

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: Jackson-Madison 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	2.27%	2.22%	2.00%	1.89%	1.75%
MSAA Math	2.23%	2.18%	1.95%	1.86%	1.65%
TCAP- Alt Science	2.22%	<i>*Field test year, no data available</i>	1.66%	1.88%	1.65%

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 support to achieve measurable gains in the grade- and age-appropriate curriculum.

ANSWER: The alternate assessment is an option for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. When making decisions regarding assessment eligibility IEP teams must determine if a student meets all three of the Alt assessment criteria. In making decisions regarding assessment participation, IEP teams must first determine if a student demonstrates a significant cognitive disability. The IEP team uses the three criteria considerations to ensure decisions are based on a holistic view of the whole child and not concentrate purely on an IQ score as there are many factors that can impact assessment performance. Additionally, the district provided district-wide training on Alternate Assessment (1%) participation & Implementation from the Low Incidence and Autism Coordinator, TDOE. In addition to the training, JMCSS has access to the PowerPoint, Rubric, data, and Diploma Decision-Making Guide that the facilitator left that the district uses for one-one training or group training.

- 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.

ANSWER: Jackson Madison County School district's alternate assessment participation exceeds the state's distribution in the eligibility areas of Autism, Intellectual Disability, and Traumatic Brain Injury. Compared to the state's allocation of 29.29% for students with Autism, JMCSS's percentage was 3.91% an increase of less than 1%. Students with Intellectually Disability exceeded the state distribution by 7.69%. The district also exceeded the state distribution in the Traumatic Brain Injury category by 0.75%. Additionally, students with Developmental Delays in our district decreased the state's distribution by 0.3%. Students with Functional Delays decreased the state's distribution by 0%. Additionally, JMCSS students with Hearing Impairments decreased the state's distribution by 0%. The district also decreased the state distribution in the category of Language Impaired by 0.16% as well as a decrease in Multiple Disabilities category by 4.64%. As the district reviews the current data, we have determined that students with Intellectual Disabilities may disproportionately participate in the Alternate Assessment compared to other disability categories. Reviewing the data from the last three assessment years, Jackson Madison County Schools has demonstrated improvement by decreasing the percentage of students participating in the Alternative Assessment. In the last four years, from 2017 to 2022 school years, ELA participation decreased by 0.38%, Math participation decreased by 0.37%, and Science participation decreased by 0.38%. Although we

are heading in the right direction, there is more work to reduce the Alternate Assessment participation rate within the district.

Due to the fact that Jackson-Madison County is a suburban area, and the city of Jackson is centrally located to many other surrounding rural counties where many of their residents come to Jackson for healthcare services, social services, and other needs met. Additionally, several outside agencies such as Star Center, Le Bonheur, Easter Seals, Therapy and Learning Center, etc. provide services and resources to families in the West TN Region. As a result, Jackson-Madison County School System enrolls more students with disabilities than neighboring districts, which has led to a higher number of students with low-incident disabilities. In an effort to reduce or eliminate disproportionality, the district has planned to gather and analyze data on the characteristics of students participating in the alternate assessment, provide professional development for IEP team members including principals and LEA representatives, and other educators on the nature of the alternate assessment and which students should participate in it, provide information sessions for parents of students with disabilities so that they can participate in the IEP decision-making process about the assessment in which their child participates, and monitor testing participation rates quarterly. The assessment and accountability coordinator along with the EasyIEP clerk will provide reports to the director of special education on how many students are participating in the alternate assessment using the EasyIEP system quarterly. The special education director will share the reports with the district consulting teachers, who will meet with building-level staff to discuss any concerns related to the reports.

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 participation in the IEP team discussion.

Parent Referral

Once a written notification from a parent is received at the school or district level, the parent request is time-stamped and logged on a referral document log by the sped secretary and forwarded to the assigned School Psychologist. The School Psychologist then contacts the lead sped teacher at the school level to schedule an initial consent meeting with the parent and IEP team.

JMCSS ensures that one or both parents of a child with a disability are present at the consent meeting or are afforded the opportunity to participate. The meeting is

scheduled at a mutually agreed-on time and place. An invitation is sent to the parents which include: the purpose, time, location of the meeting, and who will be in attendance by role/title. Also notice that the parents may invite people with knowledge or special expertise of the child to the meeting. JMCSS sped staff ensures parent participation in the IEP/consent meeting if the parent cannot attend by using other methods, including individual or conference, telephone calls, or video conferencing.

Consent Meeting

At the consent meeting, a copy of the Notice of Procedural Safeguards for Special Education is given to the parents and discussed with them to ensure their understanding of parental rights as related to the referral process. Then the school psychologist discusses the reasons for the referral; explains the evaluation process and procedures and decides what areas of assessments are needed to address the parent's concerns. Once the parent is fully informed of the evaluation process consent is obtained given and the parent signs the initial consent form. In cases where speech/language is a concern or for certain suspected disability categories (Developmental Delay, Autism) the speech-language pathologist is also invited to the meeting.

Once parental consent is signed by the parent, the sped teacher forwards a copy of the signed consent form to the EasyIEP administrator. The EasyIEP administrator enters the referral information into the system to begin the evaluation timeline. Assessment specialists begin the evaluation process and eligibility meetings are held within 60 days of obtaining consent.

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

Based on JMCSS data, support is needed in additional training on Alternate Assessment

Participation: Eligibility and Instructional Considerations

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: Bernie Thompson Date: 2/15/23