

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#

793 - Arlington

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

Weirich, Carolyn

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.* *

0.93

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.* *

0.61

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.* *

0.84

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

1.11

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

0.73

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

0.73

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.* *

0.97

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.* *

0.69

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.* *

0.93

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

1.17

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

0.66

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

0.66

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

16. Science Participation Rates 2020-21 *

0.92

17. Science Participation Rates 2021-22 *

0.73

18. Science Participation Rates 2022-23 *

1.1

19. Science Participation Rates 2023-24 *

0.83

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. *

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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**. *

0

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? *

Meetings are held with administrators, teachers, school psychologist, and support service providers regarding guidance on alternative assessments including criteria used to determine eligibility for the alt assessment. The training focus is on interpreting cognitive and adaptive data together, avoiding common misidentification errors, and applying state participation criteria with fidelity.

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

IQ 60 or below, Adaptive scores- 60 or below, students that are below the 1 percentile and evidence of global cognitive impairment and adaptive behavior measures determine how cognitive deficits impact real world functioning. All assessments including behavioral assessment data is used to make the decisions for students.

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

The standardized data across domains is used in the decision making process. Students that have significant cognitive disabilities and adaptive scores that confirm deficits, not just academic, but impact independent functioning are considered for the alternate assessment. There is a converging of evidence that includes classroom performance, work samples, progress monitoring data, teacher/parent input, observations, and response to intervention.

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 will need to demonstrate that the child has adequate access to high quality, standards aligned instruction. This is conducted through a comprehensive review of different data sources and instructional variables. The IEP team should verify that the student received standards aligned, grade level instruction in the LRE with appropriate supports and accommodations. The IEP team needs to review progress monitoring data, intervention logs, and evidence that research-based instructional strategies and supports were in place. Using this information, the IEP will need to determine that lack of progress is not due to inconsistent implementation, inadequate instructional time, or misalignment to standards.

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

The data used to make the informed determination is comprehensive psychological evaluations, including cognitive and adaptive behavior assessments. The team should also use factors such as excessive absences, limited English proficiency, or lack of access to instruction, and any documentation that these are not primary contributors to the student's performance. General ed teachers, special education staff and related service provider input should be considered as data.

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? *

Progress monitoring data, Response to Intervention, Classroom performance data, State and District assessment data, Comprehensive evaluation results, IEP goal progress reports, Observational data and service provider input, and Service delivery records.

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? *

Teams must consider several factors when determining the type and level of support needed including present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, progress monitoring and intervention data and IEP goal progress. The team will need to conduct a task and environmental analysis breaking down grade level standards and classroom expectations to identify specific barriers to access and participate. Based on the findings the team determines: instructional supports, accommodations and modifications, related service and supplementary aids. Using this information, the team will make decisions regarding the students LRE and how much time is needed in the special education setting verse the general education setting.

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 makes the distinction by anchoring every support decision on individual student needs, then verifying whether that need exceeds what is routinely available to all students in the instructional environment. The team identifies universal (Tier 1) support that are available for all students in the gen ed setting. This is typical support for all students. Next the team analyzes the student present levels of academic achievement and functional performance. The team also looks at persistent skill deficits that directly are linked to the student's disability and that are not addressed through universal supports. The team will review progress monitoring and intervention data to determine how students respond to increasingly targeted supports. If the student demonstrates limited or insufficient progress despite consistent access to high quality Tier1 and Tier II supports, this indicates a need for specially designed instruction and individualized supports.

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.

Data dig meetings are held monthly with teachers and administrators to drill down student data to see how individual students are performing academically and behaviorally. This allows individualized planning for student success. Culturally Responsive Practices are utilized to connect students' cultures, languages, and life experiences with what and how they learn. Culturally Sensitive Assessments are utilized. An example is assessing a on-verbal student with a test that is for non-verbal students. Trauma informed interventions are utilized to promote a safe and welcoming climate in the school setting. This focuses on building positive relationships between teachers, school staff, parents, and students. PLC meetings are held weekly to review individualized student success and make decisions to reduce/eliminate idsproportionality. Alternative assessment participants are decided on individual student needs.

*(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? * TCAP Alt information is provided to parents when consent is gained if suspected area of disability could move the student to qualify for alternative assessment. An IEP meeting is held that includes the parent/guardian where results/eligibility are shared, data is presented, and a decision is made by the team regarding testing. The testing decision is addressed annually during and IEP meeting where present levels of performance are shared.

34. How are parents included in the IEP team decision-making process? * An IEP meeting is held that includes the parent/guardian where results/eligibility are shared, data is presented, and a decision is made by the team regarding testing. The testing decision is addressed annually during and IEP meeting where present levels of performance are shared.

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 testing decision is addressed annually during and IEP meeting where present levels of performance are shared.

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.* Arlington Community schools ensures that students participating in alternative assessment receive standards-based instruction and make appropriate academic progress through aligned policies, procedures, and practices. All IEP's are developed using standards-based framework, and with present levels derived from multiple data sources and measurable annual goals linked to grade-level standards or alternative academic achievement standards. Goals are individualized, ambitious, and designed to enable progress appropriate in light of student's circumstances, consistent with *Endrew F. v Douglas County School District*. IEP teams follow a structured decision-making process to determine assessment participation. The team addresses significant cognitive and adaptive deficits and the need for extensive, individualized instruction. These decisions are reviewed annually. Progress is monitored regularly using multiple data sources. Data is reviewed in inform instructional adjustments and IEP revisions when needed. Arlington Community Schools provides ongoing professional development on standards-based IEPs, alternate assessment criteria, and evidence-based instruction aligned with the ESEA act. Administrative oversight includes monitoring participation rates, reviewing IEP quality, and implementing corrective actions as needed.

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. *
- Real-time data visibility, a powerpoint presentation to be shared with teachers, staff, and administrators regarding TCAP alt, and sharing of trends across the state.