

## 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#

740 - Robertson County

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

Swindle, Misti

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.* \*

1.09

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.* \*

0.98

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.* \*

1.01

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

1.05

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

1.05

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

0.877

## 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.* \*

1.08

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.* \*

1.03

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.* \*

1.03

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

1.04

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

0.95

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

0.827

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

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

0.98

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

0.98

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

0.98

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

0.96

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

1.01

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

1.029

## 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**. \*

7

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? \*

The primary method is special education professional development sessions where Kite/DLM participation is an explicit topic. Specifically targeted training is provided to teachers serving students in comprehensive development classrooms. Any time the IEP team is determining the need for alternate assessment the special education teacher explains the process and requirements to the team. The school psychologist discusses eligibility criteria to support or oppose the need for Alternative Assessment.

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

1. Progress toward IEP academic goals 2. Evidence of access to grade-level content through substantially modified instruction, which shows no progress. 3. Patterns showing the student is not working toward—or able to generalize—grade-level expectations, even with supports. 4. Cognitive and adaptive behavior data and scores

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

Adaptive behavior is an appropriate supporting data source because it helps the IEP team understand how a student functions across settings and the level of support required to access instruction. The team reviews this data to support or oppose the overall need for alternate assessment. It cannot or should not be the only factor, but must be considered.

## 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? \*

IEP teams ensure that a student's performance and skill level reflect a significant cognitive disability by reviewing multiple sources of data over time and confirming that the student has had appropriate instruction and access to learning before determining alternate assessment participation. District guidance requires that this determination occur through a thorough annual review of present levels and instructional data, not through a single score, placement, or worksheet.

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

IEP goal progress Classroom standards tracking Initial and reevaluation data Special education and general education teacher data Parent input District screeners, alternative benchmarks, curriculum and teacher made assessments

## 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 IEP team determines that a student requires extensive, direct individualized instruction and substantial supports through a systematic review of multiple data sources during the annual IEP meeting, ensuring the decision is based on the student's documented learning characteristics rather than placement, disability category alone, or instructional gaps. This includes a review of present levels, goal progress, adaptive skills, teacher and parent input.

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 through a data-driven, individualized decision-making process that begins with the student's present levels of academic and functional performance and is guided by documented needs—not by placement alone.

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? \*

IEP teams make this distinction by grounding all support decisions in the student's documented, individualized needs as described in the PLAAFP and by explicitly separating what all students can access from what this student requires because of their disability.



## **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.

There is no identified disproportionality amongst our alt testing groups. The distribution shows known disproportionality trends.

*(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 participation in the alternate assessment through a combination of required IEP team practices, direct discussion during the IEP meeting, and the provision of procedural safeguards, ensuring parents are active, informed participants in the decision-making process.
34. How are parents included in the IEP team decision-making process? \*Parents are encouraged to engage openly through questioning and commenting regarding their student's abilities, participation, access, and current progress. Parents are encouraged to ask questions regarding their understanding of alternative assessment and the relationship to graduation options in years to come.
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 team discusses this at least annually during any IEP meeting. The data is reviewed and the questions are posed regarding the assessment type. All documentation must be included on the annual IEP, Prior Written Notice and Parent Conference Notes.

## 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 with disabilities receive instruction that meets the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESEA) and the standard established in *Endrew F.* through a combination of written policies, structured IEP procedures, professional development, and ongoing monitoring of student progress. These systems are designed to ensure instruction is appropriately ambitious, individualized, and results-oriented.

## 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.