

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#

951 - Lebanon

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

Taylor McElroy

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.* *

1.24

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.* *

1.25

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

1.71

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

1.49

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

1.46

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.* *

1.24

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.* *

0.98

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.* *

1.23

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

1.65

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

1.45

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

1.46

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

16. Science Participation Rates 2020-21 *

1.15

17. Science Participation Rates 2021-22 *

0.97

18. Science Participation Rates 2022-23 *

1.19

19. Science Participation Rates 2023-24 *

1.53

20. Science Participation Rates 2024-25 *

1.42

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

1.46

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**. *

5

23. In school year 2024-25, list the total number of students scoring **"Advanced"** for **Math**.

6

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? *

IEP teams are formally trained on this during summer professional development and again during TCAP-ALT training utilizing TDOE's accommodations manual and training materials from Livebinder. In addition, students with significant disabilities, often in a self contained setting, are required to have a district level Special Education Specialist in every IEP meeting to support the decision making process for TCAP-Alt participation.

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

IEP teams utilize the WISC, WPPSI, or DAY-C assessments to determine if the student meets criterion one.

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

IEP teams utilize the ABAS-3 to determine if the student's adaptive scores are deficient.

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 utilize IQ information vs academic achievement information to make this determination.

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

Historical IQ information and re-evaluation information is utilized. The district reevaluates any second grader who is projected to participate in the alternate assessment to determine if the student continues to qualify for the alternate assessment.

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? *

Data utilized to make these decisions include: IQ, adaptive behavior, academic achievement scores, universal screener data, IEP goal data collection, teacher observations and input, 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? *

In Lebanon Special School District, only students performing at the 1st percentile can be considered for a self-contained setting/comprehensive development classroom for the majority of their school day. Data utilized to make these decisions include: IQ, adaptive behavior, academic achievement scores, universal screener data, teacher observations and input, and parent input. Students performing at the 1st percentile across multiple sources of data require significant scaffolding of the standards and pacing of standards, highly modified work, increased adult support, and individualized instruction to meet their unique learning needs. IEP teams must use this information to make a team decision regarding placement and service times while ensuring LRE is the top consideration.

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 team starts by reviewing the impact of the student's disability on accessing the general education content. The team then identifies the required supports for the child (services, accommodations, supplemental aids, etc.). The team then determines if this is a universal accommodation for any child or if the child requires these supports as a part of their IEP.

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.

Based on the review of Lebanon Special School District's alternate assessment participation data, there is a higher percentage of black students taking the alternate assessment. Student data will be reviewed case by case to ensure all students meet the criteria for the alt assessment and that only the students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are assessed using the alternate TCAP.

*(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? * All parents of students participating in and eligible for the Alternative Assessments are fully informed of the participation guidelines and implications of these tests. This occurs within the annual IEP meetings.

34. How are parents included in the IEP team decision-making process? *Parents play a critical part in the decision making for their child's participation on the Alt Assessment. The long-term implications are explained insofar as diploma options and their child's right to participation in special education through their 21st birthday. It is also shared with parents that the decision making for Alt Assessment is a fluid process, if it is decided that SWD meets eligibility standards for the Alt Assessment as a third grader it does not necessarily mean that decision cannot change over time.

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? *These decisions are discussed annually at the child's IEP meeting. Careful review of eligibility/evaluation data is considered as a part of this decision. When necessary, the team initiates a reevaluation to determine if the student is still eligible for the alternate TCAP or if the TCAP may be more appropriate for the child.

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.*

Lebanon Special School District implements several strategies to ensure students with disabilities have access to high quality instruction. These strategies include: -All teachers and students are provided with high-quality instructional materials as same-aged peers. Special Education funds are utilized to support the curriculum as needed for this population. -Special Education/Comprehensive Development teachers must create schedules that follow the same amount of academic instruction time as the general education grade level(s) they teach. -Special Education/Comprehensive Development teachers have access to district pacing guides and participate in professional development regarding pacing and curriculum. -Teachers are required to collect and input biweekly data points utilizing TN Pulse's goal progress monitoring tool. District Special Ed Specialists regularly meet with teachers to ensure students are making progress. If progress is not being made, a change of intervention occurs or an IEP team meeting is called to determine what changes/additional supports the child may require. -All Special Education teachers are evaluated using the TEAM General Education Rubric following TDOE guidelines for teacher evaluations.

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 support needed at this time.