

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: Rutherford 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	1.26%	0.98%	1.02%	0.98%	0.97%
MSAA Math	1.20%	0.98%	1.01%	1.00%	0.97%
TCAP- Alt Science	1.10%	<i>*Field test year, no data available</i>	1.18%	1.02%	0.98%

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.

Participation in Alternate Assessments is determined by each individual student's IEP team. To help the team make this decision, Rutherford County provides training to school psychologists on the Alternate Assessment Criterion listed above. This training includes information from TDOE guidance documents including "Alternate Assessment Participation Guidelines for Decision Making Tools for IEP Team Process" and "Participation Flowchart." In addition, Special Education Instructional Coaches review these guidance documents and information at least annually with school teams. Each school psychologist works with their school teams to review data for the students in which Alternate Assessment is considered. Data is taken from multiple sources including classroom performance, parent information, intervention data, and cognitive information. IEP teams review this data to make an IEP team decision about Alternate Assessment.

Rutherford County utilizes curricula that aligns to the TN State Standards. Teachers receive training and support from Special Education Instructional Coaches to assist in planning instruction which addresses individual academic needs while addressing the alternate academic standard. Teachers have access to multiple instructional resources including modules provided by TDOE. In addition, teachers and staff utilize accessibility features and strategies to incorporate access to the curricula and functional communication across all environments.

Rutherford County provides direct and explicit instruction as decided by the IEP team to address the individual needs of students assessed by Alternate Assessment. The IEP team decides on individualized supports to ensure students can access curricula and standards in multiple settings throughout the school day as determined by the IEP team.

Participation in the Alternate Assessment is not determined by a specific disability, educational placement, excessive absences, acquisition of the English language, or school accountability factors.

Teachers are also provided training for administering the MSAA both through the online modules/quiz and through building level support provided through Special Education Instructional Coaches.

Signed: Annie LaMarr

Date: 2-8-2023

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.

More than half of RCS students on Alternate Assessment are students with an Intellectual Disability. Students with Autism comprise approximately 31% while students with multiple disabilities equal 10.59% of the total. The other disability categories count for only a small percentage of students on Alternate Assessment. RCS primary eligibility data closely mirrors the overall state data. The difference between the district and state percentages does not exceed 1.55% in any category. Most categories show less than 1% difference from the state averages.

Rutherford County will continue to review individual student data to ensure the student has a significant cognitive disability requiring substantial supports to achieve gains in appropriate individual academic curricula which is connected to Tennessee state standards.

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 included in the data review during the IEP meeting as part of the discussion and determination for eligibility to participate in the Alternate Assessment. In addition, school teams receive information about diploma options from the Special Education Instructional Coaches and other Central Office Special Education staff so that they can accurately inform families about how alternate assessment impacts diploma and post-secondary options. School teams are also encouraged to share information and online resources with parents about the Alternate Assessment, diploma options, and post-secondary information.

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

No additional support is needed at this time.

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.