

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#

822 - Kingsport

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

Jones, Magen

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.* *

1.52

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.* *

1.58

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.* *

1.82

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

1.65

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

1.66

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

1.57

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.* *

1.62

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.* *

1.71

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.* *

1.86

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

1.75

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

1.53

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

1.49

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

16. Science Participation Rates 2020-21 *

1.53

17. Science Participation Rates 2021-22 *

1.47

18. Science Participation Rates 2022-23 *

1.53

19. Science Participation Rates 2023-24 *

1.7

20. Science Participation Rates 2024-25 *

1.92

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

1.7

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**. *

9

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? *

District school psychologists are involved in reviewing assessment data related to cognitive functioning and adaptive behavior and interpreting these results for IEP teams. When needed, the team requests updated program planning assessments so decisions are based on current data with valid scores. The district has included Alternative Assessment training for all special education staff and for building-level leaders (principals) over the past school year to help inform special education and LEA team members on criterion following state trainings attended by district leaders.

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

Data includes standardized assessments such as the Vineland or ABAS, classroom functioning and daily living skills.

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

Adaptive behavior data supports whether the student's functional skills are low enough to justify participation in the alternate assessment instead of the general TCAP.

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? *

All students are in their LRE and either provided the rigor in the general education classroom with modifications and/or accommodations or provided with the modified curriculum, Unique Learning Curriculum. Students receive benchmark assessments and monthly unit checkpoints to monitor progress through the Unique Learning Curriculum when on the modified curriculum and district and state assessments when they are on the general education curriculum. Students individual goals and instruction outlined in their IEP's are linked to the grade-level standards and address knowledge and skills that are appropriate and challenging for the student.

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

Unique Learning Curriculum, student benchmark assessments, and monthly unit checkpoints to monitor progress and data. This can also include standardized cognitive assessments, psychological evaluation results, and intellectual functioning scores.

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 district has included Alternative Assessment training for all special education staff and for building-level leaders (principals) over the past school year to help inform special education and LEA team members understand criteria following state trainings attended by district leaders. These trainings specifically directed IEP teams to begin discussions about alternative assessment eligibility by first discussing Criterion 3 to determine which students in the district require extensive direct instruction and substantial supports. Case studies and specific examples were used to train teams to engage in meaningful discussions when considering this criterion. Data reviewed include the level of individualized supports required, adaptive materials, specific accommodations and modifications required, and behavior data.

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 utilize present levels, evaluation and assessment data, progress monitoring, and accommodations/modifications that are required for the student to be successful to determine their setting and need for their LRE.

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? *

Teams use evaluation data, present levels, and progress data to justify when a support is uniquely required due to the 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.

KCS is currently following the state guidelines for Alt Assessment eligibility. At this time, we currently have 86 students who meet the eligibility requirements for Alt Assessment. We continue to work with our school psychologist to ensure all students are appropriately placed on Alt Assessment. For the 24-25 school year, the state percentage for ELA was 1.35% with KCS being at 1.66%; for Math the state was 1.22% and KCS was 1.53%; and for Science the state was 1.47% and KCS was 1.92%. KCS currently has 76.74% White, 5.81% Hispanic, 11.63% African American, and 3.49% American Indian or Native American students on Alt. Assessment.

*(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 and students, as applicable, will receive a 10-day written notice of any IEP meeting scheduled. Parents are included in the IEP team meeting and provided a copy of the IEP with the PWN after the IEP is finalized. If a parent chooses not to participate in the IEP team meeting, all documents are provided after the meeting. Parents and students, as applicable, will receive a 10-day written notice of any IEP meeting scheduled. Parents are included in the IEP team meeting and provided a copy of the IEP with the PWN after the IEP is finalized. If a parent chooses not to participate in the IEP team meeting, all documents are provided after the meeting. During the IEP meeting, parents are explained the criteria for Alternate Assessment and the specific diploma paths. Parents are encouraged to participate in the decision-making process. This process will begin in elementary school and continue annually through their school career.

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

During the IEP meeting, parents are explained the criteria for Alternate Assessment and the specific diploma paths. Parents are encouraged to participate in the decision-making process. This also includes being provided the assessments and IEP 48 hours prior to the meeting.

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? *District School Psychologist review alt assessment criteria for each individual student on a yearly basis and each student's annual IEP meeting.

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 compliance with *Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District* and ESEA requirements through clearly defined policies, procedures, and practices that emphasize access to grade-level or alternate academic standards and measurable student progress. All IEPs are developed by a multidisciplinary team using current evaluation data, progress monitoring, and present levels of performance to ensure goals are ambitious, individualized, and reasonably calculated to enable progress appropriate to the student's circumstances. For students participating in the alternate assessment, instruction is aligned to Tennessee's alternate academic achievement standards and is delivered through specially designed instruction that prioritizes meaningful access to grade-level content at an appropriate level of complexity. The LEA implements ongoing progress monitoring systems to ensure students are making appropriate academic and functional progress, with data reviewed regularly during IEP meetings. Instructional decisions, including supports, accommodations, and modifications, are adjusted based on student response to instruction. Additionally, LEA procedures include guidance and professional development for staff on standards-based IEP development, appropriate identification for alternate assessment participation, and instructional practices that ensure students are actively engaged in academic learning. Oversight processes are in place to monitor consistency and ensure that placement in alternate assessment does not limit access to rigorous instruction aligned with state standards.

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. * No additional support is needed at this time.