

Florida Department of Education

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

LEA: MARION

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>Our LEA has disaggregated assessment participation data to identify trends and pinpoint areas of need. This analysis informs targeted strategies to improve engagement and compliance. Additionally, we have reviewed our training and professional learning activities to ensure they align with assessment policies and are effective in supporting staff understanding and implementation. Adjustments are made based on data findings to strengthen participation and overall assessment practices. Training and professional learning takes place with targeted staff throughout the school year to ensure compliance and best practices are in place.</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: 1.8% Math: 2.0% Science: 2.1%</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: 2.3% Math: 2.4% Science: 2.3%</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: 96% Math: 96% Science: 94%</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: 98% Math: 98% 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>There are unique circumstances in Marion County that contribute to a higher percentage of students participating in the Florida Standards Alternate Assessment (FSAA). Marion County is located in close proximity to the University of Florida and Shands Teaching Hospital, which offers intensive and specialized medical treatment for children with multiple, significant disabilities, including those with the most significant cognitive disabilities. As a result, many families choose to reside in Marion County to access ongoing medical care and support services.</p> <p>Additionally, Marion County is home to Hillcrest School, a center school specifically designed to serve students in grades 6–12 with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The presence of this specialized educational setting further attracts families seeking appropriate educational and therapeutic support for their children. These factors combined contribute to an increased proportion of students who qualify for and participate in the FSAA.</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): 55% Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): 40% Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI): 1% Other Health Impairment (OHI): 4%</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 clear patterns emerged regarding participation in the alternate assessment. There was no indication that students from a specific class, school, or program were more likely to participate, and participation rates appeared consistent across settings.</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> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>SWDs taking FAA</th> <th>Total Population</th> <th>Disproportional Representation?</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>ELLs</td> <td>7.3%</td> <td>9.8%</td> <td>No</td> </tr> <tr> <td>African American</td> <td>27.7%</td> <td>27.6%</td> <td>No</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hispanic</td> <td>22.5%</td> <td>24.8%</td> <td>No</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gender</td> <td>61.7% male 39.3% female</td> <td>51% male 49% female</td> <td>No</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Low SES</td> <td>57.3%</td> <td>54.1%</td> <td>No</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>No significant disproportionate representation was observed. While the percentage of male students taking the FAA is slightly higher than their representation in the total population, the disproportionality index is 1.21; while this does indicate a mild overrepresentation, is not statistically significant. All other demographic ratios comparing students taking the FAA to the overall student population fall within acceptable limits.</p>		SWDs taking FAA	Total Population	Disproportional Representation?	ELLs	7.3%	9.8%	No	African American	27.7%	27.6%	No	Hispanic	22.5%	24.8%	No	Gender	61.7% male 39.3% female	51% male 49% female	No	Low SES	57.3%	54.1%	No
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<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 is committed to assessing all students, including students with disabilities in all grades and subjects. Throughout the administration window, the Assessment, Accountability, and Research department works directly with school assessment coordinators to ensure they have tested 95% of students. They monitor the progress and follow up with schools that are below the percentage to help them determine how they can reach the 95% within the testing window or during make-up windows.</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>Our district uses the PEER platform for developing IEPs and the Checklist for Course and Assessment Participation is embedded in the Assessment determination section. We use this Checklist with fidelity by IEP teams to ensure compliance with implementing state guidelines and criteria for identifying students taking the FAA. Additionally, ESE compliance staff review eligibilities and state reporting data to ensure compliance with guidelines and best practices.</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>When making the initial determination for FSAA eligibility, IEP teams are expected to use the Checklist for Course and Assessment Participation to ensure that all criteria are met and that decisions are based on comprehensive, documented evidence. For initial eligibility decisions, this checklist must be completed and included within the student’s IEP to provide clear documentation of the team’s rationale and alignment with eligibility requirements.</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>There have been limited instances in recent school years where a student was removed from participation in the FAA. In these cases, the change typically followed a full, updated evaluation that determined the student no longer met the eligibility criteria for the assessment. The process included comprehensive data review, implementation of appropriate interventions, and collaborative IEP team decision-making. When a student is determined ineligible for continued FAA</p>

	<p>participation, the IEP team develops a transition plan to support the student’s successful reintegration into the general education curriculum and participation in the statewide standardized assessment.</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>The District uses the Parental.Consent.Form.for.Instruction.in.Access.Points.Alternate.Academic.Achievement.Standards.(AP_AAAS).and.Administration.of.the.Statewide?Standardized.Alternate.Assessment, as provided by the Florida Department of Education. This form is reviewed and signed annually by the parent or guardian of each student being considered for AP-AAAS participation during the student’s IEP Annual Review meeting. The ESE Specialist facilitating the IEP meeting ensures that parents/guardians are fully informed about the implications of AP-AAAS participation. Additionally, when the parent, guardian, or student’s native language is not English, translation services are provided to support full understanding and meaningful participation in the decision-making process.</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>Following each annual assessment cycle, the ESE Department will disaggregate student data to identify those consistently demonstrating advanced proficiency in more than one content area on the FAA. Once identified, school teams will be prompted to review the individual data for each of these students to determine whether participation in the general statewide progress monitoring assessments—with appropriate supports and accommodations—may be more suitable. School and IEP teams will then make individualized, data-driven recommendations to ensure that each student is placed in the most appropriate assessment setting based on current performance and 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>Action Plan (AP) to Assist Schools in Verifying the Validity of Students Participating in the Alternate Assessment (FAA):</p> <p>The District is committed to ensuring that only students who meet the eligibility criteria participate in the Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA). To support schools</p>

