

## 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](mailto:Leslie.M.Hoffman@tn.gov) by Wednesday, Feb. 26, 2019, by 5 p.m. CT.

### District Name: Sumner County Schools

	% of Alternative Assessments: 2016-2017 Administration	Current % of Alternate Assessments: 2017-2018 Administration	Projected % of Alternate Assessments: 2018-2019 Administration
MSAA ELA	1.18%	1.24%	1.08
MSAA Math	0.98%	1.27%	1.08

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

Because the decision is an IEP-Team decision involving acknowledgement of both assessment scores and accessibility to content/curriculum, the goal is to increase the understanding of what it means to have access in learning the general content versus the absolute need to learn an alternative curriculum. This increase in understanding will be demonstrated through both a decrease in the number of students taking the alternative assessments, putting our percentage at 1% (decrease of .24% in ELA and .27% in Math) as well as through an increase in the depth of discussions as measured by way of a continuum of surveys from IEP team members across the district.

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

A questionnaire about alternative testing criteria and strategies for addressing academically low students in the general classroom will be created and distributed to a variety of School Support Team members at schools in the district, providing a baseline for growth measurement throughout the year.

Following the determination of a baseline, a follow-up survey will be distributed at the end of the first semester, and then during the second semester of the school to compare with the baseline for

growth in understanding the identification and testing determinations for students with cognitively low disabilities.

Training: Training will encompass not only the actual criteria regarding alternative testing, but also will consider the areas of least understanding as gathered through the questionnaire mentioned above. Training (face to face opportunities) include the following:

- Brief but descriptive information will be shared at faculty meetings to increase the awareness of alternative testing requirements (for qualification of testing).
- After-school sessions and summer professional learning sessions for regular education teachers regarding differentiating instructional assignments for students with disabilities. Some of this training may be in connection with the SPDG Grant training occurring in the district.
- Specific PLCs with CDC and resource teacher teams to disaggregate data information from their classrooms with the focus on curriculum needs for students, determining those who need the alternative testing and those who can take TN-Ready.

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).
4. The district continually monitors the number and types of disabilities identified each year, as well as the numbers receiving services specific to the comprehensive development program (focus on alternative curriculum) and specific to skill interventions by special education teachers. The district's Special Education Coordinators meet frequently to discuss programs and caseloads, bringing to light any disproportionate findings and/or patterns in grade bands or disabilities. That information is used to determine training topics as well as what information or awareness should be promoted by Special Education Coordinators at specific schools.
5. The Lead School Psychologist meets regularly with the 19 school psychologists in Sumner County. The Lead Psychologist uses that time to address any concerns that have been brought to her attention through the reports and consultation she has done regarding eligibility determinations and/or questions regarding alternative testing. There is a continuous review of guidance documents regarding alternative assessment with school psychologists.
6. According to district numbers, 4% of the district's students with disabilities had the Intellectual Disability certification. Of the entire tested student population, this is .79%. That percentage is very close to 1%, so adding in any students who may have also met the criteria (possible TBI, Autism, DD, etc.) puts our district at or over the 1% limit as set by the state.
7. After reviewing the data regarding the numbers, per grade, of students taking the alternative test, we found that the highest number of students taking the alternative test is in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Students taking the alternative tests in 7<sup>th</sup> grade equals 1.2%, and in 8<sup>th</sup> grade it is 1.2%. This may be a result of the increase in the academic difficulty of the curriculum in higher grades, as well as the fact that teachers continue to modify as much as they can through the younger grades until the student

needs, frustrations, and academic levels lead the IEP-Team to make determinations moving toward alternative curriculums. The district will conduct a more in-depth investigation into the determinations and results of those determinations for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students with cognitive disabilities who are assigned the alternative test option. With that investigation will come specific areas to address with our middle school special education teachers and school psychologists regarding identification.

8. **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)?

Face-to-face meetings for initial IEP meetings are a must, and the district makes a mindful effort to engage parents in the annual IEP meetings thereafter. For students who meet the criteria to take the alternative assessments, the team engages in a discussion regarding the assessment and its impact on the student's curriculum. Parent input is sought in these matters, along with the entire realm of the IEP.

If a parent chooses to not participate in the IEP meeting(s) that determine participation in the alternate assessment, the case manager communicates the decision to the parent via phone conference, email, notes home, or face-to-face contact at another time. A copy of the finalized IEP is also provided to the parent, documenting the decision.

9. **Support Requested:** Please detail any support needed from the department. (All feasible requests for supports will be considered.) None at this time.