

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: Polk 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	.97	1.62	1.13	1.74	.91
MSAA Math	.99	1.61	1.14	1.07	1.41
TCAP- Alt Science	.85	*Field test year, no data available	1.30	1.58	1.40

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.

Polk County Schools require that IEP teams consider cognitive and adaptive behavior scores from the student's most recent evaluation prior to determining eligibility for alternate assessment participation. The IEP team must consult with the school psychologist for input regarding validity of the scores and any factors that may have affected student performance. Students with the most significant cognitive and adaptive delays are considered for alternate assessment participation.

IEP teams ensure that the student is learning content that is linked to state content standards by reviewing IEP goals and objectives, lesson plans, student work examples, and progress monitoring data. The team consults with appropriate IEP team members to ensure that appropriate supports/accommodations are in place to make the curriculum content and participation a meaningful experience for the student. Team members are trained at least annually on appropriate accommodations for students with the most significant need and the alternate assessment participation criteria.

The IEP team reviews and ensures that the student is receiving the highest level of direct special education intervention and specialized supports to achieve gains in grade and age-appropriate curriculum standards. Teams are provided appropriate administrative support to ensure adequate services are provided to the student with the highest needs. All special education staff are trained at least annually on appropriate LRE placement decisions.

- 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.

Polk County, for the 2021-22 school year had a 1.74% participation in alternate assessment for ELA, 1.07% in math and 1.58% in science. Projected numbers for 2022-23 are lower in ELA and Science but have increased for Math. Most students participating in the alternate assessments primary disability categories are either intellectual disability or autism.

The county has attempted to reduce the number of students participating in the alternate assessment by considering additional factors that may influence student performance on cognitive and adaptive measures. The IEP Team's focus on deciding how, not whether, the student can participate in "traditional" TCAP. Teams consider if the student would be appropriately challenged by instruction linked to grade level content. IEP teams have been instructed to review previous assessment results and consider factors that may have affected a change in scores, careful consideration to exclusionary factors, and other factors that may have affected test performance. Teams also consider areas of higher performance, rather than a Global Adaptive Composite or a Full-Scale IQ. Areas of higher performance may drive decisions regarding accommodations selected for classroom participation and testing. We have made some progress in decreasing percentages of students taking the ELA and science alternate assessments but need to focus on decreasing the number of students taking the math alternate 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.

IEP teams review the alternate assessment criteria with parents when individual students are being considered for alternate assessment participation. All testing options are explained to the parent with applicable implications of each. Parents are provided with all the data, and an explanation, when teams consider alternate assessment. Parents are encouraged to share student strengths and discuss exclusionary factors that may affect test performance and/or participation.

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

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: Frances Bramble Date: 2/14/2023