

### **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: McKenzie Special School District

|                         | % of<br>Alternative<br>Assessments<br>2017-18 | % of<br>Alternate<br>Assessments<br>2018-19            | % of<br>Alternate<br>Assessments<br>2020-21 | % of<br>Alternate<br>Assessments<br>2021-22 | Projected %<br>of Alternate<br>Assessments<br>2022-23 |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| MSAA<br>ELA             | 0.58%                                         | 0.31%                                                  | 1.31%                                       | 1.41%                                       | 1.50%                                                 |
| MSAA<br>Math            | 0.59%                                         | 0.31%                                                  | 1.28%                                       | 1.42%                                       | 1.50%                                                 |
| TCAP-<br>Alt<br>Science | 0.58%                                         | <i>*Field test<br/>year, no<br/>data<br/>available</i> | 1.19%                                       | 1.40%                                       | 1.50%                                                 |

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.

All students who participate in the alternate assessment are tested by our school psychologist and have a full comprehensive evaluation, which includes a cognitive assessment, adaptive testing including the home and school setting, achievement testing, observations, parent information, medical and developmental history, and other pertinent information needed on a case by case basis. Our school psychologist attends trainings sponsored by the Tennessee Department of Education to remain current and in compliance with the eligibility determination for the alternate assessment.

In our district, the Supervisor of Special Education is notified anytime the team is considering the alternate assessment for a student. The district supervisor provides annual training for all members of the special education department including making decisions regarding the alternate assessment. The district supervisor stays in compliance by referencing the disability evaluations and eligibility at [tn.gov](http://tn.gov), attending TN DOE professional development sessions throughout the year, and through monthly collaborations with our school psychologist. Teachers also attend professional development sessions provided by the TN DOE when they are available.

All students at MSSD participating in the alternate assessment meet the participation guidelines, and each decision to participate was carefully considered and determined through meticulous data and observation review by a multidisciplinary IEP team. This is a decision we do not take lightly.

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.

In 2021-2022, we tested almost 800 students district-wide, and only 10 of these students in grades 3<sup>rd</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> were on the alternate assessment. One of the ten students assessed on the alternate assessment was a medical exemption.

Every effort is made to reduce the number of students participating in the alternate assessment through reviewing student files and alternate assessment participation guidelines by the teacher(s), supervisor, and school psychologist to ensure only our students with only the most significant disabilities participate in the alternate assessment. We work diligently toward meeting the needs of

each individual student and try not to exceed the 1% participation rate goal, but, unfortunately, it is sometimes inevitable.

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 active part of the IEP team and all meetings. The alternate assessment is discussed annually or as needed with a multidisciplinary team, which includes the parents. Parents or guardians must indicate through signatures their agreement with this decision. During the meeting, it is communicated to parents their child participating in the alternate assessment will not qualify for a regular education high school diploma. All decisions are also documented in prior written notices, and a copy is provided to parents.

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

We would like to request that if PIE isn't brought back that there be a reasonable replacement for special educators to have ample training opportunities from TN DOE. In special education, professional development goes beyond teaching strategies, classroom management, TEAM, etc., and PIE was a great opportunity for these educators.

**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: \_\_\_\_\_

*Reighan Horne, Director of Special Education*  
*2-15-23*