in verifying the validity of student participation, the following action plan outlines actionable steps and monitoring procedures.

Actionable Steps:

1. Annual Review of FAA Eligibility Criteria
 - Provide schools with updated FAA participation guidelines each school year.
 - Conduct training sessions for ESE staff, school psychologists, and IEP team members on the criteria required for FAA eligibility.
 - Timeline: August–September (annually)
 - Responsible Staff: ESE Professional Learning Staff
2. FAA Eligibility Decision Form Standardization
 - Require all IEP teams to complete the standardized FAA Eligibility Form in PEER, which is aligned with state guidelines.
 - Require that data and information be included for each item when initial placement in FAA is being considered.
 - Timeline: Ongoing during IEP meetings
 - Responsible Staff: School-Based ESE Specialists, with support from ESE Program Specialists and Coordinators
3. District Review
 - District ESE staff will conduct audits of selected IEPs with FAA eligibility decisions for compliance and appropriateness.
 - Timeline: January-February (annually)
 - Responsible Staff: ESE Coordinators
4. Case-by-Case Consultation for Complex Cases
 - Offer consultation meetings between district staff and school IEP teams for students with unclear eligibility status.
 - Provide written recommendations based on documentation and assessment data.
 - Timeline: As needed
 - Responsible Staff: ESE Program Specialists and Coordinators
5. Ongoing Professional Development
 - Provide refresher PD sessions mid-year to reinforce FAA guidelines and address challenges identified during audits.
 - Include case studies and scenario-based learning for better decision-making.
 - Timeline: January–February
 - Responsible Staff: ESE Professional Learning Staff

Addressing Challenges:

- If a school shows unusually high FSAA participation:
 - Initiate a focused review and provide targeted support.
 - Meet with the school leadership and IEP teams to review data and ensure alignment with state eligibility requirements.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide follow-up coaching and re-training as needed. • If data shows recurring misidentification: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate those findings into future PD. • Implement a review protocol for specific locations or staff involved in the misidentifications. <p>Additionally, The ESE Department has a program specialist who is responsible for supporting FAA decisions and needs. The program specialist provides FAA training and assistance to IEP teams and teachers in relation to FAA on an on-going basis as needed.</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>In the 2024-2025 school year, we continued utilizing the Checklist for Course and Assessment Participation in PEER and provided additional professional learning to teams regarding identifying students appropriate for FAA. The ESE program specialist assigned to FAA support provided site-based professional learning, particularly at the elementary level, to ensure a more thorough understanding and compliance. Finally, school-based ESE Specialists participated in the self-assessment process which included a deep dive into the FAA standards and eligibility pieces so they are better able to articulate requirements to school teams.</p> <p>Our AP-AAAS self-assessment was 100% compliant and the quality of the IEPs being written for alternately assessed students showed a noticeable improvement from previous self-assessments at the district level. We believe that the process is continuing to show improvement and our District remains committed to continuous improvement in this area. We will use data from audits and FAA participation rates to further refine practices in the 2025–26 school year.</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>Please refer to our Action Plan outlined in question 16, which includes all action steps, responsible staff, and the timeline for progress monitoring.</p>
19.	<p>What professional learning will your staff complete for the 2025-26 SY?</p> <p>ESE Specialists who support school teams in determining eligibility for alternate assessment receive professional learning focused on appropriate student identification, accommodations, and the use of supplementary aids and supports. Additionally, ESE teachers participate in professional development designed to</p>

	<p>enhance their ability to provide targeted supports and interventions to students with disabilities, ensuring instructional practices align with individual student needs. School administrators and other support staff are also provided targeted professional learning in these areas as appropriate to their need and duties, to support informed decision-making and effective implementation across school sites.</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>Ongoing collaboration and discussions with the Psychological Services and Curriculum and Instruction departments will continue to ensure that the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and evaluation processes conducted prior to eligibility and AP-AAAS participation decisions are both robust and comprehensive. This collaborative approach helps ensure that only students who meet the criteria for the most significant cognitive disabilities are appropriately identified. These efforts support the accurate identification of students and contribute to reducing the percentage of students participating in the Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA).</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

10/17/25

 Date



 Signature of Exceptional Student Education
 Director

10/17/25

 Date



 Signature of Director of Data

10/17/25

 Date