

Florida Department of Education

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

LEA: Hillsborough

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>Review FAA participation data annually through district-level 1% self-assessments and Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) 1% Data Discussions.</p> <p>District staff verify the IEPs of students listed in the FAA Assurances</p> <p>District staff review each list collaboratively with site-based Exceptional Student Education (ESE) teams</p> <p>Review criteria for FAA participation at district ESE meetings to ensure consistent understanding across all schools</p> <p>Training has been provided district-wide to ESE staff and site administrators</p> <p>Additionally, sites may receive individualized support through targeted site-based team meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review FAA participation data annually through district level 1% self-assessments and FLDOE 1% Data Discussions• District staff checks IEPs of students listed on FAA Assurances• District staff reviews each list with individual site-based ESE teams• Review criteria for FAA participation at district ESE meetings and ensure understanding across schools• Training has been provided district wide to ESE staff and site administrators• Sites may also receive individualized supports through site-based team meeting
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: 1.6%</p> <p>Math: 1.07%</p> <p>Science: 1.8%</p>
3.	<p>What is your LEA’s projection for the percentage of students participating in the FAA in the upcoming SY in each of the following subjects?</p> <p>ELA: 1.6%</p> <p>Math: 1.07%</p> <p>Science: 1.07%</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 2024-25 SY in each of the following subjects?</p> <p>ELA: 98.4%</p> <p>Math: 97.9%</p> <p>Science: 97.5%</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 upcoming SY in each of the following subjects?</p> <p>ELA: 98%</p> <p>Math: 98%</p> <p>Science: 98%</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>Hillsborough County Public Schools provides a comprehensive range of services, including traditional schools, specialized center programs, and Hospital/Homebound services</p> <p>A significant number of students with disabilities from surrounding counties attend Hillsborough County Public Schools and its charter schools, based on parental choice</p> <p>The district serves a considerable population of students from MacDill Air Force Base, due to the availability of a continuum of supportive services across various sites</p> <p>All Children’s Hospital, located in an adjacent county approximately 30 minutes from Tampa, attracts families with medically fragile students who also have substantial cognitive disabilities</p> <p>Two charter schools within Hillsborough County Public Schools have demonstrated high percentages of students with disabilities assessed through the Florida Alternative Assessment (FAA) student candidates</p>

	<p>One charter school within the district has nearly 100% of its student population assessed via FAA</p> <p>Hillsborough County Public Schools also hosts several group homes, including a recently established Developmental Cottage dedicated to students with profound cognitive disabilities assessed through FAA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hillsborough County Public Schools offers the full continuum of services from traditional sites to a few center schools, including Hospital/Homebound • Many students with disabilities from other surrounding counties are attending Hillsborough County Public Schools and its charter schools, per parental choice • Hillsborough has a large number of students from MacDill Air Force Base as a result of the continuum of services offered at each site • All Children’s Hospital is in the neighboring county (approx. 30 min from Tampa) which serves as an attractor for families with students who are medically fragile who also have significant cognitive disabilities • Two charter schools within Hillsborough County Public Schools maintain extremely high percentages of students with disabilities assessed via FAA • One charter school within Hillsborough County Public Schools has almost 100% of the student population assessed via FAA • Hillsborough County Public Schools is also home to several group homes, one of which recently opened a Developmental Cottage specifically designed for students with significant cognitive disabilities who are assessed via FAA
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): 60.8% Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): 45.8% Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI): 0.18% Other Health Impairment (OHI): 6.2%</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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students with the following areas of eligibility are more likely to participate in FAA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Intellectual Disability ○ Autism Spectrum Disorder ○ Traumatic Brain Injury

