

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: **Monroe County 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	1.06	1.15	1.18	1.25	0.97
MSAA Math	1.05	1.14	1.13	1.23	0.97
TCAP- Alt Science	0.76	<i>*Field test year, no data available</i>	1.25	1.29	0.97

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.

A School Psychologist is included on every IEP team that is considering alternate assessment. All district School Psychologists have been trained on and understand the State guidance for participation in the alternate assessment and the local criteria (IQ and Adaptive Behavior Ratings below 60) used to determine what constitutes the “most significant cognitive and adaptive behavior skill deficits.” The goal is not to exceed the 1% cap for students participating in the alternate assessment, while still allowing IEP teams the right to make the most appropriate decisions for each individual student. We continue to follow all State and Federal guidance related to participation in alternate assessments, understanding that the decision for participation is ultimately the responsibility of each IEP team, based on the individual needs of each student. For the current school year, we are carefully monitoring each situation and continue to require the inclusion of a School Psychologist on the team anytime alternate assessment is being proposed or discussed. We also continue to utilize the State’s *Guidance for IEP Teams on Participation* which includes detailed explanation of the three consideration criteria (significant cognitive disability, engagement in learning linked to Tennessee’s Academic Standards, and the need for extensive, direct, individualized instruction and support).

- 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 previous ten school years, Monroe County has not been found disproportionate in any area of participation. However, due to the higher likelihood for smaller systems without diverse populations to be identified as disproportionate, we have taken steps to monitor areas of potential disproportionality more closely. Our district-wide Special Education staff meets monthly to discuss topics of relevance. Each month, this includes a discussion about disproportionality with particular emphasis on the identification of autism, intellectually gifted, speech-language impairments, and participation in the alternate assessment. This discussion is led by the Exceptional Education Director and requires input from all School Psychologists and other assessment specialists as needed.**

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.

IEP team meetings are scheduled to discuss student participation. The parents/guardians are always invited to these meetings. Additionally, a school psychologist is required to attend, along with other required participants. At the meeting, discussions are held to explain whether the student meets the requirements for consideration of the alternate assessment, what that means for the current year's testing, and what it means for the student's long-term educational plan (i.e., explanation that participation in the alternate assessment means that the student will not be working toward attainment of a regular high school diploma). If the decision is made that the student will participate, the LEA and team must sign in agreement that the decision was made in the best interest of the student and not in the best interest of the school or the school's overall test scores. After the meeting, a Prior Written Notice is developed and presented to the parent that summarizes the decisions made during the IEP team meeting. If the meeting is not an initial placement meeting and the parent does not attend or gives permission for the team to proceed without their involvement, paper copies of the IEP and Prior Written Notice are mailed to the parents/guardians. Parents are always informed that they have the right to discuss any decision further with the local Special Education team or with State Special Education officials as outlined in the Procedural Safeguards.

4. **Support Requested:** Please detail any support needed from the department. (All reasonable requests for supports will be considered.). **At this time, we do not feel that additional support or training is needed.**

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: 2/7/2023