

**Florida Department of Education**

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

**LEA: Gilchrist 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>The Gilchrist County School District conducted a comprehensive analysis of the 2024-25 assessment data. The Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Department has collaborated with the Management Information Systems (MIS) Department and the District Assessment Coordinator to review all the FAST and FAA participation rates. The data was broken-down by assessment type, primary exceptionality, and eligibility for instruction on Access Points. This review was supplemented by a targeted review of Individual Education Plans (IEP's) for all students participating in the FAA 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: 1.8% Science: 1.7%</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: 2.0% Math: 2.0%</p>

	<p>Science: 2.3%</p>
<p>4.</p>	<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: 98.1%  Math: 97.7%  Science: 97.8%</p>
<p>5.</p>	<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: 98.03%  Math: 98.04%  Science: 97.71%</p>
<p>6.</p>	<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>When the district conducted a comprehensive review of students participating in the FAA, several of these students included in the count transferred into Gilchrist County. They are already correctly placed in Access courses and scheduled to take the FAA.</p> <p>According to the FDLE Gilchrist Annual Crime Report Abstract and the Gilchrist Adult Arrest Report by Gender and Offense, males in Gilchrist County were arrested for drug-related crimes at twice the rate of females.</p> <p>The most recent Community Health Needs report from the Florida Department of Health highlights that Gilchrist County has insufficient healthcare providers and resources. Shortage areas include primary care, dental health, and mental health, while health disparities are driven by factors such as poverty, mortality, and maternal and child health (<a href="http://www.floridahealth.gov/provider-and-partner-resources/community-partnerships/floridamapp/state-and-community-reports">http://www.floridahealth.gov/provider-and-partner-resources/community-partnerships/floridamapp/state-and-community-reports</a>).</p>

	<p>According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Gilchrist County has consistently higher rates of poverty for individuals and children compared to the state of Florida. The Gilchrist County School District is examining whether this disparity in poverty rates contributes to the number of students with significant cognitive disabilities.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>List the percentages of the following primary/secondary exceptional 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): 53.8%  Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): 46.1%  Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI): 0%  Other Health Impairment (OHI): 2.5%</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>There were no significant patterns identified. FAA participation rates are consistent across schools and classrooms.</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>Yes. The data has indicated an overrepresentation of African American males in FAA participation.</p> <p>The district is undertaking a systematic review of student records using the “Checklist for Participation,” to determine the extent to which implicit bias may be present in IEP team actions.</p> <p>An enhanced MTSS framework led by a new and designated coordinator, guaranteeing that targeted general education supports are effectively applied before initiating a special education evaluation.</p>

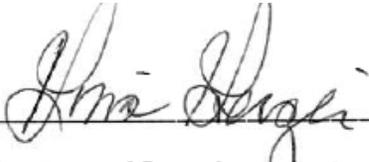
<p>10.</p>	<p>How will the LEA seek to assess 95% participation in all assessments, including students with disabilities in all grades and subjects? Review your individual educational plan (IEP) data and identification practices to identify the root cause of why the LEA is under the 95% participation rate and over the 1% threshold for students participating in the FAA.</p> <p>Gilchrist County has consistently met the target data of 95% for participation rate in all assessments, including students with disabilities. The district's Tier 1 universal attendance strategies have proven effective during testing periods.</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 “<a href="#">Checklist for Course and Assessment Participation</a>” for IEP team meetings within your LEA.)</p> <p>Consistency across the district is achieved through mandatory use of the state’s “Checklist for Course and Assessment Participation,” which is embedded in the PEER IEP system the district uses. Additionally, the district’s protocol stipulates the School Psychologist is a mandatory attendee at meetings where determinations about a student's cognitive ability are made.</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>The district follows the “Checklist for Course and Assessment Participation” during the process of finding a student eligible to participate in the FAA. The checklist is aligned with the criteria in Rule 6A-1.0943.</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>Following a district-wide review triggered by the updated state rule, it was determined that all students participating in the FAA are eligible based on the criteria in Rule 6A-1.0943.</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</p>

	<p>participation. How is it provided in the parent or student’s native language? How often is this information provided?</p> <p>Information is provided to parents, families and if appropriate, the student annually at the IEP meeting. Parents also receive the Parent Consent Form: Instruction in Access Points (AP-AAAS) and Administration of the Statewide, Standardized Alternate Assessment, which is embedded in the PEER IEP system in multiple languages.</p> <p>The district makes every effort to provide a bilingual School Psychologist during meetings where initial instruction in Access Points and/or participation in the FAA is being considered. This support helps ensure that parents can fully engage in the discussion and understand the “Checklist for Course and Assessment Participation” in their native language.</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>IEP teams must conduct an annual review of the academic performance of all students participating in the Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA). If a student achieves an advanced proficient or perfect score in any content area, the IEP team will automatically reconvene to evaluate comprehensive data and determine whether the student is eligible to transition to the general statewide assessment with appropriate accommodations. The outcome of this review will be formally recorded in the IEP conference notes section.</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>Action Step 1: The district’s Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Department will prepare a preliminary assessment report for students expected to take part in the Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA).</p> <p>Action Step 2: The Staffing Specialists/Alternate Assessment Coordinator will evaluate the list using the 'Checklist for Participation' to assess whether individual file reviews are warranted prior to finalizing decisions.</p>

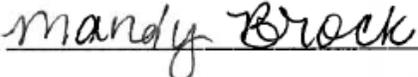
	<p>Monitoring: Monitoring of this process provides an added layer of verification, ensuring consistency between school and district lists and confirming eligible participation</p>
<p>17.</p>	<p>Describe any improvement activities implemented by your LEA in the 2024-25 SY. Were they effective? If not, please describe why your LEA feels that they were not effective and what your next steps are.</p> <p>The LEA requires annual professional learning sessions for ESE teachers and Staffing Specialists on FAA participation guidelines. This training emphasizes best practices for instructional support, compliance with state and district requirements, and the correct completion of documentation to ensure accurate assessment decisions.</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> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Quarterly reviews of MIS reports will be conducted by the ESE Director and Staffing Specialists at the district level.</li> <li>2. Individualized Education Plans (IEP's) for students participating in the Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA) will be reviewed on an annual basis by district Staffing Specialists.</li> <li>3. The district data team and the ESE Director will jointly analyze disaggregated FAA participation data, using reports from both the FDOE and the District MIS.</li> </ol>
<p>19.</p>	<p>What professional learning will your staff complete for the 2025-26 SY?</p> <p>The district will utilize state-level IDEA projects, specifically FDLRS and Project Access, to deliver expert training and thereby strengthen staff comprehension of assessment decision-making criteria.</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> <p>Leading up to the 25-26 school year, the LEA proactively enhanced its Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) to guarantee students receive appropriate, intensive interventions within general education. This strategic effort,</p>

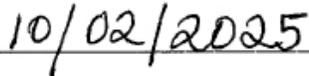
	overseen by the MTSS Coordinator, is designed to prevent inaccurate identifications of significant cognitive disabilities.
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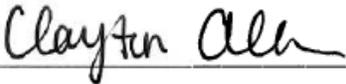
By submitting this LEA justification AP, the LEA verifies that all the information provided is valid and accurate and can provide any requested documentation of evidence.

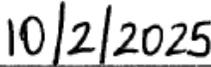
  
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Signature of Superintendent

  
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Signature of Exceptional Student Education  
Director

  
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