

Florida Department of Education

Local Educational Agency (LEA) Justification for Exceeding the 1% Cap Participation Action Plan (AP)

LEA: Columbia County School District

Please select one:

My LEA **does not expect to exceed** one percent of the number of assessed students participating in the Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA) in the 2025-26 school year (SY).

My LEA **expects to exceed** one percent of the number of assessed students participating in the FAA in the 2025-26 SY.

Please check the LEA size.

Small

Medium

Large

Very Large

1.	<p>How has your LEA reviewed the data for assessment participation to make informed decisions for implementation?</p> <p>Columbia County conducted a comprehensive analysis of 2024-25 assessment data. The District Assessment Coordinator, Management Information Systems Coordinator, and Exceptional Student Education (ESE) office collaborated to review FAST and FAA participation rates. Data was disaggregated by assessment type, primary exceptionality, and eligibility for instruction on Access Points. This review was supplemented by a targeted review of Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) for all FAA-participating students to verify alignment with state criteria.</p>
2.	<p>What are your LEA's percentages of students that participated in the FAA in the 2024-25 SY in each of the following subjects?</p> <p>ELA: 1.5% Math: 1.7% Science: 1.4%</p>
3.	<p>What is your LEA's projection for the percentage of students participating in the FAA in the 2025-26 SY in each of the following subjects?</p> <p>ELA: 1.4% Math: 1.6% Science: 1.3%</p>
4.	<p>What are your LEA's percentages of students participating in the Florida Assessment for Student Thinking (FAST) 3-10 Progress Monitoring and End-of-Course (EOC) assessments in the 2025-26 SY in each of the following subjects?</p>

	<p>ELA:96%</p> <p>Math:94%</p> <p>Science:96%</p>
5.	<p>What is your LEA’s projection for the percentage of students participating in the FAST 3-10 Progress Monitoring and EOC assessments in the 2025-26 SY in each of the following subjects?</p> <p>ELA: 97%</p> <p>Math: 97%</p> <p>Science: 96%</p>
6.	<p>Are there unique circumstances in the LEA that might draw large numbers of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities to live in the LEA, which in turn might result in more than one percent of students participating in the FAA? If so, describe those unique circumstances (i.e., migrant families, military bases, hospitals, rehabilitation centers or student enrollment).</p> <p>Yes, our LEA has some unique circumstances that contribute to a higher number of students with significant cognitive disabilities being served, which in turn may result in more than one percent of students participating in the FAA. Columbia County has several medical and rehabilitation centers in the county. The county also has several facilities to house foster care students with significant cognitive disabilities.</p> <p>Our LEA serves a substantial migrant population due to the agricultural industry in the region. These families often have children with significant cognitive disabilities.</p> <p>Columbia County also has several group homes and CARC (Advocates for Citizens with Disabilities) designed to serve students with significant cognitive disabilities. These programs draw families to the LEA specifically for specialized services and supports they offer, resulting in a higher number of students enrolled in our schools.</p> <p>Columbia County allows student who live in surrounding counties to attend school in the district. Some of these students are significantly cognitively delayed and contributes to the district FAA percentage.</p>
7.	<p>List the percentages of the following primary/secondary exceptionality categories in your LEA for students participating in the FAA in the 2025-26 SY for each of the following:</p> <p>Intellectual Disability (InD): 61.9%</p> <p>Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): 36.19%</p>

	<p>Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI): 1.9% Other Health Impairment (OHI): .01%</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>After reviewing your data on students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, were there any patterns that emerged? For example, were students who attended a specific class or school more likely to participate in the alternate assessment? Does the participation rate vary?</p> <p>Columbia County School District has 8 elementary school and 2 of these elementary schools (Columbia County Elementary and Minnie J Niblack) has classrooms designed for students on access points curriculum and participates alternative assessment. Students are allowed to tend the school closes to the child’s home, if the parent chooses. For this reason, these 2 elementary may have a higher rate of significant cognitive disabilities students participating in alternative assessment.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Regarding the participation of students in alternate assessments, is the LEA aware of any disproportionate representation of students in the following subgroups: English Language Learners, African American students, Hispanic/Latino students, male/female students or low-income students? If so, please describe the steps the LEA will take in the coming year (or the steps already taken) to find the root cause and reduce the impact of any disproportionate representation of students in the above-referenced subgroups among those taking the FAA.</p> <p>Based on the June 2025 data chat and Annual Performance Report 2025, Columbia County does not have any disproportioned representation.</p>

