

2017-18 Alternate Assessment Justification

The following must be completed by districts contributing to the state exceeding the 1% cap for students participating in the alternate assessment. Please return the completed form to Leslie.M.Hoffman@tn.gov by Wednesday, Feb. 26, 2019, by 5 p.m. CT.

District Name: Hamilton County Schools

	% of Alternative Assessments: 2016-2017 Administration	Current % of Alternate Assessments: 2017-2018 Administration	Projected % of Alternate Assessments: 2018-2019 Administration
MSAA ELA	2.14%	2.10%	1.5%
MSAA Math	2.09%	2.10%	1.5%

1. **Percentage Goal:** What is your goal in addressing decision making for identifying the right students for the alternate assessment?

HCDE would like to reduce the overall percentage of students proposed to participate in the alternate assessment by .6% for the 18-19 SY.

2. **Process:** Describe the process, training, and steps the district will use to meet the percentage goal reduction proposed above.

Exceptional Education Supervisors will continue to participate in ongoing professional development regarding alternate assessment offered by the State Department. HCDE has a process in place that requires Ex Ed teachers to submit a lead teacher request prior to a change of placement to review the criteria for alternate assessment eligibility and guidance for decision making and consideration. The district will continue to provide ongoing professional development and promote best practices to ensure only the students with the most significant cognitive and adaptive behavior disabilities take an alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards and the use of multiple sources of data. Guidance for participating IEP members will include the following:

- Participation guidelines for making assessment decisions
- Differentiating instruction and ensuring access to academic content
- Selecting, implementing, and evaluating accessibility features and accommodations for instruction and assessments

- Understanding the implications regarding the type of diploma the students receive, including postsecondary and career readiness
3. **Disproportionality:** Explain how the school district is addressing any disproportionality identified in areas that include, but are not limited to: student's IEP disability, number of students with disability, grade bands (elementary, middle, high school).

HCDE students with significant cognitive disabilities who are participating in alternative assessments fall within the categories of intellectual disabilities, autism, and multiple disabilities. Characteristics of these students include significant deficits in receptive/expressive communication, cognitive functioning, processing deficits, and adaptive behavior skills across a wide range of settings. District IEP teams collect and organize evidence before making a decision about whether a student meets all of the criteria for participation. IEP teams utilize the Department of Education's Participation Guidelines, Checklist, and Decision Flowchart to assist in collecting and reviewing evidence to determine whether it is appropriate for an individual student to participate in alternate assessments. Students are determined to have a significant disability when it significantly impacts cognitive function and adaptive behavior which prevent the student from meaningful participation in the general academic core curriculum or achievement of the standards at their enrolled grade level. The student is unable to apply academic, life, and job skills in home, school, and community without intensive, frequent, and individualized instruction and supports in multiple settings. The student's demonstrated cognitive functioning and adaptive behavior across these settings is significantly below age expectations, even with program modifications, adaptations, and accommodations. Our district also serves students with significant cognitive disabilities who do not participate in alternative assessments because they do not meet those guidelines. As we review grade level data, and considering the ongoing training and support in recent years; there has been a notable shift in early grade bands which aligns with the 1% cap.

4. **Parent Participation:** How do parents participate in, or how are they notified of, the IEP decision for their student to participate in the alternate assessment(s)?

Parents will receive a ten day notice and they are involved in the assessment process. They are active participants in the IEP decision making process and they are clearly informed. Parent input will be noted and included in the IEP decision making process.

5. **Support Requested:** Please detail any support needed from the department. (All feasible requests for supports will be considered.)

HCDE would like the department to provide professional development at the district level to explain the process for alternate assessment participation guidelines for general education, special education, and administrators.