

Florida Department of Education

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

LEA: Liberty

**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>Liberty County School District conducted a thorough review of assessment participation data for the 2024–25 school year to guide implementation decisions. This process involved collaboration between the District Assessment Coordinator, the Management Information Systems Coordinator, and the Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Office. The team analyzed participation rates for the FAST and FAA assessments, disaggregating the data by assessment type, primary exceptionality, and Access Points eligibility. Additionally, the district conducted a focused review of Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) for all students participating in the FAA to ensure compliance 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: 3.9 Math: 3.6 Science: 4.8</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: 3.8 Math: 3.8 Science: 5.1</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: 96.8 Math: 96.5 Science: 95.5</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 2025-26 SY in each of the following subjects?</p> <p>ELA: 96.2 Math: 96.2 Science: 94.9</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>Liberty County School District recognizes that its FAA participation rate exceeds the 1% threshold and attributes this to several unique local factors that influence the identification and concentration of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. These factors include both demographic and contextual challenges specific to our community:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Small District Enrollment: With a total enrollment of only 1,165 students, Liberty County is a small, rural district. This means that even one or two additional students qualifying for the Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA) can significantly impact the overall participation percentage, even though the actual number of eligible students remains small.</li> <li>2. Rural, Economically Disadvantaged Community: All three of our schools are classified as Title I schools, serving high percentages of economically disadvantaged students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Liberty County High School – 56% Free/Reduced Lunch</li> <li>○ Hosford Elementary – 61% Free/Reduced Lunch</li> <li>○ W.R. Tolar – 71% Free/Reduced Lunch</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>Many families face limited access to transportation, healthcare, and other essential community resources, which can lead to delayed identification of developmental delays and limited access to early intervention services — contributing to the higher need for specialized instruction once students enter the school system.</p>

	<p>1. Limited Access to Medical and Community-Based Services: Students in Liberty County often have restricted access to regular medical providers, mental health services, and diagnostic evaluations. This creates challenges in providing early support and may result in more students requiring extensive, individualized interventions through ESE services once enrolled in school.</p> <p>2. Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) Facility: The district includes a DJJ facility that frequently enrolls students with significant educational needs, including disabilities. These students are counted in the district's total enrollment and FAA participation rates, contributing to a disproportionate impact on the overall percentage due to the small size of the LEA.</p> <p>3. Declining Enrollment Trends: The district is currently experiencing a decline in student enrollment, further intensifying the mathematical impact of each student participating in the FAA. As enrollment decreases, maintaining a low percentage becomes more difficult despite ongoing efforts to ensure proper eligibility determinations.</p> <p>These local factors, when combined, help explain why Liberty County's percentage of students participating in the FAA may exceed the 1% threshold. The district remains committed to maintaining rigorous eligibility review processes and ensuring that only students who meet the state's criteria are included, despite these challenges.</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): 90% Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): 10% Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI): 0% 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>After reviewing the data on students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, no specific patterns were identified related to school site, classroom placement, or instructional setting. FAA participation rates remain fairly consistent across all schools and grade levels within Liberty County School District.</p>

	<p>The only notable variation occurred within the current 8th-grade cohort, which has a slightly higher number of students participating in the Florida Alternate Assessment compared to other grades. Upon further review, it was determined that two students transferred into the district with existing IEPs and eligibility under the Significantly Cognitively Impaired category. Through a comprehensive file review and the district’s standard annual IEP review process, both students were confirmed to continue meeting eligibility requirements for instruction on Access Points and participation in the FAA.</p> <p>This slight increase in one grade level is attributed to student mobility and prior determinations made in other districts, rather than a systemic issue within Liberty County. Overall, participation rates remain stable and are continuously monitored to ensure accurate and appropriate identification aligned with state guidelines.</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>Yes, the LEA is aware of a slight overrepresentation of white male students participating in the Florida Standards Alternate Assessment (FAA). While white male students make up approximately 46% of the district’s overall student population, they represent 48% of the students participating in the FAA. This indicates a disproportionate representation that the district is committed to addressing.</p> <p>To better understand and reduce the impact of this overrepresentation, the LEA will implement the following steps in the coming year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conduct IEP file reviews to evaluate whether implicit bias may be influencing IEP team decisions regarding FAA eligibility.</li><li>• Ensure strict adherence to the “Checklist for Participation in the FAA” to guide IEP teams in making data-driven, standardized eligibility determinations.</li><li>• Provide professional development for IEP team members focused on equity, implicit bias, and appropriate use of alternate assessments.</li><li>• Monitor FAA participation data by subgroup regularly to identify and respond to trends proactively.</li></ul> <p>These steps are intended to support fair and equitable participation in alternate assessments and to ensure that all decisions are based solely on student need 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>Liberty County School District has consistently met and exceeded the 95% participation rate in statewide assessments across all student groups, including students with disabilities. Participation rates over the past four years demonstrate this commitment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2021–22: 96%</li> <li>• 2022–23: 97%</li> <li>• 2023–24: 98%</li> <li>• 2024–25: 97%</li> </ul> <p>To maintain this high level of participation, the district implements proactive scheduling, early communication with families, and targeted support for students with disabilities. School-level testing coordinators collaborate with ESE teachers to ensure that all eligible students are assessed appropriately and provided with necessary accommodations.</p> <p>While participation rates remain high, the district continues to monitor its Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA) participation rate, which exceeds the 1% threshold. To address this, the Exceptional Student Education (ESE) department has initiated a comprehensive review of IEPs and identification practices. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducting annual professional development on state eligibility criteria for alternate assessments.</li> <li>• Reviewing FAA eligibility during each student’s IEP meeting to ensure alignment with state guidelines.</li> <li>• Establishing a district-level review team to audit FAA eligibility decisions and provide feedback to IEP teams.</li> <li>• Engaging in root cause analysis to identify any patterns in misidentification, including overreliance on cognitive assessments or lack of exposure to grade-level standards.</li> </ul> <p>By maintaining rigorous review practices and investing in staff training, the district aims to ensure that only students who meet the state’s criteria participate in the FAA while continuing to achieve strong overall assessment participation rates.</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>To ensure consistent implementation of state guidelines for FAA participation across all schools, Liberty County School District requires IEP teams to utilize the state's "Checklist for Course and Assessment Participation," which is fully</p>