<p>10.</p>	<p>How will the LEA seek to assess 95% participation in all assessments, including students with disabilities in all grades and subjects? Review your individual educational plan (IEP) data and identification practices to identify the root cause of why the LEA is under the 95% participation rate and over the 1% threshold for students participating in the FAA.</p> <p>Columbia County School District regularly monitors the participation rates at the schools, grades, and student subgroup levels which includes students with disabilities. The District, school principals, and school testing coordinators review assessment participation data in real-time leading up to, during, and after testing window to flag low participation early.</p> <p>Truancy is a major contributing factor to falling below the 95% assessment participation rate. Schools refer truant students to the Child Study Team which develops intervention plans. If the interventions is not successful, the CST will refer the student to Truancy court.</p> <p>The ESE Director conducts IEP compliance checks for students assigned to the FAA to ensure alignment with the FAA eligibility criteria. The ESE Director and ESE Staffing Specialist trains ESE Teachers, school principals, and guidance counselors annually on the state eligibility criteria for FAA.</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>How are IEP decisions in all schools within your LEA consistently implementing the state’s guidelines and criteria regarding which students should take the FAA? (Please consider using the “Checklist for Course and Assessment Participation” for IEP team meetings within your LEA.)</p> <p>All IEP teams across the LEA is required to use the Checklist for Course and Assessment Participation during IEP meetings when determining FAA Eligibility. Professional Development is provided at the beginning of the school for all ESE teachers, guidance counselors, and school administration. The Director of ESE review’s all FAA folders to ensure that the student meets eligibility requirements based on the Checklist for course and assessment participation. The Director of ESE also completes the FAA Desktop Monitoring to ensure compliance.</p>
<p>12.</p>	<p>Describe the process and required evidence of finding a student eligible to participate in the FAA using all the criteria in Rule 6A-1.0943, Florida Administrative Code.</p> <p>Columbia County School District uses the <i>Consideration for Access Points Instruction and Statewide, Standardized Alternate Assessment: Access Committee Determination</i> guide when determining whether a student with disabilities meets eligibility criteria to be assessed through the administration</p>

	<p>of the Florida Alternate Assessment (F.A.A.). The I.E.P. team considers a variety of information, including student performance across different areas, evaluation data, test scores, observations, medical records, attendance, teacher certification, and more, to ensure that all eligibility requirements have been met. The team considers whether the student has a significantly below-average cognitive score (≤ 67), has received exceptional student education services in appropriate and aligned courses, and requires specially designed instruction, systematic, explicit, and interactive small-group instruction focused on foundational skills. There must be documented evidence of exhausting all appropriate and allowable instructional accommodations, that the student requires modifications to the general education curriculum standards, and evidence of accessing a variety of supplementary instructional materials, the student requires modifications to the general education curriculum standards.</p>
<p>13.</p>	<p>Has your LEA removed students from participating in the FAA using state guidelines? If so, please provide more information, such as how many, what process was followed and any other feedback.</p> <p>Yes, the Columbia County School District has removed three students from the Florida Standards Alternate Assessment (FSAA). The ESE Director conducted a review of all students' psychological evaluations to determine whether they had a significantly below-average cognitive score ($IQ \leq 67$).</p> <p>For students whose psychological evaluations did not include an IQ score or a score above 67, the IEP team convened and obtained parental consent for a reevaluation. Through this process, one student was determined not to have a significant cognitive disability and was therefore removed from FSAA eligibility.</p> <p>The other two students were in-state transfers who enrolled in the Columbia County School District while receiving instruction on access points curriculum. Upon review of their psychological reports, it was determined that they did not meet the eligibility criteria for FSAA. As a result, they were also removed from FSAA testing.</p>
<p>14.</p>	<p>Describe how the LEA informs parents, families and students of the instruction in Access Points – Alternate Academic Achievement Standards and participation in the FAA, as well as the possible implications of this instruction and participation. How is it provided in the parent or student’s native language? How often is this information provided?</p> <p>Each year, parents receive The.Access.Project brochure, which provides an overview of the Access Points curriculum and FSAA participation. This brochure explains the instructional differences from the general education curriculum, the eligibility criteria for participation, and the potential long-term implications, including impact on graduation options and post-secondary opportunities.</p>

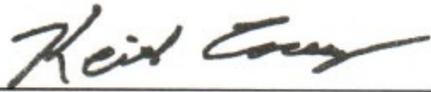
	<p>In addition to the annual brochure, this information is reviewed and discussed during the Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings. The IEP team ensures that parents are fully informed about the criteria for alternate assessment participation and the nature of instruction on Access Points. Interpreters or translated documents are provided during meetings for families who speak a language other than English.</p>
15.	<p>Describe how IEP teams will review the assessment data of students with advanced proficiency or perfect scores in one or more content area, and consider whether these students could participate in the general statewide progress monitoring (FAST) or EOCs with necessary supports and accommodations.</p> <p>The IEP team reviews FAA performance data, particularly for students scoring at advanced or perfect levels in one or more content areas. For these students, the IEP team will re-evaluate the appropriateness of FAA participation and consider transitioning to general statewide assessments, with necessary accommodations.</p>
16.	<p>Describe your LEA’s AP to assist schools in verifying the validity of the number of students taking the alternate assessment. The plan should include actionable steps and how the LEA will monitor progress or address challenges (it should not be the state’s guidelines reiterated).</p> <p>LEA Action Plan to Verify Validity of Alternate Assessment Participation</p> <p>The Columbia County School District has implemented a multi-step verification process to ensure that only students who meet eligibility criteria are scheduled to participate in the Florida Standards Alternate Assessment (FSAA). This process is designed to maintain compliance, support accurate reporting, and ensure students are appropriately placed in instructional settings that match their needs.</p> <p>Step 1: School-Level IEP and Schedule Alignment</p> <p>Each school’s staffing specialist is responsible for reviewing student schedules and cross-referencing them with IEP documentation. This ensures that only students who have been officially determined eligible for the FSAA through the IEP process are scheduled for Access Points curriculum and alternate assessments.</p> <p>Step 2: Data Verification in Focus</p>

