

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: Jefferson 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	1.71%	1.57%	1.48%	1.54%	1.7%
MSAA Math	1.70%	1.56%	1.53%	1.52%	1.7%
TCAP- Alt Science	1.47%	<i>*Field test year, no data available</i>	1.58%	1.52%	1.7%

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.

Over the course of the last three years, our district has shown a decrease in the number of students with disabilities participating in the alternate assessment (i.e., MSAA), but then had a slight increase this past year. Discussion through various professional developments, facilitated by the special education supervisor, has occurred with school psychologists and special education staff regarding students who meet alternate assessment eligibilities. Deeper discussion will occur around the difference between students who have cognitive disabilities and those who have significant cognitive disabilities. Although special education staff are aware of alternate assessment participation criteria, the district will revisit alternate assessment eligibilities with special education staff using the Alternate Assessment Participation Guidelines. We are partnering with the state department to bring systemic change to Jefferson County to meeting this guideline.

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

For students with significant cognitive disabilities participating in an alternative assessment, the district has purchased the Unique software program to ensure access to grade level standards. Training with the Unique program has occurred and staff use the program for all subject areas (i.e., ELA, math, science, and social studies). Progress monitoring for grade level standards is conducted within the program, as each student is placed within a differentiated "level" based on his/her own individual profile. It is important to note there is a shift in district mindset as the number of students participating in the alternate assessment has continued to decrease, allowing ALL students the opportunity to reach their full potential.

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

Through IEP meetings, the Least Restrictive Environment is discussed to ensure students have access to typical peers and grade-level standards. Student strengths are acknowledged and creative programming is implemented. Appropriate accommodations/modifications are incorporated to ensure support is offered to students in general education and/or special education settings. IEP members are encouraged to think "outside" the box in order to meet individual student needs. Several students, who once participated in alternate assessments,

are now enrolled in general education classes with their typical peers. This requires academic support staff and modifications when addressing grade level standards in order to ensure active participation during daily class instruction.

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.

Our district data shows a slight increasing trend regarding students who participate in the state alternate assessment. An analysis of students taking the alternate assessment will occur while conversation with staff will continue. For example, the recent district distribution for Other-Health Impairment is 7.4% which is 3.21 reduction from the 19-20 school year (10.61%). While we have worked to reduce this percentage, our district still exceeds the state distribution is Other-Health Impairment (4.28%%). The district will take a deeper look into who these particular students are in order to re-evaluate appropriate assessment participation. The district has developed a review committee of these students to determine if there is a possibility to reduce the district percentage, since the data also indicated all of these students are housed in the same school.

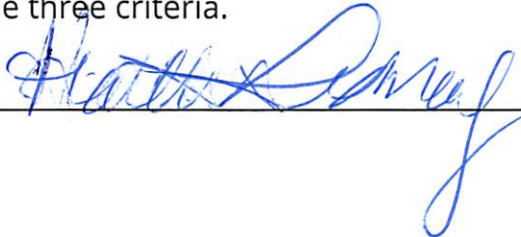
3. **Informed Parent Participation:** Describe the process and practices used to adequately inform parents of the eligibility requirements and implications of participation to ensure active parent participate in the IEP team discussion.

Continual conversation with special education staff regarding the implications of students remaining on an alternative assessment path will occur at future professional development trainings. The importance of sharing how the alternate assessment and graduation diploma path are aligned is vital to ensuring all team members have the information needed to develop the most appropriate individualized program

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

We have a training scheduled on March 21st with Allison and April to discuss systemic changes for Jefferson County to support the reduction of inappropriate students on the Alt Assessment.

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: 2/13/23