	<p>integrated into the PEER IEP system. In addition to this checklist, the district mandates the completion of three supplemental digital forms designed to support data-driven decision-making:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eligibility for Access Points Review</li><li>• FAA Committee Initial Decision</li><li>• FAA Committee Data Worksheet</li></ul> <p>These documents must be completed and thoroughly discussed by the IEP team prior to making any final decision regarding a student’s participation in the Florida Alternate Assessment. This multi-step process promotes alignment with state criteria and ensures that all FAA eligibility decisions are based on comprehensive, individualized reviews.</p> <p>The ESE Director and Staffing Specialist will be participating in upcoming training provided by DOE regarding the use of data to make informed decisions.</p>
12.	<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>IEP teams in Liberty County School District determine eligibility for the Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA) based on Rule 6A-1.0943, F.A.C., following a rigorous and documented decision-making process that ensures alignment with state criteria. The following evidence must be present and reviewed as part of the eligibility determination:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Confirmation that the student has a significant cognitive disability, as documented through formal assessments and team consensus.</li><li>2. Evidence that the student has received specially designed instruction on Access Points for two consecutive reporting periods, verifying ongoing instructional alignment with alternate academic achievement standards.</li><li>3. Documentation that the student is enrolled in a curriculum based on Florida Access Points, which are reduced in depth and complexity but aligned to grade-level standards.</li><li>4. Data showing limited progress despite intensive interventions, supplementary aids, and assistive technology, indicating that general education standards and supports are not sufficient for meaningful academic progress.</li><li>5. Verification that the student was present for instruction and received instruction from a certified teacher for the required percentage of the prior school year, ensuring that lack of progress is not due to attendance or instructional access issues.</li><li>6. Evidence that the student requires extensive, direct individualized instruction and substantial supports across academic and adaptive domains.</li></ol>

	<p>7. Confirmation that the decision is not based on non-qualifying factors such as disability category, academic or behavioral challenges, English learner status, or administrative considerations.</p> <p>8. Parent engagement is a required component—the rationale for FAA participation is explained to parents in their native language, and informed consent is documented in the IEP and meeting notes.</p> <p>To support this process, Liberty County School District mandates the use of the Checklist for Course and Assessment Participation, embedded in the PEER IEP system, and three supplemental district forms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eligibility for Access Points Review</li> <li>• FAA Committee Initial Decision</li> <li>• FAA Committee Data Worksheet</li> </ul> <p>These tools ensure that all criteria are reviewed with documented evidence and that FAA eligibility decisions are made consistently and appropriately across all schools.</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 prompted by the updated state rule, our LEA identified one 10th-grade student whose cognitive assessment scores exceeded the eligibility threshold for the FAA. The IEP team reconvened and, after careful consideration, determined that with appropriate accommodations, the student could successfully access the general education curriculum and statewide assessments. The student has graduated with a standard diploma waiver. In addition, two other students were removed from FAA participation during their annual IEP review meetings. These decisions were based on a combination of formal re-evaluation data, classroom performance data, teacher input, and other relevant progress monitoring information. The IEP teams determined that both students are able to make progress on general education standards when provided with appropriate supports and accommodations. All decisions were made in accordance with state guidelines and through collaborative IEP team processes, ensuring that each student is placed in the most appropriate and least restrictive assessment environment.</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>Liberty County School District provides information about instruction in Access Points – Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (AP-AAAS) and participation</p>