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 disproportionate representation of students in the above-referenced subgroups among those taking the FAA.</p> <p>While the majority of subgroups have a less than 1% risk ratio, it is noted that the following subgroups have risk ratios slightly above 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black/African American ~1.5 • Economically Disadvantaged ~ 1.5 • Male ~1.9 <p>According to the most recent 1% profile, the LEA is not aware of any disproportionate representation of students within any subgroup. The subgroups listed above are</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>Hillsborough County Public Schools’ participation is always above the required rate of participation. For the 2024-2025 school year Hillsborough’s participation rate was 97.9%.</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>The Checklist for Course and Assessment Participation is embedded in the IEP and therefore used by every IEP team during the initial decision-making meeting, as well as every subsequent IEP.</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>Prior to meeting with families to discuss the FAA, the IEP team must document that all required criteria have been fully met. District staff supports teams in reviewing documentation to ensure compliance with all established requirements. All students must have relevant testing reflecting cognitive scores falling within the 1st percentile. Each IEP team must go through the checklist for course and assessment participation to ensure each criterion has been met.</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>In the last 2 years, several students have need removed from being assessed via FAA due to not meeting the primary exceptionality criteria or having an IQ score in the first percentile. Additionally, students who are identified with areas of exceptionality, such as DHH, OI, and a small number with InD or ASD eligibility, were also removed from participation in FAA</p> <p>Re-evaluations were conducted and completed, and IEP meetings were held to ensure that appropriate supporting services were provided to the students following their removal.</p> <p>Yes, over the past two years students have been removed from participating in FAA due to not meeting the primary exceptionalities criteria or having an IQ score in the 1st percentile. Additionally, students having other areas of exceptionality (i.e. DHH, OI, and a small number of students with the eligibility of InD or ASD) were removed from participating in FAA.</p> <p>Re-evaluations were initiated and completed along with holding an IEP meeting to ensure ample supporting services were provided to the student following the removal.</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>IEP teams review relevant information with parents during the annual IEP meeting before obtaining parental consent. Additionally, they provide a brochure detailing Access Points services, available in multiple languages. Interpreters are utilized during IEP meetings to communicate information to parents in their preferred/native language.</p>

	<p>IEP teams review the information with parents at the annual IEP meeting prior to seeking parent permission. The teams also provide a brochure outlining Access Points services which is offered in multiple languages. IEP teams use interpreters to provide information during the IEP meeting to the parent in their native language.</p>
<p>15.</p>	<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>District ESE teams review student data for those students with perfect scores and meet with school teams to review individual student data to engage in educational planning to consider other services that may best meet the student’s individualized needs.</p>
<p>16.</p>	<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>Steps Hillsborough County Public Schools follows to ensure proper monitoring of students enrolled in the FAA program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The district team reviews the FAA Assurances to verify student eligibility. ○ District personnel verify that all students are correctly enrolled in the appropriate courses. ○ FAA Assurances are distributed among site-based teams for review. ○ Eligibility criteria for each individual student are confirmed to ensure compliance. ○ School teams verify the presence of parental permission documentation. <p>When issues arise, the district collaborates with school-based teams to collaboratively address and resolve challenges.</p> <p>Step Hillsborough follows to address how students taking FAA are monitored:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The district team receives and reviews the FAA Assurances to confirm eligibility ● District staff confirms appropriate course enrollment for all students ● District staff separates FAA assurances into site-based teams ● Individual student areas of eligibility are confirmed to meet criteria ● School Teams confirm evidence of parental permission <p>When challenges arise, the district facilitated problem solving with school-based teams to address challenges.</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>Students were not uploaded into TIDE with the initial assurances if they did not meet criteria.</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>The FAA assurances and 1% report will be used to determine the effectiveness of this action plan.</p> <p>Hillsborough County Public Schools assessment team, to include the FAA AAC Lead and the ESE General Director, will monitor the progress.</p>
19.	<p>What professional learning will your staff complete for the 2025-26 SY?</p> <p>The Professional Learning opportunities staff will participate in will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAA-PT Face-to-face training • District provided assessment preparation guidance and updates throughout the year to site-based teams
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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage IEP teams meet to review reevaluation needs to consider acquiring updated academic and cognitive testing to ensure student is most appropriately placed on Access Points • IEP Teams will continue to document attempts to garner parent permission for access points • Ongoing partnerships with IDEA State Funded Projects to include FIN, Project Access, and FDLERS

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.

[Handwritten Signature]

Signature of Superintendent

9/30/25

Date

[Handwritten Signature]

Signature of Exceptional Student Education
Director

9/30/25

Date

[Handwritten Signature]

Deirdre Welch (Sep 30, 2025 13:56:03 EDT)
Signature of Director of Data

09/30/2025

Date