

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: Lakeland School System

	% 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	1.12%	.69%	.66%	.94%	1.19%
MSAA Math	1.12%	.62%	.69%	.97%	1.24%
TCAP- Alt Science	1.16%	<i>*Field test year, no data available</i>	.70%	1.05%	1.25%

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.

Lakeland School System exceeded the 1% cap for participation in the alternate assessment in science for 2022. This occurred as a result of the high number of eighth grade students enrolled in Physical Science for high school credit, which is a non-tested course. Had all eighth graders participated in a state science exam, Lakeland would not have exceeded 1% participation in the alternate assessment in 2022. For the 2022-23 school year, Lakeland is projected to exceed the 1% cap in all subject areas as there are 4 additional students who qualify for the alternate assessment that have entered a testing grade.

LSS annually shares and reviews the state guidance on alternate assessment eligibility with all special education teachers, related service providers, school psychologists, school administrators and parents. When teams are determining if a student meets the criteria for participating in the alternate assessment, the school psychologist serves as the assessment specialist and helps the team to interpret the results, make informed decisions, and understand decision implications.

In order to determine that a student demonstrates a significant cognitive disability the LSS assessment team considers multiple sources of data to determine the presence of a cognitive disability, as well as to rule out any reasons that a student's IQ score may be lower than the student's true ability, and to ensure that the results are not primarily due to exclusionary factors. In addition, the assessment team determines whether the student's ability represents a significant cognitive disability that is more than two standard deviations below the mean, and that the student's adaptive behavior scores are consistently significantly low compared to same-aged peers. If there are inconsistencies with the adaptive ratings provided by the parent and teacher, additional observation data is obtained to determine which scores are more consistent with the student's adaptive behaviors.

LSS ensures that all students participate in daily standards-based instruction in the areas of English Language Arts (ELA), math, science, and social studies. The team also considers what individualized accommodations, modifications, and instructional strategies are necessary for the student to access the content. These accommodations and modifications are clearly documented in the student's IEP.

LSS students who participate in the alternate assessment require extensive, direct individualized instruction and substantial support to achieve measurable gains in the grade appropriate curriculum. This is documented in the IEP and monitored through student performance. The team considers the student's strengths and present levels of performance

and how the student will participate in instruction for each subject, and what accommodations and modifications are necessary for meaningful participation.

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.

Lakeland School System had 13 students participate in the alternate assessments during the 2021-2022 school year. This included 7 students (54%) who have autism, 4 students (31%) who have an intellectual disability, 1 (7.5%) who has multiple disabilities, and 1 (7.5%) who has other-health impairment. Lakeland does exceed the state distribution rate for the participation of students with autism, as Lakeland has a high rate of students with autism attending our district (12% of our students with disabilities, excluding gifted students, have autism). Currently Lakeland has 39 students with autism, 7 of which participate in the alternate assessment.

A plan to reduce/eliminate disproportionality in Lakeland School System will include:

- The continued professional development of teachers, related service providers, and school level administration on the eligibility determination process.
- A review of all students currently being assessed on the alternate assessment to ensure that their current data continues to meet the requirements for participation in the alternate assessment.

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.

Parents are an integral part of the IEP team in all aspects of a student's special education eligibility and IEP planning. When considering evaluation to assist with programming for alt participation consideration, the school psychologist explains suspicions during the consent process. When reviewing the evaluation results, the impacts of significant disabilities are discussed with the opportunity for any questions. Requirements and implications of participating in the alternate assessment are then discussed and reviewed at each IEP team meeting where alt participation is included.

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

State provided PD for both general and special education teachers on co-teaching, inclusionary practices, and modifying curriculum in the general education setting to support students with comprehensive needs.

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: Lara O'Mara Date: 2/15/23