

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: **Bells City School District**

	% 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%	<1%	1.72%	1.16%	<1%
MSAA Math	<1%	<1%	1.72%	1.5%	<1%
TCAP- Alt Science	<1%	*Field test year, no data available	1.72%	1.5%	<1%

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

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

Bells City School District is committed to appropriately identifying students for participation on the alternate assessments. In accordance with all federal and state regulations, all eligibility decisions are made by a student's entire IEP team, considering all criteria.

Every year, each special educator is appropriately trained on the disability identification process, including the important roles of the school psychologist and the entire IEP team in identification. Special educators are also fully integrated into the academic framework of our district, maintaining full access to all grade-level curriculum and teaching state academic standards with full support from the Special Education and Instructional supervisors. All academic progress is closely monitored in concert with classroom teachers in order to measure the efficacy of interventions and to assess the need for more support. The decision to make a student eligible for alternate assessments is not made lightly; each special educator is thoroughly trained to follow our processes and procedures for the consideration of all data and input from all team members.

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.

Bells City is a small, one-school district with 400 students in grades Pre-K through 5. We have 53 students with disabilities. Of these 53 students with disabilities, only 3 are on the alternate assessment—however, this puts us over the prescribed participation rate.

These three students have been made eligible under the category of Intellectual Disability, in accordance with all appropriate guidelines. One of these students is also eligible under Other Health Impairment. In each of these cases, all data clear to the team members that these students needed to participate in the alternate assessments.

We plan to reduce/eliminate our disproportionality through more thorough education of the broader faculty on alternate assessment determinations. Then, the special education supervisor will be able to facilitate a more targeted collaboration between special and regular education teachers in which we can work to lead students away from alternate assessment identification.

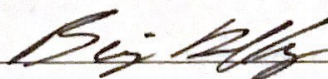
3. **Informed Parent Participation:** Describe the process and practices used to adequately inform parents of the eligibility requirements and implications of participation to ensure active parent participation in the IEP team discussion.

Each special educator is re-trained every year in departmental procedures concerning evaluation, eligibility, placement, accommodations, and more—including determining eligibility for the alternate assessment. Part of this training involves communicating to parents the implications of students being eligible for the alternate assessment. Using information directly from the Tennessee State Department of Education, our special educators disseminate information to parents about these long-reaching implications. If parents are not clear, we do not proceed—we ensure parent understanding of these important considerations. Using specific information from the state department gives us clear, consistent verbiage.

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

Any data and details from districts successful in reducing their alternate assessment disproportionality would be greatly appreciated.

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:  Date: 2/15/23