

Florida Department of Education

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

LEA: Hamilton

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>Hamilton County School District 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: 0.7% Math: 0.7% Science: 0.6%</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: 1.0% Math: 0.5% Science: 0.5%</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: 97.4%</p> <p>Math: 97.2%</p> <p>Science: 97.3%</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: 96.3%</p> <p>Math: 96.8%</p> <p>Science: 96.8%</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>No. Hamilton County is a small, rural district without specialized hospitals, rehabilitation centers, or military bases that would attract a disproportionate number of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Our student enrollment remains stable, reflecting the county's general population.</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): 0.5%</p> <p>Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): 0.4%</p> <p>Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI): 0%</p> <p>Other Health Impairment (OHI): 0%</p>
8.	<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>No significant patterns were identified. FAA participation rates are consistent across schools and classrooms.</p>
9.	<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</p>

	<p>disproportionate representation of students in the above-referenced subgroups among those taking the FAA.</p> <p>Yes. Data indicate an overrepresentation of African American males from low-income backgrounds in FAA participation. While the district's student body is 33.9% African American, this subgroup constitutes 77% of FAA participants. To address this:</p> <p>The district is conducting focused file reviews to determine if implicit bias influences IEP team decisions.</p> <p>We are strictly utilizing the "Checklist for Participation" to guide eligibility decisions.</p> <p>A reconfigured Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) process, overseen by a dedicated coordinator, ensures appropriate general education interventions are implemented prior to special education referral.</p>
10.	<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>The primary strategy is a proactive test-day attendance plan, which includes targeted outreach to the families of students who frequently miss school. By minimizing absences, we will increase overall participation rates.</p>
11.	<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>Consistency is ensured by mandating the use of the state's "Checklist for Course and Assessment Participation," which is embedded in our PEER IEP system. Furthermore, the district requires IEP teams to complete three additional digital forms to guide decision-making: the Eligibility for Access Points Review, the FAA Committee Initial Decision, and the FAA Committee Data Worksheet. These forms must be completed and discussed before a final FAA decision is made.</p>
12.	<p>IEP teams determine FAA eligibility based on Rule 6A-1.0943, F.A.C. The process requires documented evidence for each criterion, including:</p> <p>A statistically significant cognitive score at or below the 1st percentile (standard score ≤ 67), or an approved alternative procedure.</p>

	<p>Evidence of receiving specially designed instruction on Access Points for two consecutive reporting periods.</p> <p>Documentation of limited progress despite intensive interventions, supplementary aids, and assistive technology.</p> <p>Confirmation that the student was present for instruction and taught by a certified teacher for the required percentages of the prior school year. The rationale is explained to parents in their native language, and informed consent is documented.</p>
13.	<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. Following a district-wide review triggered by the updated state rule, one 8th-grade student was identified with a cognitive score above the threshold. The IEP team reconvened and determined that with appropriate accommodations, the student could access the general education curriculum and assessments. The student subsequently graduated in 2025 with a standard diploma waiver.</p>
14.	<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>Information is provided annually at the IEP meeting. Parents receive the Parental Consent Form: Instruction in Access Points (AP-AAAS) and Administration of the Statewide, Standardized Alternate Assessment, which is embedded in the PEER system in multiple languages. The IEP document itself, which includes assessment and accommodation details, is also provided.</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 are required to review the performance of all students taking the FAA on an annual basis. Any student scoring "Proficient" or "Advanced" in any content area will trigger an automatic reconvention of the IEP team. The team will analyze progress data, work samples, and IEP goals to determine if the student can now participate in the general assessment with accommodations. This review will be documented in the IEP notes.</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</p>

	<p>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 ESE Department will generate a pre-assessment report for all students projected for FAA participation, based on prior-year IEPs.</p> <p>Action Step 2: The Staffing Specialist/FAA Testing Coordinator and ESE Director will review this list, using the "Checklist for Participation" to determine if file reviews are necessary before finalizing decisions.</p> <p>Monitoring: This pre-approval process ensures a second layer of scrutiny to validate appropriate participation.</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 LEA provides annual training on FAA participation guidelines for all ESE teachers and staffing specialists. This training included a review of district policies, procedures, and the specific documents used for assessment determination.</p>
18.	<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>Maintain and/or reduce district-wide FAA participation to or below 1.0% by the end of the 2025-26 SY.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review of FAA participation projections, MIS Report, Quarterly, ESE Director 2. Audit of IEPs for students taking the FAA, IEP file, Annually, Staffing Specialist 3. Analysis of disaggregated FAA participation data, FDOE Assessment Reports & District Data Dashboard, Annually, District Data Team & ESE Director
19.	<p>What professional learning will your staff complete for the 2025-26 SY?</p> <p>The district will utilize state-level experts, accessing targeted training through FDLRS and Project ACCESS to enhance staff understanding of assessment decision-making criteria.</p>
20.	<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>The LEA will strengthen the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) to ensure students receive appropriate, intensive interventions within general education before an ESE referral is considered. The MTSS Coordinator will actively monitor the problem-solving cycle to prevent inappropriate identification of significant cognitive disabilities.</p>

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

9-23-25
Date



Signature of Exceptional Student Education Director

9-23-25
Date



Signature of Director of Data

9-23-25
Date