

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: **Putnam 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	1.45%	1.51%	1.12%	1.06%	1.29%
MSAA Math	1.46%	1.50%	1.11%	1.05%	1.30%
TCAP- Alt Science	1.45%	<i>*Field test year, no data available</i>	1.10%	1.23%	1.26%

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. Our district will ensure ongoing discussions and trainings are provided targeting assessment personnel in regards to what factors should impact team decisions as well as the impact the decision will have on the students future learning trajectory and graduation plans at regularly scheduled staff meetings. This will help ensure that assessment personnel can assist educational teams in making data based decisions in the best interest of each individual child based on historical and current information.

Ongoing discussions will be held at professional learning community meetings to ensure all special education staff are aware of the above noted factors and can assist educational teams in making decisions.

Building level administrators will be provided with resources so they have a thorough understanding of state guidelines, factors to be considered, and the impact of assessment decisions on each student's future educational path.

All staff will continue to be informed of the state 1% guideline and our districts current percentage of students identified to participate in alternate assessment to ensure a global view. All staff will be made aware of ongoing efforts to ensure educational teams have adequate knowledge and are making data based decisions in the best interests of each student.

The district will encourage ongoing conversations and training that ensures educational teams are not making decisions primarily based on eligibility identification. The district will continue to encourage that educational teams look beyond the child's educational label to ensure that only the most globally affected of the intellectually disabled population are identified to participate in alternate assessment.

The district will ensure that comprehensive reevaluations rather than those completed by file review are completed to establish a stable baseline of cognitive and adaptive functioning based on individual assessments, progress monitoring data, and observations. Teams will be encouraged to give consideration to alternate assessment only after consistent data and historical information is available that indicates global deficits in the areas of cognitive and adaptive functioning as well as the need for extensive, individualized supports. Observations are completed across settings to ensure that obtained scores seem to accurately reflect the students competencies within the educational setting. When discrepancies in parent and teacher adaptive ratings occur, assessment personnel will complete additional, intensive observations across educational settings to gather further information. This will assist teams in clarifying each student's adaptive profile and identify functional skills that would benefit from targeted support to enable the student to have greater access to educational

programming. Results are reviewed in an IEP meeting and the team determines that the obtained results are an accurate reflection of the students abilities.

Teams are encouraged to consider the continuum of intellectual disabilities and give consideration to alternate assessment for only those students with the most global and significant deficits.

Adaptive assessments are completed with home and school interviews to measure adaptive competencies and ensure that performance is consistent with previous scores obtained. When discrepancies occur, systematic observations are completed by evaluation personnel to provide clinical judgement in regards to adaptive functioning.

B. Teachers attend training on state standards, are provided curriculum that is aligned to state standards, meet with grade levels during common planning times to ensure that they are on pace with curriculum, and are provided with the district curriculum pacing guides. Additionally, students are mainstreamed into their core classes to the maximum extent possible. Educational team gives careful consideration to supports and strategies that may assist students in being able to access grade level content.

Special education teachers have received professional development in Orton Gillingham methodology to enable them to provide strong foundational instruction in reading. Teachers have received training from the district math coach in how to utilize Number Talks. District content coaches are a resource to special education personnel.

Each student's participation and opportunities for practice to integrate with typical peers is re-evaluated at annual IEP reviews. Transition plans are discussed and implemented to increase participation to the greatest extent possible based on each student's abilities. Teams strive to identify behaviors and other impeding factors that are impacting increased integration and implement increased functional skills and behavioral supports as possible to address them.

C. The district utilizes progress monitoring data at the student's instructional level as well as at the student's grade level to determine where the student can make gains academically, adaptively, emotionally and socially. The district utilizes the results of our universal screeners and the student's current and past classroom performance. The district uses data that not only looks at academics but also adaptive behavior and social skills when looking at the environment where a child will be most successful.

To assist a student in increasing behavioral, social, and emotional tolerance to integrated settings, transition plans are discussed. Increased participation to lunch, recess, and encore settings as well as preferred academic focus areas may be implemented first to increase tolerance and allow students to practice needed skills impacting their performance.

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.

While our overall district goal is to be in compliance with the states 1% cap, Putnam County continues to strive to make data based decisions based on the whole child's performance with consideration given to each students cognitive, academic, and adaptive performance as well as historical data when determining appropriate state assessments.

Our plan to reduce/eliminate disproportionality includes continuing to provide guidance and training to educational teams in regards to what factors should impact team decisions as well as the impact the decision will have on the students future learning trajectory and graduation plans. This will include frank discussions with parents/guardians to ensure a thorough understanding of future impact.

Our district will ensure general conversations are routinely held with building administrators to ensure a thorough understanding of the factors to be considered and the impact of this decision on the student's future.

Educational teams will be encouraged to give consideration to alternate assessment only after consistent data and historical information is available that indicates global deficits in the areas of cognitive and adaptive functioning as well as the need for extensive, individualized supports.

Teams will be encouraged to have thorough conversations particularly for those students where historical data is not available. Teams will continue to be made aware that the decision for alternate assessment is revisited each year at the students annual IEP. Participation in traditional assessment is strongly encouraged until historical information is available indicating the need for extensive, individualized supports in order for a student to make measurable gains in grade level curriculum.

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 integral part of the annual IEP team decision for their child's state assessment determination. Procedural safeguards are reviewed with parents at each IEP meeting to ensure understanding that they are an integral part of the decision making team for their student and procedures are in place if they were to disagree with team decisions. The district strives to arrive at data based decisions with consideration given to multiple sources of information to make informed decisions in the best interests of students. Team discussions are documented on the prior written notice. District educational teams also recognize that decisions for students to participate in traditional or alternate assessments can be revisited as needed annually. The district strives to have sensitive but thorough and direct conversations with parents in sharing evaluation results and the impact identified deficits may have on a student's ability to access grade level curriculum. Educational teams explain how the decision for a student to participate in alternate assessment impacts the trajectory of their learning progression and graduation plan even at the elementary level. Teams are encouraged to consider the continuum of intellectual disabilities and give consideration to alternate assessment for only those students with the most global and significant deficits.

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

Continue to provide training and webinars on the alternate assessment (new expectations, courses and course codes, processes etc.) that would be accessible to personnel anytime that a district could use any time new personnel is hired or as a refresher for teachers throughout the year.

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: 2/14/23