

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#

901 - Johnson City

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

Frizzell, Allecia

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.* *

1.54

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.* *

1.49

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.* *

1.33

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

1.54

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

1.68

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.* *

1.57

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.* *

1.56

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.* *

1.33

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

1.38

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

1.41

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

1.68

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

16. Science Participation Rates 2020-21 *

1.47

17. Science Participation Rates 2021-22 *

1.46

18. Science Participation Rates 2022-23 *

1.38

19. Science Participation Rates 2023-24 *

1.65

20. Science Participation Rates 2024-25 *

1.46

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

1.62

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**. *

6

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 process used to ensure IEP teams are only considering students with the most significant cognitive disabilities begins with the assumption that all students with disabilities (SWD) are general education students first. Only students with the most significant cognitive impairments who are unable to access grade-level assessments with accommodations are considered for alternate testing. If a member of the IEP team feels that alternate testing could be appropriate, then the special education teacher contacts the assigned diagnostician. The diagnostician will conduct an initial review of results from the psychological, cognitive tests, adaptive, achievement, communication and language, observations, and other relevant data, to determine whether the student meets criteria (typically IQ and adaptive scores are in the 60s or lower). If the initial review indicates that alternate testing could be appropriate, then the information is sent to the IEP administrator. The request is then logged and shared with the school psychologist to review criteria. If criteria are met, and the team determines that alternate testing is appropriate, then the student information is logged as participating in the alternate assessment. The special education department maintains a list of all students who participate in alternate assessment for tracking purposes. During the review process, the diagnostician or psychologist may recommend additional or updated testing to support the team decision for alternate assessment. For students who have already been identified to participate in alternate assessment, the IEP team must review continued participation on an annual basis. The school psychologist also reviews the information annually, according to the annual IEP schedule.

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

Eligibility requires evidence of significant deficits in cognitive, adaptive, and typically speech/language function, with the student's least restrictive environment typically being a self-contained special education classroom setting. Data typically includes: Standardized cognitive assessments (e.g., IQ measures) Adaptive behavior assessments (e.g., BASC-3, Vineland, ABAS) Academic achievement data (e.g., WIAT-4, KTEA-3, classroom-based assessments, review of academic levels) Progress monitoring data State and district assessment results Observational data across settings

Process for Determining Alternate Assessment Eligibility:

Criterion One

Teacher reports and work samples Parent input and developmental history

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

Adaptive behaviors must demonstrate significant delays, and the team must determine that the student's adaptive needs have to be met in a more restrictive environment. The IEP team analyzes adaptive functioning across domains (conceptual, social, and practical skills) using standardized rating scales, teacher observations, and parent input.

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 assesses cognitive functioning using an IQ assessment, and academic performance is measured through benchmark scores, DRA results, and teacher checklists and observations using a functional rather than standards-based checklist. The IEP team also reviews the student's educational history to ensure the student has had consistent access to high-quality, standards-aligned instruction delivered with appropriate interventions and supports. The team reviews items that rule out low performance being due to lack of instruction, environmental factors, or limited English proficiency but rather reflects a significant cognitive disability.

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

The IEP team considers the IQ score, adaptive behavior scores, academic performance levels, and speech/language assessments (if applicable), historical data, benchmark data, progress monitoring trends, standardized assessment results, intervention data and response to intervention, classroom performance and curriculum-based measures, observations across multiple environments, input from educators, specialists, and parents, gen ed information and special education supports that were provided previously to the IEP team decision to consider alt assessment path.

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 team reviews the psychological, cognitive tests, adaptive, achievement, communication and language, observations, and other relevant data. The supports needed for a student to engage in LRE are highly individualized and student specific. For example, a student may require significant supports but not necessarily through the comprehensive environment. Teams collaborate to develop opportunities for students to receive supports in the general education environment first and move along the continuum to determine what is needed for LRE.

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? *

The IEP team considers the needs of the individual student first. When considering the appropriate learning environment, the IEP team is utilizing review of all academic records (both general education and special education data gathered along with behavioral needs). The determination for placement in a more restrictive LRE is based on each individual student and related to how their disability is impacting their access to general education curriculum. Supports and services are based on available, updated data during the IEP meeting. Goals and accommodations are also discussed. All these areas are considered prior to making this recommendation.

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? *

These are individual decisions based on student need and data collected with formal and informal evaluations for student need from the IEP team.

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.

According to all available data, there is no significant disproportionate participation on alternate 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? *

Members of the IEP team, typically the special education teacher and diagnostician will explain the criteria for alternate assessment during the IEP meeting. Parents are heavily involved in the discussion and decision-making. The team also discusses the potential impacts of participating in alternate assessment, including the diploma options and coursework requirements. If the team is unsure of whether a child should participate in alternate assessment, the team is encouraged to allow the child to participate in the TCAP/EOC

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

Parents are active members of the IEP team and are invited to all meetings with at least a 10-day notice; encouraged to share input regarding their child's strengths, needs, and functioning at home; provided opportunities to ask questions and participate in discussions; given copies of evaluation reports and data used in decision-making at least 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? *The IEP team reviews this during the annual IEP meeting. The school psychologist has to review each students' data and document that criteria have been met.

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.*

Johnson City Schools provides all students the opportunity to learn from highly effective teachers using high quality instructional materials. Supervisors, principals and curriculum coaches support access to rigorous standards-based instruction through a variety of ways, (see district plan). To ensure that students make appropriate academic progress, faculty and staff receive job-embedded training, participate in content team meetings, and receive one on one support to build staff capacity. Progress is regularly monitored, according to IEP goals. If a student is not making adequate growth, then teams will meet to develop plans for intervention and support to foster student success.

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.