	<p>in the Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA) during each student’s annual IEP meeting.</p> <p>At that time, parents are given the Parental Consent Form: Instruction in Access Points and Administration of the Statewide, Standardized Alternate Assessment, which is embedded in the PEER system and available in multiple languages to support families in their native language.</p> <p>In addition, the IEP document, which outlines the student's instructional setting, assessment participation, and accommodations, is also provided to parents in their preferred language when requested. This ensures families are fully informed about the nature of Access Points instruction and FAA participation, as well as the long-term implications, such as impacts on graduation pathways and post-secondary opportunities.</p> <p>This information is reviewed and updated annually during the IEP process or more frequently if there is a change in the student's assessment participation or instructional setting.</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 in Liberty County School District conduct an annual review of assessment data for all students participating in the Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA). If a student earns a “Proficient” or “Advanced” score in any content area, this automatically triggers a reconvening of the IEP team to re-evaluate the appropriateness of the student’s continued participation in the alternate assessment.</p> <p>During this review, the IEP team will analyze multiple data sources, including assessment results, progress toward IEP goals, classroom performance, and work samples. The team will carefully consider whether the student may be able to transition to the general statewide progress monitoring (FAST) or End-of-Course (EOC) assessments with the necessary accommodations and supports in place.</p> <p>All decisions and supporting evidence will be fully documented in the IEP meeting notes, ensuring transparency and alignment with state assessment participation criteria.</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>Liberty County School District has established a targeted Alternate Assessment Participation (AP) plan to verify the validity of all student placements in the Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA). The plan outlines clear, actionable steps to ensure consistent implementation across all schools.</p> <p>Action Steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Generate FAA Participation Projections: The ESE Department generates a districtwide report at the beginning of each school year identifying students projected to take the FAA, based on the previous year’s IEPs.</li> <li>2. Distribute and Review Projection Lists: The Staffing Specialist/FAA Testing Coordinator and ESE Director review the projected list for accuracy. They use the Checklist for Course and Assessment Participation to verify eligibility criteria and flag any questionable cases for further review.</li> <li>3. Conduct IEP File Reviews: For flagged students, the district conducts a detailed file review to examine documentation of cognitive disability, Access Points instruction, progress data, and instructional history.</li> <li>4. Implement a Pre-Approval Process: The ESE Director or designee approves each student’s FAA eligibility before it is finalized in the IEP. Schools cannot proceed with FAA placement without this district-level approval, ensuring a second layer of accountability.</li> <li>5. Provide Targeted Training: The district delivers professional development to IEP team members on FAA eligibility, documentation standards, and appropriate use of the Access Points curriculum. Priority is given to schools with higher participation rates or identified inconsistencies.</li> <li>6. Monitor IEP Compliance: The ESE Department monitors ongoing IEP development throughout the year, checking for FAA eligibility alignment and ensuring accurate documentation is maintained.</li> <li>7. Enforce Corrective Actions When Needed: If discrepancies are found, the district initiates corrective action plans, which may include re-training IEP teams, revisiting eligibility decisions, and holding follow-up IEP meetings to correct misalignments.</li> </ol> <p>By following these structured action steps, Liberty County School District ensures appropriate FAA participation, minimizes over-identification, and maintains alignment with both student needs and state expectations.</p>
17.	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>During the 2024–25 school year, Liberty County School District implemented improvement activities focused on strengthening the accuracy and consistency of FAA participation decisions. One key activity included annual training for all Exceptional Student Education (ESE) teachers, staffing specialists, guidance counselors, and school administrators (as needed).</p> <p>This training provided a comprehensive review of state and district guidelines for FAA participation, along with detailed instruction on district policies, procedures, and required documentation used during IEP team decision-making. The training also emphasized the appropriate use of the “Checklist for Course and Assessment Participation” and district-level forms to ensure data-driven and compliant eligibility determinations.</p> <p>At this time, the district considers the activity effective, as it has contributed to more consistent documentation practices and increased awareness among school-based staff. However, the district will continue to monitor the effectiveness of this training through ongoing file reviews and annual FAA participation data to identify any further areas for refinement.</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>Liberty County School District’s Alternate Assessment Participation (AP) plan focuses on ensuring that all FAA eligibility decisions are accurate, data-driven, and aligned with state criteria. The primary goal of the AP is to maintain or reduce the district’s FAA participation rate by verifying that only students who meet the eligibility requirements are assessed using the Florida Alternate Assessment.</p> <p>Progress Monitoring Activities and Data Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarterly Review of FAA Participation Projections: The ESE Director utilizes MIS-generated reports each quarter to review projected FAA participation and identify any potential increases or anomalies in participation rates across grade levels and schools.</li> <li>• Annual IEP File Audits: Staffing Specialists conduct annual IEP file reviews for all students identified to participate in the FAA. These audits ensure that eligibility criteria are met and properly documented, and that decisions are based on current data.</li> <li>• Desktop Monitoring File Reviews: The district references prior-year desktop monitoring results to identify patterns or compliance concerns. These findings are used to guide current-year reviews and corrective actions, if necessary.</li> <li>• Disaggregated Data Analysis: The ESE Director and District Data Team conduct an annual analysis of</li> </ul>

