

Florida Department of Education

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

LEA: Leon

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.	How has your LEA reviewed the data for assessment participation to make informed decisions for implementation? Analysis of the Florida Department of Education “Know Your Schools” reports, which provided insights into statewide and district-level assessment trends and participation rates. Examination of District 1% data compiled reports, allowing us to monitor compliance with federal participation thresholds and identify patterns among students with significant cognitive disabilities. Utilization of the Focus Student Information System, which enabled us to track individual student assessment participation, demographic data, and program placement to ensure accurate reporting and targeted support.
2.	What are your LEA’s percentages of students that participated in the FAA in the 2024-25 SY in each of the following subjects? ELA: 1.8% Math: 2.0% Science: 2.4%
3.	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? ELA: 1.8% Math: 2.0% Science: 2.4%

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: 97.7% Math: 97.8% Science: 96.9%</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% Math: 97% Science: 97%</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. LCS offers specialized programs and services to surrounding districts, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gretchen Everhart Center School, which serves students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who cannot be appropriately served at their home-zone schools, as determined by their IEP teams. • School Choice Options, allowing students with the most significant cognitive disabilities from neighboring districts to attend Leon County schools of their choice. • Specialized Middle and High School Programs for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, agreements with Gadsden, Wakulla, Jefferson, Liberty, and Taylor Counties. Some of these students are also identified as having significant cognitive disabilities in addition to the identification of deaf and hard of hearing. <p>These offerings make LCS a regional hub for exceptional education, particularly for students with complex needs, and may contribute to a higher concentration of such students in the district.</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): 62% Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): 33%</p>

	<p>Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI): 1%</p> <p>Other Health Impairment (OHI): 3%</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>Yes. Participation rates tend to be higher in schools with dedicated self-contained ESE classrooms or specialized support programs. These patterns are monitored to ensure consistency in eligibility determinations and to provide targeted professional development where needed.</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 disproportionate representation of students in the above-referenced subgroups among those taking the FAA.</p> <p>The school district of Leon County is a majority district. 65 % of students are identified as being of minority subgroups.</p> <p>African American: 65%</p> <p>Hispanic/Latino: 2%</p> <p>Low Income: 43%</p> <p>Male: 71%</p> <p>Female: 29%</p> <p>Leon County Schools monitors subgroup data to identify any disproportionate representation. If disparities are found, the district investigates root causes and provides training to IEP teams to ensure decisions are based solely on student needs and eligibility criteria.</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>The district average is 97.6%. The district reviews IEP data and identification practices to ensure students are appropriately placed in assessments. Outreach to families, staff training, and monitoring participation rates help maintain compliance with the 95% requirement while reducing FAA overrepresentation.</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 schools within the Leon County School District (LEA) implement the state’s guidelines and criteria for determining which students should take the Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA) through a structured and ongoing process centered around the Checklist for Course and Assessment Participation.</p> <p>These practices include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District-Level Oversight: The ESE office regularly reviews the checklist’s procedures and criteria with ESE district liaisons, student services personnel, district administrators, and site administrators to ensure consistent understanding and application. • School-Level Implementation: ESE district staff meet monthly with ESE teachers at each school site to discuss the checklist and its use in IEP decision-making. These meetings also include school data reviews to support informed decisions. • Mandatory Use in IEP Meetings: the Checklist for Course and Assessment Participation is required to be reviewed at every IEP meeting, ensuring that all teams follow the state’s guidelines when considering FAA participation. <p>This multi-tiered approach ensures that decisions are made consistently, collaboratively, and in full alignment with Florida Department of Education requirements.</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>

In order for a student to participate in the statewide, standardized alternate assessment, all of the following criteria must be met:

1. The student must receive exceptional student education (ESE) services as identified through a current IEP and be enrolled in the appropriate and aligned courses using alternate achievement standards for two (2) consecutive full-time equivalent reporting periods prior to the assessment;
2. The student must be receiving specially designed instruction, which provides unique instruction and intervention supports that is determined, designed and delivered through a team approach, ensuring access to core instruction through the adaptation of content, methodology or delivery of instruction and is exhibiting very limited to no progress in the general education curriculum standards;
3. The student must be receiving support through systematic, explicit and interactive small-group instruction focused on foundational skills in addition to instruction in the general education curriculum standards;
4. Even after documented evidence of exhausting all appropriate and allowable instructional accommodations, the student requires modifications to the general education curriculum standards;
5. Even after documented evidence of accessing a variety of supplementary instructional materials, the student requires modifications to the general education curriculum standards;
6. Even with documented evidence of the provision and use of assistive technology, the student requires modifications to the general education curriculum standards;
7. Even with direct instruction in all core academic areas (i.e., English language arts, mathematics, social studies and science), the student is exhibiting limited or no progress on the general education curriculum standards, and requires modifications;
8. Unless the student is a transfer student, the student must have been available and present for grade-level general education curriculum standards instruction for at least seventy (70) percent of the school year prior to the assessment;

