

## 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#

761 - Oneida

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

Burress, Kim

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.* \*

1.89

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.* \*

1.79

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.* \*

1.34

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

2.05

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

1.99

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

1.45

## 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.* \*

1.77

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.* \*

1.75

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.* \*

1.35

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

1.91

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

1.81

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

1.45

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

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

1.4

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

1.93

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

1.69

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

1.92

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

1.85

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

1.45

## 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**.

2

## 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 district implements policies and practices ensuring that decisions are made on an individual basis by each student's IEP team, consisting of all required members and a school psychologist who can appropriately interpret results of cognitive and adaptive assessments. IEP teams are informed of the criteria and expectations annually through district-wide professional development and prior to each IEP meeting in which decisions will be made through review of the TDOE guidance document/Decision Making Tool for IEP teams. The guidance document is shared with all stakeholders. It is included in school administrator, special education teacher and general education teacher toolkits through Google share, and it is shared with families of students who are being considered for participation prior to the IEP meeting with the supervisor's contact number in case the family has questions.

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

The IEP team must review all assessment data related to intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior in order to make appropriate decisions and must identify the sources of information used to make decisions regarding criterion one. The district does NOT use any type of "cut-off" score. However, an explanation of "most significant cognitive disability" is included in training and information so that IEP teams understand that not every student who falls in the category of Intellectual Disability will necessarily meet criterion one. Teams are required to carefully consider results of the most current assessments. If the team feels the assessments may not be current enough to provide appropriate information, permission may be obtained to conduct additional assessments. Students' adaptive behavior skills may be reassessed if the most current assessments are more than three to five years old, depending on the student's age, or if the student was young when assessments were done. Intellectual functioning may be reassessed if the team suspects previous assessments may not give an accurate measure of the student's current functioning or if the student was young when assessed.

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

## Process for Determining Alternate Assessment Eligibility:

### Criterion One

process? \*

Teams are required to carefully consider results of the most current parent and teacher adaptive rating scales. If the team feels the assessments may not be current enough to provide appropriate information, permission may be obtained to conduct additional assessments. Students' adaptive behavior skills may be reassessed if the most current assessments are more than three to five years old, depending on the student's age, or if the student was young when assessments were done. Adaptive behavior assessments are considered in relation to intellectual functioning. If there is a significant discrepancy between the two. One or both may be reassessed.

## 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 is required to review each student's present levels of performance, annual goals and short-term objectives, goal monitoring data, lesson plans, work samples, class schedules, fidelity checks, and coaching notes to ensure that the student's instruction is linked to and derived from state standards and that the student has been provided access to grade-level standards. Classroom instruction is monitored through regular fidelity checks and walkthrough observations using tools that are aligned to expectations of rigor, intensity and duration of instruction provided to peers. Special education instructors are provided the same instructional training and practice that is provided to general education teachers to ensure high-quality standards-based instruction is being provided.

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

IEP present levels of performance, annual goals and short-term objectives, goal monitoring data, lesson plans, work samples, class schedules, fidelity checks, and coaching notes



## 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 is required to review the student's current IEP to include the consideration of special factors, current levels of performance, goals/objectives, supplemental aids and services (accommodation/modifications), extended school year option, special transportation, and assistive technology components in order to gauge the level of supports and services a student requires.

#### **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? \***

Supports for students who participate in a highly modified special education setting for all or a portion of the day are determined by consideration of the student's ability to participate in a modified curriculum. Supports are determined as related to needs such as physical access, communication, assistive technology or special equipment, hand-over-hand assistance, one-on-one adult support, etc., as opposed to academic modifications, which are embedded in the modified curriculum based on the student's levels of academic performance and 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 considers the question, "Would the student be able to access and make progress in the general education curriculum without this support if high-quality, universal instruction were provided?" If a support is something any student can access—such as flexible seating, small-group instruction, or reteaching—it is considered part of the instructional environment. The team examines evaluation data and present levels of performance and determines if the student's skills deficits or functional needs are directly related to their disability and if those needs persist, even when strong instruction is in place. The team also considers the intensity and frequency of supports needed by the student.

