

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: **Houston 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	1.89	1.43	.88	1.50	1.58
MSAA Math	1.87	1.42	.90	1.47	1.34
TCAP- Alt Science	1.75	<i>*Field test year, no data available</i>	1.47	1.37	1.34

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.
 - i. ***Any student under consideration for participation in the alternate assessment has a file review conducted by the school psychologist in***

- order to provide the IEP team with interpretive information about the student's current measured cognitive and adaptive abilities.**
- ii. **Special education director and school psychologist attend TDOE trainings and review guidance provided by TDOE pertaining to eligibility for the alternative assessment and then disseminate to school teams.**
 - iii. **Special education director and school psychologist conduct an annual review of participation data, analysis of student characteristics of participating students, and exploring trends across eligibility and location of IEP services.**
- b. Criterion Two: The student is learning content linked to (derived from) state content standards.
- i. **Special and general educators have participated in PD opportunities on differentiation and scaffolding within Tier I instruction through SPDG training, Kagan Strategies training, state directed early literacy training, as well as local and regional trainings.**
 - ii. **Elementary special education staff participate in monthly grade level meetings with general education teachers to address students with disabilities' access and progress in the general education curriculum.**
 - iii. **Middle and high school teams review eligibility, transition, and state assessment information to assist students and parents in choosing an appropriate course of study for high school, as well as discussing implications of course choices and associated state assessments on diploma type.**
 - iv. **Special educators have access to information on the TDOE website to resources that include Core Content Connectors and NCSC instructional resources.**
- c. Criterion Three: The student requires extensive direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in the grade- and age-appropriate curriculum.
- i. **Ongoing training continues to be provided addressing how to make special education the most intensive intervention.**
 - ii. **Team-based discussions occur around the participation status of any student scoring a 4 on ELA or Math Alternate Assessment from the previous year, prior to making assessment decisions for the current year.**
 - iii. **Guidance from TDOE including Alternate Assessment Participation Guidelines: Decision Making Tools for IEP Teams, Guidance for IEP Teams on Participation Decisions for the Alt Assessment, and the three criterion**

found in Consideration for Participation in the Alternate Assessment has been reviewed and disseminated with district and building administrators and special educators county-wide.

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.
 - a. ***The percentage of students with autism participating in the alternate assessment (27.27% or 3 of 11 students participating) was lower than the state rate of 29.29%. The percentage of students with intellectual disability participating in the alternate assessment (45.45% or 5 of 11 students participating) was lower than the state rate of 52.59%. The percentage of students with developmental delay, emotional disturbance, and orthopedic impairments participating in the alternate assessment (9.09% or 1 of 11 students participating for each disability category listed) was higher than the state rates of 1.01%, 0.35%, and 0.31%. Teams are very mindful that no specific disability category “automatically” qualifies a student as participating in the alternate assessment, but instead that teams must consider the content and instructional supports required to access the content specific to that student before making the assessment decision. An intentional focus on staff training over the past 6 years had led to a reduction in the district’s percentage of students participating in the alternate assessment. Reviewing Houston County’s rate of participation with the alternate assessment has shown a decline across ELA, Math, and Science comparing the 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2020-2021 data. Based upon the 2020-2021 rates, science was the only area that was found to be disproportionate over the 1% guideline. This disproportionality was the direct result of the amount of students taking the Biology I Alt Assessment as opposed to the data related to the grade 3-8 students. When comparing the 2021-2022 participation rates to the previous year, Houston County showed an increase in ELA and Math while decreasing the participate rate in Science.***
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.

- a. ***Parents/guardians continue to be invited to and encouraged to attend all IEP meetings.***
- b. ***Beginning at the elementary level, teams have a heightened focus in their conversations with parents/guardians on the impact participation in the alt assessment will have on the type of diploma their student would be working toward in high school.***
- c. ***Parent signature/consent for participation in the alternate assessment continues to be obtained at the IEP meeting.***
- d. ***A copy of Alternate Assessment Participation Guidelines: Decision Making Tools for IEP Teams is provided to parents/guardians at IEP meetings.***
- e. ***Follow-up discussions on alt assessment and the impact on diploma type is led by the case manager/LEA Rep if the parent/guardian does not attend the IEP meeting.***
- f. ***A copy of Alternate Assessment Participation Guidelines: Decision Making Tools for IEP Teams will be sent with the IEP for signatures if the parent did not attend the meeting.***
- g. ***Decisions will always be reflected in the Prior Written Notice provided to the parent.***

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

- a. ***No support is 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: Kelly Brown

Date: 2-13-23