

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: Stewart

	% 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	1.71%	1.29%	1.28%	1.18%	1.17%
MSAA Math	1.75%	1.30%	1.31%	1.31%	1.23%
TCAP- Alt Science	1.29%	<i>*Field test year, no data available</i>	1.46%	1.38%	1.02%

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.

Stewart County uses any state updates and guidance for training on Alternate Assessment as well as in making decisions related to participation in alternate assessment. Additionally, staff responsible for administering the alt assessment is trained to monitor appropriate indicators for participation.

The policy used by the SCSS for identifying students who are appropriate for alt assessment participation is aimed at reviewing data, determining needs, and making a team based decision for students. During the team meeting, the exclusionary criteria listed in EdPlan (Factors not to be considered) are listed and reviewed. If it is discovered that the primary reason for alternate participation is one or more of the exclusionary criteria, relevant parties are notified of the decision and the student remains on TCAP.

If it is determined that alternate participation is not based on exclusionary factors, current school data is reviewed including any previous cognitive assessments, adaptive assessments, special education records, teacher/parent input, and medical history to aid in decision making. If additional assessments are deemed necessary, the process for getting those assessments completed is started.

During the IEP meeting, all data and assessments are reviewed and parents are informed of the impact in high school and graduation with regards to alternate assessment participation. This is when diploma options are also discussed. Special attention is made to maintain the student in their LRE. During this meeting is when procedural safeguards are provided and explained to parents so they understand and are comfortable with the decisions being made.

In order to ensure continued appropriate use of alternate assessment participation, those on it are reviewed at both the annual IEP and during their reevaluation to determine if it is still in the child's best interest to continue on the alternate assessment path.

In regards to the specific criteria listed above, the following are how those factors are monitored:

- **Criteria One: Cognitive Disability** – The maximum cognitive score that will be considered is 70, but it is the policy of SCSS to provide LRE for all students, and those with an IQ around 70 are first considered for resource support rather than alternate assessment. Most students taking alternate assessment score in the 50s or low 60s on standardized cognitive assessments. Cognitive results are also considered in context of other data such as academic performance measured by RTI benchmarks, classroom observations, and home performance. If other data suggests resource support for TCAP is more appropriate, then cognitive scores are not used to justify or determine alternate assessment participation.
- **Criteria Two- Content Standards** – Standards used in CDC classrooms for alternate assessment are linked directly to state content standards. The standards are modified as determined by the IEP in order to provide for the student's education, but the basis for all instruction is state content standards.
- **Criteria Three – Extensive Direct Instruction**- For the purposes of alternate assessment in the SCSS, in order to participate, a student must require extensive special education support in the CDC classroom. The fit with a CDC environment, which provides the most intense level of support and life skill development, is a major indicator for the appropriateness of alternate assessment. This provides another level of monitoring for the students taking alternate assessment.

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.

Based on the data, there is not identified disproportionality in students who are taking alternate assessment. The data of students currently taking alternate assessment is consistent with the demographics of the community and with previous cohorts on the Alt path. SCSS borders Fort Campbell Military Base which has an Exceptional Family Member Program. This draws military families with exceptional children with needs to the base which impacts our numbers each year. As such, there is no plan to eliminate disproportionality. The SCSS plans to continue to focus on this area to prevent disproportionality from occurring in the future. This is done by monitoring any students that have been proposed as possible alternate assessment candidates to ensure that factors such as age or race are not used in or impacting alternate assessment participation.

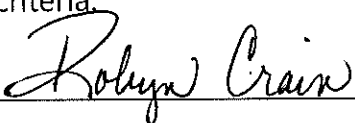
3. **Informed Parent Participation:** Describe the process and practices used to adequately inform parents of the eligibility requirements and implications of participation to ensure active parent participate in the IEP team discussion.

The primary means used to inform parents about participation and implications is a direct IEP meeting with parents at which time discussion covers these topics. A discussion of eligibility requirements occurs when the IEP document covers participation in alternate assessment. At this time, data is reviewed from the file and from any additional assessments that were completed to inform the decision. After eligibility is discussed, the impact is addressed. For those students who are elementary or middle school aged, some time is spent outlining the impact of those grade levels, but the primary focus is on the effect if the student participates in alternate assessment at the high school level. To ensure that parents are aware of the decision, the impact on graduation and diploma is also discussed toward the end of the IEP when the assurance statements are signed by parent and staff.

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

At this time, no particular support appears to be needed. Since 2017, trends have shown a decline in the number of students taking alternate assessment. The extent that the SCSS has exceeded the 1% is approximately 2-3 students. We anticipate this declining even more this year. We will continue to work towards lowering our alternate assessment participation.

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