

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: Maryville City

	% 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	1.68%	1.42%	1.42%	1.58%	1.69%
MSAA Math	1.79%	1.38%	1.49%	1.74%	1.69%
TCAP- Alt Science	1.64%	*Field test year, no data available	1.39%	1.62%	1.82%

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.

For criterion one, school psychologists undergo annual review of this requirement to ensure that appropriate cognitive assessments are being

conducted in a timely manner to provide accurate information to IEP teams for decision making purposes. The district school psychology team along with the Special Education Director regularly discuss general and child-specific issues related to application of this criterion to ensure that only those students with the most significant disabilities are being considered for alternate assessment. Certified special education staff undergo annual training that includes a review of this criterion; however, school psychologists are often the trainers on this topic at the school level. School administrators who are typically the LEA attendee at IEP meetings receive training on this topic annually through site-level training, district leadership team meetings, and special education in-services. Regular education teachers receive training from school psychologists as needed to support active participation in IEP meetings where alternate assessment may be proposed.

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

Annually, all certified special education staff and typically at least 1 administrator from each school attend two half day in-service trainings on IEP topics. At least once annually a training topic includes each criterion for alternate assessment eligibility including content linked to state standards for students. Each special education teacher who is responsible for educating students in core academic content is responsible for knowing how to access grade level content standards, access modified standards for their grade level instruction, appropriately modify grade level instruction to meet individual student needs in a general education setting, write IEP goals focusing on extended content standards, and select curriculum with a focus on extended content standards. Additional individualized training is available for special education teachers who need assistance with these expectations. The district also encourages and funds off site and online professional development opportunities.

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

As part of annual district special education in-service training, criterion for alternate assessment eligibility, including documentation of student need for

extensive direct instruction in functional, daily living, and adaptive areas is a content topic. Each student with an intellectual disability is expected to have closely monitored and documented present levels of educational performance in adaptive functioning. Teachers are encouraged to regularly review assessment tools for this area, data tracking measures, and curriculum materials. For consideration of alternate assessment, special education teachers must be able to present significant information to IEP teams that supports a student having adaptive skills that require extensive direct instruction in multiple settings.

Due to a significant number of special education case managers within the district being new to the field of special education in combination with elevated ALT assessment data, the Special Education Director will conduct specific training for special education case managers of children with low incidence disabilities in February 2023. District administrators of elementary and intermediate schools received guidance on ALT assessments and district data in January 2023. Additional training for school administrators, school psychologists, and LEA representatives will be completed by July 2023.

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 review of district data indicates that 55% (more than half) of all alternate assessment participation is by students with an identified Intellectual Disability. This is to be expected and an increase from last year by 10%. Another 26% (over a fourth) of alternate assessment participation is by students identified under the disability area of autism. For Maryville City Schools, this is also to be expected. Historically, many parents of students with autism have been hesitant to agree to secondary disability eligibility for intellectual disability (ID) even when a student meets state standards.

The areas of greatest concern from district ALT assessment data for FY22 include 1 student identified with a Specific Learning Disability and 1 student identified with a Developmental Delay as well as overall data well above the 1% target. Both students' records need a review for eligibility for alternate assessment. The Special Education Director will initiate a review immediately. A review of

Disproportionality Data indicates no further significant concerns related to ED status, EL status, gender, or race/ethnicity.

Action Plan for February 2023- February 2024:

- 1. Development of a document for elementary and intermediate schools providing guidance on all three criterion for ALT decision-making, benefits of participation in regular state assessments for children in grades 2-4, and achievement/growth questions submitted by teachers and principals**
 - 2. Provide training to teachers of low-incidence disabilities on the developed guidance document, especially areas of criterion and facts which teams are NOT to consider when making decisions (examples- instructional reading level and expectation of poor performance) on February 20, 2023**
 - 3. Provide training to school leaders who act as LEA representatives on the ALT guidance document for grades 2-4**
 - 4. Continue quarterly psychology meetings that include discussion and review of ALT eligibility standards and best practices for providing guidance to school leaders and case managers**
 - 5. Special Education Director to monitor ALT participation in May 2023, December 2023, and March 2024 to determine further training initiatives needed throughout the school year with specific educators, general education teachers, and/or schools**
- 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 provided DRAFT IEPs at least two days in advance of a meeting. This allows parents to review information that will be used as part of eligibility decision making for regular/alternate assessments. As each IEP team discusses eligibility for alternate assessment, a special education teacher or psychologist is responsible for explaining to parents what each of the three sections is asking and then the team collectively selects the available sources of evidence. A special education teacher/case manager, school psychologist, or LEA

representative at each meeting where alternate assessment is discussed is required to verbally explain the implications for alternate assessment participation. The IEP team, especially the parents or legal guardians must be made aware that participation in the alternate assessment means that the student is participating in a curriculum that does not lead to a general education high school diploma. The achievement expectations for the alternate assessment are not the same as the expectations for the general assessment. In addition, upon each IEP decision to place a student on alternate assessment, a Prior Written Notice is expected to contain a statement indicating that the district proposed participation in alternate state assessments and participation will have an adverse impact on acquisition of a regular diploma.

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

Support was received from Alison Gauld in January 2023 when she provided the district with course codes that allow children receiving highly modified specialized instruction access to regular state assessments. This information, as well as further provided guidance to support increasing elementary participation on regular state assessments, will be disseminated February 2023 to stakeholders. The goal is for significant improvements in data on regular state assessment participation, especially for grades 2-4, from March 2023 to April 2024.

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: Dr. Melanie Davidson Date: 02/07/2023