

2021-22 Alternate Assessment Justification

The following must be completed by districts that contribute to the state exceeding the 1% cap for students participating in the alternate assessment and will be posted on the department website upon receipt.

District Name: Alcoa City Schools

	% of Alternative Assessments 2017-18	% of Alternate Assessments 2018-19	% of Alternate Assessments 2020-21	% of Alternate Assessments 2021-22	Projected % of Alternate Assessments 2022-23
MSAA ELA	1.03%	1.01%	1.32%	.81%	1.60%
MSAA Math	1.02%	1.04%	1.32%	1.01%	1.50%
TCAP-Alt Science	1.10%	*Field test year, no data available	.84%	1.25%	1.57%

1. Eligibility Determination Process: Describe the policies, training and supports in place to ensure IEP teams appropriately identify students for participation on the alternate assessments related to each of the three criteria. *Completing the form in EasyIEP is not sufficient justification. The description should include training or processes to ensure the IEP team is carefully considering both the student's data and the implication of participation in the alternate assessment.*

- a. Criterion One: The student has a significant cognitive disability. Only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities should be considered for the alternate assessment.

During the IEP process, students that are in tested grades and classes are individually reviewed on the 3 criteria proposed by the TN Dept of

Education. The school psychologist and/or interpreter of results reviews academic and adaptive data with the IEP team to determine which comprehensive testing instrument is most appropriate for that individual student. The school psychologist enters testing data into EasyIEP after review. The special education director meets with the teacher's of low incidence students to review criteria for alternative assessment and review decisions made to place a student on the alternative assessment. The Director of Special Education also reviews this criteria with building administrators.

- b. Criterion Two: The student is learning content linked to (derived from) state content standards.

All students receive instruction in the least restrictive environment based on their individual needs. For students that are able to attend regular education classes, they receive standards based content instruction in the general education setting. For students that the general education setting is not their least restrictive environment, those students receive their standards based content within a small group setting tiered to their learning styles and academic competence.

- c. Criterion Three: The student requires extensive direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in the grade- and age-appropriate curriculum.

Students that are eligible for the alternate assessment generally receive the majority of their content instruction in a small group setting where the core instruction is individualized to meet the specific needs of the individual student. Often, they will attend the general education classroom with inclusion support to receive some exposure to the grade level standards and return to the small group setting to drill down grade level standards to a place that the information is accessible to the individual student. This small group setting also allows for individualization of adaptive behavior skills to improve all outcomes for the whole child.

2. **Disproportionality:** Using your data by primary eligibility, describe your district data, including disproportionate participation on the alternate assessment and a plan for reducing/eliminating disproportionality.

According to the data received outlining participation by disability category, Alcoa City Schools aligns with the state count in alt distribution. Our students all fall within 3 of the 4 highest counts by category. Of the 14 students alt assessed at ACS, 7 are identified as Intellectual Disability (highest count category), 6 are identified under Autism (second highest category), and 1 is identified under Other Health Impaired (4th highest category). Our numbers coincide with the states as to distribution. Although I do not feel our data is disproportionate, we will continue to strive to identify students in the most appropriate category along with providing the Least Restrictive Environment and offer the most appropriate assessment method to meet the individual needs of each student.

3. **Informed Parent Participation:** Describe the process and practices used to adequately inform parents of the eligibility requirements and implications of participation to ensure active parent participate in the IEP team discussion.

Parents, along with all IEP team members, are encouraged to play an active role in determining what assessment path is best for the student. All state testing options are discussed as well as implications of moving a student from the TN Ready Assessment to the MSAA Assessment. In lower grades, parents are informed of the possibility that their child may move from one assessment type to another depending on factors influencing progress in their current programs of study. These conversations begin early in a child's school career so that parents have a deep understanding of the process and all the implications of decisions made on behalf of the student. As a district, we try to wait until the later grades to determine assessment path due to the implications of that decision on a student's high school diploma.

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

Our district is continually looking to better our practice of providing the best possible outcomes for our students. We appreciate the information shared through the Department of Education as well as the information presented and available on the Transition TN website. Collaborating with other similar size districts is beneficial in finding new ways to meet the unique needs of students and designing programming to accomplish this. I feel like bringing back more in-person professional development and conference opportunities would be a productive way to encourage this collaboration between professionals.

Assurance: The district is committed to ensuring all students are participating in the most appropriate assessments. Students determined eligible for the alternate assessment will meet the three criteria.

Signed: _____

May Beth Warrick

Date: _____

2/2/2023