	<p>The LEA uses Focus, the district’s student information system, to generate reports that compare alternate assessment participation against course enrollment. This includes a verification of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students enrolled in Access Points courses, • Course codes aligned with alternate assessments, • Whether students are appropriately placed in “equal/not equal access” courses based on their IEP. <p>This step helps to identify any inconsistencies between assessment participation and course enrollment.</p> <p>Step 3: Centralized Oversight and Spreadsheet Review</p> <p>The District ESE Coordinator maintains and shares a comprehensive FAA spreadsheet with each school’s staffing specialist. This spreadsheet includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assigned Access Points courses, • Required alternate assessments, • Current Access Points consent dates. <p>Staffing specialists review this document to confirm that all listed students are properly scheduled and that the alternate assessment aligns with the instructional setting indicated in the IEP.</p> <p>Ongoing Monitoring and Problem-Solving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular check-ins are conducted between the ESE Coordinator and staffing specialists throughout the year, especially before major assessment windows. • Any discrepancies identified are immediately addressed through collaboration with IEP teams. • The LEA provides targeted support or retraining to schools where persistent issues are noted. <p>This layered system of checks ensures that alternate assessment participation is valid, justified, and fully aligned with both state requirements and the unique needs of each student.</p>
17.	<p>Describe any improvement activities implemented by your LEA in the 2024-25 SY. Were they effective? If not, please describe why your LEA feels that they were not effective and what your next steps are.</p>

	<p>The District had one school in that did not meet the 95% testing criteria. The district will monitor the schools testing participation. The district will also train testing staff to ensure that the schools follow monitoring protocol. The District changed testing coordinator for the one school that did not meet the 95% testing criteria.</p>
<p>18.</p>	<p>Describe your LEA’s AP. List your progress monitoring activity and data source that will assist in determining the effectiveness of the AP. Identify the persons responsible for monitoring the progress of the AP.</p> <p>Brigance Inventory of Childhood Developmental III: This instrument assesses the developmental skills of children ages birth to 7-8, identifying developmental delays or areas needing support. It is administered through observation, interviews, and direct interaction and covers various domains of development, providing insights into a child's progress.</p> <p>The Brigance Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills II assesses students' academic skills in grades K-9. It identifies strengths and weaknesses in various academic areas, including reading, math, and written and oral language skills. Administered through paper-and-pencil tasks, it provides valuable information about students' academic abilities.</p> <p>Brigance Transition Skills Inventory assesses a range of skills necessary for individuals transitioning from school to adult life, mainly focusing on vocational, independent living, and post-secondary education skills.</p> <p>Teachers progress monitor 3 times a year, the same time as FAST monitoring. Principals are responsible for monitoring the progress of AP. At the end of the year, the teachers will submit a final copy of progress monitoring to the Principal and Director of ESE.</p>
<p>19.</p>	<p>What professional learning will your staff complete for the 2025-26 SY? The ESE teachers will have an opportunity to participate in the following professional learning: Early Literacy Skill Builders, Zone Training (FDLRS), Progress monitoring tools for IEP goals, Support with Brigance (FDLRS), Centers/Task Boxes (FDLRS), AT in the classroom (FDLRS), Visuals (FDLRS), Common items in your classroom for AT(FDLRS), Sensory Island (FDLRS), IEP Training (FDLRS), Access Training (Access Project), FAA Training, Datafolio Training, Collaborative Teaching (FIN)</p>
<p>20.</p>	<p>What other additional actions does your LEA plan to implement to ensure the reduction of the percentage of students participating in the FAA?</p>

Columbia County School District will continue to monitor the students data, strengthening early intervention, access standards-based instruction and engaging families in informed decision-making.

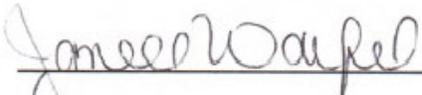
By submitting this LEA justification AP, the LEA verifies that all the information provided is valid and accurate and can provide any requested documentation of evidence.



Signature of Superintendent

9/29/25

Date



Signature of Exceptional Student Education
Director

9/29/25

Date



Signature of Director of Data

9/29/25

Date