

### **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: Decatur County Schools

|                         | % of<br>Alternative<br>Assessments<br>2017-18 | % of Alternate<br>Assessments<br>2018-19           | % of Alternate<br>Assessments<br>2020-21 | % of Alternate<br>Assessments<br>2021-22 | Projected % of<br>Alternate<br>Assessments<br>2022-23 |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| MSAA<br>ELA             | 1.08%                                         | 1.12%                                              | 1.78%                                    | 1.61%                                    | 1.00%                                                 |
| MSAA<br>Math            | 1.08%                                         | 1.13%                                              | 1.75%                                    | 1.59%                                    | 1.00%                                                 |
| TCAP-<br>Alt<br>Science | .60%                                          | <i>*Field test<br/>year, no data<br/>available</i> | 1.10%                                    | 1.33%                                    | 1.00%                                                 |

**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.

Decatur County Schools will continue to monitor and ensure that IEP teams appropriately identify those students offered the opportunity to participate in the alternate assessment. We actually have a **training** opportunity coming up this month – on **February 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023**, and the Special Education Director will train special educators on the Eligibility Process and the three Criterion options. Our training will focus on the processes and to make sure that the special education teachers ensure the IEP team is carefully considering both the student's data and the implication of participation in the alternate assessment. A training agenda will be produced along with participant signatures for those in attendance to verify the scheduled training. Educators will be reminded that these students eligible to participate on the alternate assessments must have a cognitive disability, learning linked to state content standards, and require extensive support to achieve measurable goals in their grade and age-appropriate curriculum. At least annually, the training is provided to all special educators as to eligibility for student participation in the alternate assessment and the ramifications of such participation. We especially target those CDC special education classroom teachers, thoroughly explaining to them to be able to justify offering the alternate assessment to those students who will potentially be administered the alternate assessment. Our plan going forward is to reduce participation rates for those students who meet the three eligibility criteria and for whom participation in the alternate assessment is the most appropriate assessment.

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 data chart provided by TDOE depicting the participation rate calculations is very useful as far as alternate assessment guidelines. Although we exceeded the 1% rate (1.61% for ELA, 1.59% for Math, and 1.33% for Science), our two largest disability categories – Autism and Intellectual Disability – fall appropriately in line with the state’s largest distribution percentages. It is evident that statewide and in our LEA that the ID category displays the highest participation rate, and justifiably so. As a public school system, we will continue to monitor this data as will ensure that only those students who meet eligibility criteria will be given the alternate assessments. Difficult conversations sometimes must take place at the IEP team table to make sure that we are doing what is in the best interest of the student – now and in their future. District training is set to occur in February 2023 and will be conducted at the very least on an annual basis in an effort to reinforce to our special educators the need for a specific, student- specific individual plan as well as a plan to assist our district in their effort to reduce/eliminate disproportionality.

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.

As part of an IEP team meeting, parents are made adequately informed of the eligibility requirements of participation in the alternate assessments, as well as the implications of that participation. Parents are an active, integral participant of the IEP team and process. Parents are asked if they have any questions about the process and parent signatures are secured to validate their understanding/participation. Parents are specifically made aware that participation in the alternate assessment does not align to the state’s general high school diploma criteria.

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

None needed/requested at this time.

**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: Tina Gardner Date: February 6, 2023