

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: Warren 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	1.88%	1.78%	1.71%	1.39%	1.3%
MSAA Math	1.87%	1.81%	1.72%	1.37%	1.3%
TCAP- Alt Science	1.61%	*Field test year, no data available	1.78%	1.62%	1.3%

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.

Warren County strives to identify students appropriately who will participate in the alternative assessment. We have steadily decreased our percentages of students on alternative assessment over the last four years in ELA from 1.88% (2017-18) to 1.78% (2018-19) to 1.71% (2020-21) to 1.39% (2021-22). In addition, we have decreased our percentages of students on alternative assessment over the last three years in Math from 1.87% (2017-18) to 1.81% (2018-19) to 1.72 (2019-20) to 1.37% (2021-22).

Our IEP teams review all assessment data (specifically focusing on current data), student goals, and the progress monitoring of students who have already been identified as meeting criteria for the alternative assessment. By this review of data, these teams can investigate if any of these students were inappropriately identified. If students were found to be inappropriately identified, the IEP teams would meet to change their identification from alternative assessment to regular TCAP assessment. In addition, this year we focused on students who were scoring high on their previous alternative assessments and having in depth discussions in IEP teams to transition these students to regular TCAP assessment.

Warren County's school psychologists are continually trained in state requirements for criteria for all disabilities, the state assessment decisions, and eligibilities for each assessment. Our staff continues to stay aware and follow state guidance for criteria and continue to review and discuss other options for students who are placed on an alternative assessment path. During each IEP meeting, the team discusses the student's progress, and if the student's data reveals significant progress on the previous alternative assessment or scoring in the upper quartile, conversations and decisions regarding changing the pathway to regular TCAP are discussed with the IEP team.

This past year, our school psychologists and IEP consulting teachers reviewed each student who was placed on an Alternative Assessment path by discussing previous Alternative Assessment scores, current assessment scores, current teacher input, and current progress monitoring to determine if each student could be moved from Alternative Assessment to regular TCAP. After reviewing these files, we were able to move some students from Alternative Assessment to regular TCAP this past year. We are continuing to review these in each student's IEP meeting to make the best determination for the student.

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.

Currently, Warren County does not have any disproportionality concerns in relation to any student's disability category. Our highest disability category of students on Alternative Assessment pathway is Intellectually Disabled (32 students). We realize that this disability alone does not equate to Alternative Assessment, and we are careful in making decisions for these students. Our second highest category is Autism (18 students). After careful review of these students' files, we have decreased this number from 27 students in 2020.21 to 18 students in 2021.22. We have also decreased our Other Health Impairment disability category from two students in 2020.21 to one student in 2021.22. We plan to continue with this intentional work.

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 of our student with disabilities continue to be a vital part of the IEP team when making determinations regarding their student possibly participating in the alternative assessment. When the team first suspects a disability, parents are invited to come into the school and requested to give written consent for an evaluation of the suspected disability. During the evaluation, parents are fully involved by giving input through a social history, adaptive measures, and another other measures giving their input through a social history, adaptive measures, and another other measures needed to assist in the evaluation process. After the evaluation is completed, parents are included in the eligibility meetings where results are presented and explained to the entire IEP team, which includes the parents. If the student meets criteria for eligibility in special education, the parents' consent is obtained to receive services, and an IEP is developed to support the student with present levels of performances, goals, accommodations, and services developed by the IEP team. During the IEP development, all members of the IEP team, including the parents, determine if the child is eligible and meets criteria for either the regular TCAP assessment (grades 2-11) or the alternative assessment (grades 2-11). If a student is deemed eligible for the alternative assessment, our school psychologists lead this discussion when completing the alternative assessment eligibility portion of the IEP. The student's trajectory is discussed regarding the alternative assessment, and the IEP team is very transparent with the parents, even with our young students, that if continuing this path will make them ineligible for a regular education diploma. Currently, the Alternative Academic Diploma is an option for these students if they meet criteria under this pathway. After the IEP team makes a decision regarding the student's assessment pathway, all members sign that they either agree or disagree with the decision (with a dissenting statement). All finalized copies of the evaluation reports, eligibility report, IEP, Alternative Assessment Decision Report, and Prior Written Notice are given to the parents to keep for their records.

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

Since this is a very difficult process for the IEP team, Warren County makes decisions to place a child on the alternative assessment with much caution. Often, these decisions include collaboration with other school psychologists, the Director of Special Education, and other members of the department to assist in making these decisions without thoroughly investigating all other possibilities. Only students who meet criteria are made eligible for this alternative assessment. All students who are eligible and take the alternative assessment have significant deficits in cognitive and adaptive levels of functioning, and this prevents them from being fully involved with grade level state content standards while using program modifications. We include all our students on alternative assessments in the general education setting to the highest extent possible. We have seen gains in our students who participate in the general education classes; however, many of these students continue to struggle with cognitive deficits and successfully participating in the grade level curriculum.

From our description of our programs, and our successful work in continuing to work on lowering our percentages, we would request any new ideas from the department to assist us in lowering this number even more. Additionally, we welcome any new information or training to assist us in reducing these numbers.

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: Candice G. Will

Date: 2/13/23