

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: Blount County 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	1.58%	1.49%	1.48%	1.65%	1.3%
MSAA Math	1.57%	1.5%	1.49%	1.64%	1.3%
TCAP- Alt Science	1.63%	<i>*Field test year, no data available</i>	1.48%	1.61%	1.2%

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 support to achieve measurable gains in the grade- and age-appropriate curriculum.

The district has written procedures that have been updated yearly to be utilized when case managers and IEP teams are considering the Alternate Assessment for any student. These procedures specifically include the consideration of the three factors listed above. In addition, IEP teams include school psychologists and district level instructional coaches to participate in the discussion and specifically walk through the three indicators above in coordination with EdPlan form questions. Each case manager participates in a yearly Alternate Assessment district training and must pass a quiz after the training to measure understanding and follow up coaching is provided based on results. In addition, procedural changes have been implemented to require the inclusion of a school psychologist to IEP meetings that are considering alternate assessment. In addition, the alternate assessment district report is generated quarterly and shared with the district special education team and coaches for additional analysis of any pattern or disproportionality from school to school or with specific case managers. File reviews are held and follow up training is tailored to individuals and small groups as needed.

Administrators (LEA reps) are trained yearly in special education law and procedures, which include alternate assessment provisions. Extensive training and observation is provided to ensure individualized instruction and supports are provided with fidelity of curriculum implementation, and progress towards goals is meaningful. Based on our district's decrease in percentages over the last three years, our team feels that these strategies and training opportunities have data that support a move in the right direction. Our team remains committed to decreasing alternate assessment percentages moving in following years as appropriate with each individual student.

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.

When analyzing our current percentages based on disability categories, our ratios very closely mirror the state trends on alternate assessment in relation to the disability category. In addition, our district has not been flagged for disproportionality over the last several years. However, our district is committed to identifying students appropriately and using careful determination when considering alternate assessment. Based on our breakdown, our team will pursue significant follow up on specific students and work with IEP teams to closely consider Alternate Assessment appropriateness. While there was an increase in alternate assessment from 20-21 (lagged data), our team has worked diligently in this area and is reflected in the projections for 2022-2023 which would reflect the lowest alternate assessment participation percentages since 2017.

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.

During IEP team decision making, parents and team members thoroughly review the three prong criteria from the state and carefully consider each point. In addition, each team carefully discusses the implications that the alternate assessment has on the future diploma path. Each team carefully weighs the priority of students graduating with a regular education diploma if at all reasonable and feasible.

4. Support Requested : Please detail any support needed from the department. (All reasonable requests for supports will be considered.) 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: 2/10/23