## 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.

Oneida District Disproportionality Data is as follows: Economically Disadvantaged 47.06%, as compared to the state 37.43% (district 42%) Not Economically Disadvantaged 52.94%, as compared to the state 62.57% English Learner 0%, as compared to the state 3.91% (district 1%) Not English Learner 100% as compared to the state 96.09% Female 35.29%, as compared to the state 32.57% Male 64.71%, as compared to the state 67.43% American Indian or Native American 0.00% as compared to the state .44% (district <1%) Asian 5.88% (1 student), as compared to the state 2.98% (district 1%) Black or African American 5.88% (1 student), as compared to the state 34.62% (district 1%) White 88.24%, as compared to the state 49.30% There are no significant disproportionalities in Oneida data as it is compared to state data or district data.

*(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 parent participates in the review of each criterion as evidence is presented and must sign the determination document, if in agreement, stating understanding that participation will not result in the student earning a regular diploma. Participation is reviewed at each student's annual review IEP meeting with participation of the school psychologist who explains the criterion and evidence and answers any questions the parent and team may have. The process is guided by the TDOE decision-making guidance document and decision-making tool.
34. How are parents included in the IEP team decision-making process? \* It is the district's practice that no decisions regarding participation in the alternate assessment are made in IEP team meetings without direct parent participation as a team member, either in person or via conference call. The parent must be able to participate as an informed member of the IEP team, with the criteria for participation and post-secondary outcomes clearly and explicitly communicated. The school psychologist explains the criteria and evidence and answers any questions the parent and team may have.
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 is reviewed at each student's annual review IEP meeting with participation of the school psychologist who explains the criterion and evidence and answers any questions the parent and team may have. The process is guided by the TDOE decision-making guidance document and decision-making tool.

## 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.\*

Policies, procedures, and instructional practices are grounded in data-based decision making and a strong commitment to the least restrictive environment (LRE). The district utilizes a district-wide Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Focus Manual to guide IEP teams in determining appropriate accommodations, modifications, and services. These decisions are guided by each student's Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) and aligned directly to measurable annual goals. The IEP team ensures that services are designed to enable the student to access, participate in, and make progress in the general education curriculum alongside non-disabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate. Placement decisions are made individually and begin with the general education setting, with supplementary aids and services considered prior to more restrictive options. Instructional practices include the use of evidence-based interventions, differentiated instruction, and supports aligned to each student's needs. Special education and general education staff collaborate to implement inclusive practices and provide appropriate scaffolding to promote student success in the general education environment. To meet the standards outlined in ESEA, the district ensures that all students, including those with disabilities, have access to high-quality, standards-aligned instruction delivered by qualified personnel, ensuring all personnel receive high-quality professional development and training in instruction and in writing and implementing high-quality IEPs. The district ensures that IEPs are developed with clearly defined, ambitious, and measurable IEP goals that are directly tied to identified areas of need. Progress toward these goals is systematically monitored and documented. The district has established a structured progress monitoring system in which student data is formally reviewed every nine weeks. During these review cycles, IEP teams analyze progress monitoring data, classroom performance, and other relevant information to determine whether the student is making sufficient progress. If progress is not adequate, the team engages in a problem-solving process to adjust instruction, interventions, supports, or services. This may include revising goals, increasing service intensity, or considering additional supports within the general education setting before moving to more restrictive environments. In addition, the district's practices emphasize ongoing communication with families and collaboration among multidisciplinary team members. Parents are regularly informed of their child's progress and are active participants in decision-making processes, ensuring transparency and shared accountability. Through the implementation of these aligned policies and practices—grounded in LRE, data-driven decision making, evidence-based instruction, and continuous progress monitoring—Oneida Special School District ensures that students with disabilities receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) that meets federal requirements and supports meaningful 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. \* The district needs no support at this time.