For students whose LRE includes a highly modified special education setting for all or part of the day, the team ensures that placement decisions are based on documented need for substantial supports and individualized instruction, not convenience or disability category, and that supports are aligned to help the student access the grade- and age-appropriate curriculum to the maximum extent appropriate.

#### 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 disability-related supports and those available in the instructional environment by comparing how the student performs with typical classroom supports versus individualized supports documented in the IEP. Using PLAAFP information, progress-monitoring data, and observations, the team identifies which supports are necessary due to the student's disability and go beyond universal or standard supports available to all students.



## 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.

Based on review of TCAP Alternate assessment participation data, Perry County Schools did not identify disproportionality in alternate assessment participation. The majority of students participating in the alternate assessment are White, which aligns with the LEA's overall student population, which is approximately 91% White. Due to the small number of students assessed using the alternate assessment, percentage variations may occur and do not indicate inappropriate identification. The LEA will continue to annually review participation data by race/ethnicity and other subgroups, reinforce use of state-provided participation decision tools, and provide guidance to IEP teams to ensure alternate assessment decisions are individualized, data-based, and aligned with federal and state eligibility criteria.

*(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 on an annual basis through the IEP process. During each annual IEP meeting, the team reviews the TCAP Alternate eligibility requirements, explains why the student meets the criteria, and discusses the instructional differences and expectations associated with alternate assessment participation. Parents are explicitly informed that participation involves highly modified academic content and may limit the student's ability to earn a traditional high school diploma. This information is documented in the IEP, and parents are given the opportunity to ask questions and provide input before a decision is finalized.

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

Parents are included as full members of the IEP team and participate in all decision-making related to their child's educational program. Parents are invited to IEP meetings, provided advance notice and relevant information, and encouraged to share input regarding their child's strengths, needs, and educational goals. During the meeting, parents actively engage in discussions about assessment participation, supports, placement, and services, and no decisions are finalized without parent input and consent.

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? \*Alternate assessment participation is reviewed at least annually through the IEP process. During each annual IEP meeting, the team discusses the student's assessment participation and reviews multiple data sources, including TCAP Alternate score reports, IEP goal progress, PLAAFP information, and instructional data. The team specifically reviews TCAP-Alt performance, including whether the student scored at the advanced level, to determine if the student may be able to participate in the general assessment. These discussions are fully documented in the IEP, and students may transition to the general assessment at any time if data indicate the alternate assessment is no longer appropriate.

## 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.\*

Perry County Schools ensures students participating in the alternate assessment receive standards-based instruction and make appropriate academic progress in accordance with ESEA and *Endrew F.* Students receive instruction aligned to Tennessee academic standards with appropriate modifications and are taught by appropriately licensed special education teachers. IEPs include measurable, ambitious goals based on PLAAFP data, and student progress is routinely monitored through classroom assessments, work samples, and IEP goal progress. Alternate assessment participation and academic outcomes, including TCAP Alternate results, are reviewed at least annually, and instructional supports or assessment decisions are adjusted as needed to ensure progress appropriate to each student's circumstances.

## 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. \*
- At this time, Perry County Schools does not require additional support and will continue to use existing Tennessee Department of Education guidance and resources to meet all requirements.