

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: Anderson County

	% 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	1.64	1.43	1.49	1.38	1.46
MSAA Math	1.66	1.46	1.51	1.45	1.46
TCAP-Alt Science		<i>*Field test year, no data available</i>	1.44	1.42	1.56

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.*

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

School psychologists have been trained on Intellectual Disability and Alternative Assessment. They meet throughout the year and collaborate on case

studies including cases in which consideration to the most significant cognitive disabilities and alternate assessment are given. Our policy is to consider multiple sources of student data and not just focus on IQ scores. School psychologists are trained in multiple assessments, including non-verbal and adaptive behavior. All Special Education Teacher department chairs were trained in understanding of all state assessment options and how this fits into local assessment practices. Administrators have been trained in understanding students who are the most significant, and those who through multiple settings meet the criteria of alternative assessment. Training and support through PLCs and district-wide training will continue in order to fully understand those students who meet criteria one of being the most significant cognitive delayed students. The team always looks at multiple data sources in order to fully understand the impact of the student's cognitive delays and decisions will be based on all sources of data. The special education supervisory staff will continue to go to schools where staff are not trained or lack the understanding of state assessment options and train teachers individually so that they are informed with the process and expectations of criteria for placement of students on Alternative Assessment during the IEP team process.

The district would like to see a continual decrease in the amount of students taking the Alternative Assessment if that is what is appropriate for the individual needs of the students. For the school year 2022-2023 Anderson County believes we will see an increase in results due to the following reasons:

1. Anderson County has seen an increase in the number of student enrollment into the district from out of state and county who were already on Alternative Assessment.
2. When looking at the current number of students who will be taking the test in Spring of 2023 it appears we will have 56 students take the test which is an increase over the 2021-2022 school year.

The district will continue to look at each individual student, data, goals, and the need to be on the alternative assessment while addressing the rigor of each goal to make sure we are assessing the overall student correctly.

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

IEP teams are trained to look at how the disability impacts their active participation in accessing the general education curriculum. How the instruction is designed to support the student's active participation, including accommodations that are built into the lesson, the system or strategy that is used to modify the instruction, and which strategies are used to engage and elicit responses. Overall, the IEP team determines where, when, and how the student participates in the instruction aligned with the state standards. Training will continue in understanding the core content connectors that students with the most profound cognitive delays will be assessed on. A side-by-side comparison of state standards and core content connectors is used when showing the rigor that is expected with our most profound students.

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

The data will be collected and analyzed under consideration of the intensity of the support and services. Data includes progress monitoring via teacher data collection, as well as, nationally normed probes. This information will be collected and documented in the present levels of educational performances to help the IEP determine the student's least restrictive environment. The data would allow the team to determine if the student requires the most significant modifications, accommodations, goals/objectives for instructional services. Training via modeling and research-based studies will continue in order to understand the continuum of services and support for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

- 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.

The district is continuing to make gains in lowering the number of students taking the alternate assessment. From 2016-2019 we have lowered the number of students taking MSAA ELA from 2.11% to 1.43% and MSAA Math from 1.96% to 1.46%. During the 2019-2020 school year the district did not participate in assessments. The 2020-2021 school year data saw a slight increase in the area of ELA to 1.49, and Math to 1.51. Science was a 1.44 with no score from the previous year. During the 2021-2022 school year the district saw a decrease in the data in all three areas- MSAA ELA 1.38, MSAA Math 1.45 and MSAA Science 1.42. With more students moving into the district from out of state already participating in MSAA, our numbers have slightly increased which might cause a trend upwards in student assessment scores during the 2022-2023 school year. We are continuing to look at only our most significant cognitively involved students. The IEP team looks at the multiple sources of data based on the three criteria considerations that goes along with the alternative assessment justification manual. The IEP follows these guidelines when determining whether a student will be assessed using the alternate assessment or Tn Ready assessment.

Our goal as a district is to focus on getting all teachers, administrators, parents, and district staff to look at decisions based on only the most profound students to be alt. assessed. Our goal as a district for the 2022-2023 school year is to decrease the number of students participating in MSAA. This will be of course an IEP team decision.

- 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.

Annually, parents, as well as, other IEP participants, review the criteria set by the decision making guide for alternative assessment, including multiple sources of evidence for each area (psychological evaluation reports, results of individual cognitive ability tests, adaptive behavior skills data, results of individual or group administered achievement assessment, district-wide alternative assessments, individual reading assessments, findings of communication or language proficiency assessments, teacher-collected data from classroom observations,

progress monitoring data, and IEPs), in order to make the decision of alternative assessment participation. If the decision is made for an alternative assessment participation, it is explained to parents/ guardians that their child is on an alternative high school diploma path not resulting in a general education high school diploma. The parent is an equal participant of the IEP team and is an equal participant of the decision process in determining if the child qualifies for the alternate assessment(s). When it is determined that a student is appropriate for an alternative assessment, all IEP team participants including parents sign the Participation Decision Documentation portion of the IEP acknowledging that the student meets the criteria, what evidence was used to support the decision, and the assurance of specific considerations that were not used to make the decision. The parents also indicate their acknowledgement by signing the Informed Consent.

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

Training for administration and general education teachers on the implications of early decisions of alternative testing and comprehensive training on the understanding of the data that has been collected. Training for general education teachers and administrators in understanding that lower cognitive functioning and or behavior doesn't always equal an alternative assessment.

This is an area that regular education teachers struggle in understanding on many fronts. Training on additional considerations not to be used in reviewing evidence when making alternative assessment decisions, such as, specific disabilities (Intellectual Disability, Autism, etc.), behavior, attendance, etc. We train our staff and work to ensure that all students are given the same opportunities but feel sometimes training by state personnel is heard differently.

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.

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: Kym Tower Date: 2-13-2023