	<p>9. Unless the student is a transfer student, the student must have been instructed by a certified teacher for at least eighty (80) percent of the school year prior to the assessment;</p> <p>10. The assessment instrument used to measure the student’s global level of cognitive functioning was selected to limit the adverse impact of already-identified limitations and impairments (e.g., language aquisition, mode of communication, culture, hearing, vision, orthopedic functioning, hypersensitivities and distractibility); and</p> <p>11. The student has a most significant cognitive disability as defined in paragraph (1)(f) of this rule.</p> <p>A student is not eligible to participate in the statewide, standardized alternate assessment if any of the following is true:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The student is identified as a student with a specific learning disability or as gifted; 2. The student is identified only as a student eligible for services as a student who is deaf or hard of hearing or has a visual impairment, a dual sensory impairment, an emotional or behavioral disability, a language impairment, a speech impairment, or an orthopedic impairment; or 3. The student scored a level 2 or above on a previous statewide, general education curriculum standardized assessment administered pursuant to Sections 1008.22(3)(a) and (b), F.S., unless there is medical documentation that the student experienced a traumatic brain injury or other health-related complication subsequent to the administration of that assessment that led to the student having the most significantly below-average global cognitive impairment. <p>If a global, full-scale intelligent quotient score is unattainable, teachers and/or parent guardians complete checklists for the Developmental Profile 4. This will be scored by the school psychologist. The Cognitive Domain of the DP-4 will serve an estimate of the student’s global intellectual functioning if deemed valid by comparing the score to multiple sources of data across multiple settings. This included the other domains and composite score of the DP-4 as well as measures of adaptive functioning, as rated by both teacher and parent/guardian.</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. When students no longer meet eligibility criteria, IEP teams reevaluate assessment placement. The district has removed students from FAA</p>

	<p>participation following updated evaluations and instructional progress, ensuring alignment with state guidelines.</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 shared during IEP meetings, and parent/student-friendly formats and native languages when needed. Families receive verbal and written explanations of Access Points, FAA implications, and long-term academic planning period communication occurs at least annually.</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>IE P teams will analyze assessment data to determine if students with high performance in one or more content areas may benefit from participation in general assessments with accommodations. This review is part of the annual IEP process.</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>Leon County Schools will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> --Conduct quarterly audits of FAA participation decisions. -- Require data documentation reviews for all new FAA placements. --Provide targeted training for schools with high participation rates. --Provide corrective support as needed.
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 implemented IEP team training and district review of FAA eligibility documentation. These activities improved consistency and reduced inappropriate placements. Continued monitoring and training are planned to further improve outcomes.</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>Progress monitoring activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> --Quarterly data reviews by ESE Office staff utilizing the Focus student information system. --Student-level compliance checks for IEPs and Checklists for Course and Assessment Participation. -- ESE district compliance liaisons to address challenges at school sites.
19.	<p>What professional learning will your staff complete for the 2025-26 SY?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> --FAA eligibility and documentation training for school administrators and teachers. --Access Points curriculum alignment workshops.
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>Leon County schools will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> --Strengthen pre-referral processes. --Increased use of general assessments with accommodations as appropriate to individual student. --Conduct parent education on assessment option parameters. --Monitor IEPs and the Checklist for Course and Assessment Participation. <p>Review criteria with school administration at district administrative meetings. ESE district staff review school data with school teams and administration.</p> <p>ESE district staff review/participate in IEP meetings where individual student data may indicate instruction and Access Points and/or participation in FAA may be recommended.</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.

Rocky Huang

Signature of Superintendent

9/30/25

Date

Cathy Shields

Signature of Exceptional Student Education
Director

9/30/25

Date

Justin Williamson

9/30/25