	<p>disaggregated FAA participation data using FDOE Assessment Reports and the District Data Dashboard. This helps to identify trends across disability categories, grade levels, and schools, allowing for targeted follow-up where needed.</p> <p>Persons Responsible for Monitoring the AP Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ESE Director – Oversees the implementation and effectiveness of the AP, leads quarterly data reviews, and coordinates follow-up actions.</li> <li>• Staffing Specialists – Conduct IEP audits and support schools in ensuring compliance with FAA eligibility procedures.</li> <li>• District Data Team – Assists in compiling, analyzing, and interpreting district-level data related to FAA participation.</li> </ul> <p>This multi-tiered approach ensures that FAA participation remains appropriate and compliant, while also supporting continuous improvement through data-informed decision-making.</p>
19.	<p>What professional learning will your staff complete for the 2025-26 SY?</p> <p>For the 2025–26 school year, Liberty County School District will provide targeted professional learning opportunities to strengthen staff understanding of alternate assessment eligibility and decision-making.</p> <p>The district will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with state-level experts to deliver training sessions focused on the eligibility criteria for the Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA) and appropriate use of Access Points instruction.</li> <li>• Access professional development through FDLRS and Project ACCESS, ensuring that ESE teachers, staffing specialists, and IEP team members receive up-to-date, research-based training that enhances their ability to make data-driven and compliant assessment decisions.</li> <li>• Provide scenario-based training and case studies to help staff apply the Checklist for Course and Assessment Participation and supporting documentation more effectively during IEP meetings.</li> <li>• Offer refresher training throughout the year, particularly when updates are made to state guidelines or assessment protocols.</li> </ul> <p>These professional learning activities are part of the district’s broader effort to ensure consistent implementation of state criteria, reduce over-identification, and support IEP teams in making appropriate and well-informed decisions for each student.</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>Liberty County School District is committed to reducing the percentage of students participating in the Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA) by ensuring that only students who meet the state’s eligibility criteria are considered. To support this goal, the district will implement the following additional actions:</p>

1. **Strengthening the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS):**  
The district will reinforce the MTSS framework to ensure that students receive appropriate, evidence-based interventions within the general education setting before any referral for exceptional student education (ESE) services is initiated. This process will help distinguish between students with true significant cognitive disabilities and those whose learning needs can be addressed through targeted supports.
2. **Enhance MTSS Oversight and Problem-Solving:**  
The MTSS Coordinator will actively monitor and support school-based teams in implementing the full problem-solving cycle. This includes reviewing data on intervention fidelity, student response, and progress monitoring to ensure decisions are data-driven and appropriately documented.
3. **Improve Early Identification Practices:**  
The district will review and refine identification practices to prevent early mislabeling of students. Staff will be trained to recognize the distinction between learning challenges and significant cognitive disabilities, especially in early grades, English language learners, and students with social-emotional needs.
4. **Provide Ongoing Professional Development:**  
The district will continue to train general education, school guidance counselors, administrators and ESE staff on FAA eligibility criteria, the use of Access Points, and the long-term implications of alternate assessment participation. Emphasis will be placed on making informed, team-based IEP decisions.
5. **Implement Pre-Referral Reviews:**  
Before a student is recommended for alternate assessment, the district will require a pre-referral review of instructional history, MTSS data, and cognitive assessment results. This review will serve as an additional checkpoint to prevent inappropriate placement.
6. **Engage Parents in Early Conversations:**  
Schools will engage parents earlier in the process, clearly communicating the implications of Access Points instruction and FAA participation, and offering support in their native language to promote truly informed consent.

By implementing these actions, Liberty County School District aims to ensure accurate identification, reduce unnecessary placement in the FAA, and maintain compliance with federal and state requirements.

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



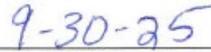
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Date



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Signature of Exceptional Student Education Director



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Date



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Signature of Director of Data



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Date