

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: _____ Lexington City 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	2.43	2.83	1.87	1.4	.67
MSAA Math	2.42	2.83	1.87	1.41	.67
TCAP-Alt Science	2.42	<i>*Field test year, no data available</i>	2.15	1.4	.67

- 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.

In the Lexington City School District, children are not considered for placement on the TN Alternative Assessment unless there is a significant cognitive disability. We make every effort to ensure that all invested parties are part of the eligibility process and understand the criterion for placing a child on the alternative assessment. Although we never make assumptions about a child's ability to take the regular TCAP, we do not consider TCAP Alt during the identification process unless there is evidence of an identified severe cognitive disability. Training on the TCAP Alt and the determining criterion is provided during in-service at the beginning of the year and periodically throughout the year. The system relies heavily upon the IEP File Review Rubric created by the Office of Special Populations to help us make a decision about placing a child on the TCAP Alt.

Criterion 1: Significant Cognitive Disability

All past and current evaluations are thoroughly reviewed and the school psychologist is asked to be a part of the IEP meeting in which placement on the alt assessment will be discussed. Any medical or psychological diagnoses are considered and discussion is held on how those diagnoses might affect the child's ability to take the regular TCAP. We rely heavily on observations by the school psychologist who worked with the child, as well as on teacher and parent observations. IQ scores are considered, but are not the determining factor. Observations of a child's past and current classroom performance, review of all academic data, psychological evaluations, adaptive behavior assessments, and past performances on high stakes testing (if available) are considered to be much more important in determining a child's ability to take the regular TCAP test. Ideally, we want the child to work extensively with the special education teacher with proper modifications and accommodations and to take the regular TCAP at least once before discussion is held about placement on the Alt assessment. The more data we have to support our decision, the better decision we can make for the child.

Criterion 2: State Content Standards

All students at LCSS, no matter what their LRE is, are expected to learn content linked to and derived from TN State Standards. The vast majority of our SWDs receive their services through an inclusive setting, and modifications and accommodations are put into place to support the student in order for them to more easily access the regular curriculum and to ensure the student's active participation in grade level learning. Those students who require a more restrictive LRE also learn content derived from state standards. Teachers in a CC setting are required to take part in grade level meetings and training in order to ensure their students are learning material as close to grade level as possible. All teachers, including those teaching our most severely disabled students, receive training on how to scaffold instruction to meet individual student needs and to ensure they are working as close to grade level as possible. Training specific to special education teachers is provided on an on-going basis through monthly SpEd Staff meetings. Training on creating suitable measurable annual goals and short term objectives that support increased opportunities for learning grade level standards is one of the first things discussed in depth at the first of the year, and is reviewed monthly. Additionally, LCSS is taking part in the IAIEP Partnership offered through the Southwest Core Office. Intensive work is being done

to outline and implement improvements in writing Present Levels of Educational Performance and Measurable Annual Goals. These improvements are in development at this time and will be rolled out during in-service training at the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year.

Criterion 3: Extensive Direct Individualized Instruction and Supports

When making a decision to place a student on the TCAP Alt, there must be substantial evidence that the student requires, and is receiving, extensive direct individualized instruction. The IEP team ensures the child's LRE is based on current comprehensive data, present levels of performance, and evidence that general education was the first option considered for the child. Gen Ed and SpEd teachers are required to show that multiple strategies were used in order to change interventions and supports if the child was making little to no progress toward MAGs.

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.

For the 2022-2023 school year, LCSS has a total of 6 students taking the TCAP Alt: 3 with the primary designation of Autism, and 3 with the designation of Intellectual Delay. This is a reduction of 2 students from last year. With the current student enrollment of 890, this puts us at 0.67% of our students taking the TCAP Alt, which is under the required 1% cap.

At the time of this report, LCSS has not placed any students on the TCAP Alt for the 2022-2023 school year. We do have one student in our 2nd grade CDC class whose parents asked about the TCAP Alt. We completed the IEP File Review Rubric for this child. His IEP team met to review this data and determined it did not justify placing him on the Alt at this time. His team agreed to allow this student to participate in the regular 2nd grade TCAP. Unless we receive new enrollees with significant cognitive disabilities, we do not anticipate adding any more students to our list of those taking TCAP Alt for the 2022-2023 school year. Although we are committed to making the best possible informed decisions for each individual student, our ultimate goal is for every student with disabilities to be able to participate in the regular state 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 a vitally important part of our IEP teams and in the decision making process when considering placing a child on TCAP Alt. Parents know their students better than anyone, including their strengths and limitations, and provide valuable insight when making educational decisions for their children. When students are referred for evaluation, the eligibility process is described in detail during the consent meeting. We make sure parents know every piece of data that will be considered when making the eligibility decision, including the fact that no one evaluation will be the sole

determining factor in eligibility for special education services or the decision to place the student on the alternate assessment. Parents are also given a copy of the IEP File Review Rubric we use to help us make a determination about TCAP Alt, and the document is discussed in depth. If a severe cognitive disability is suspected, we thoroughly discuss the three criteria we consider when placing a child on the alternate assessment and assure the parents that every aspect of the child's strengths and limitations will be considered before making such an important decision. We will ensure that the parents understand that only the most significantly disabled children are eligible for the alt assessment and, although the decision to place a child on the alt will be considered and made each year according to what the child needs at the time, consistent participation in the alt assessment could possibly affect the child's graduation and diploma options at the end of their high school years.

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

LCSS is currently participating in the IAIEP Partnership offered by the Southwest Core District and is working very closely with Core SpEd Consultant Beth Meeks to improve our PLEPs and MAGs.

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: Beth S Deere

Date: 2/13/2023