

Florida Department of Education

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

LEA: Martin

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? Our district reviews both individual student records and school/district-wide patterns to ensure proper implementation of the Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA) with the goal of staying within the federal 1.0% participation limit. At the individual student level, using the Checklist for Course and Assessment Participation, IEP teams carefully examine educational records—including cumulative files, Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), assessment reports, progress monitoring, and signed parent consent documents to confirm that only students meeting the criteria for the most significant cognitive disabilities are considered for FAA participation. We analyze the data to identify any disproportionate representation of particular student groups in alternate assessments. These analyses help to inform any needed corrective actions. Results from these data reviews guide focused on professional learning and technical support for IEP teams. This evidence-based approach promotes consistent and accurate application of FAA participation guidelines across the district.
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: 1.3% (144 students FAA of total 11,056 assessed) Math: 1.65% (164 students FAA of total 9944 assessed) Science: 2.1% (91 students FAA of total 4319 assessed)
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?

	<p>ELA: 1.18% (132 students FAA of total 11135 assessed) Math: 1.24% (118 students FAA of total 9505 assessed) Science: 1.14% (48 students FAA of total 4180 assessed)</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: 99% Math: 98.2% Science: 98.1%</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: 99% Math: 98.5% Science: 98.5%</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>Our LEA has several unique circumstances that contribute to a higher concentration of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, which may lead to exceeding the 1.0% participation cap for the Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA).</p> <p>One of the schools we serve is located within a residential treatment center that provides mental health services to students from across the state. Many of these students are temporarily placed for hospitalization and transfer to our district with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) that include instruction and assessment aligned with alternate achievement standards. Because this facility receives students from throughout Florida and experiences frequent enrollment turnover, it contributes to a disproportionate number of FAA-eligible students within our district.</p> <p>Additionally, our LEA includes a charter school that is designated as an Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Center School that specifically serves students who have been determined eligible under the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) exceptionality program, as well as those with similar characteristics. These students meet the criteria for placement in a separate school setting due to the severity of their needs. A significant portion of the student population requires instruction and assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards, due to the extent of their cognitive disabilities.</p>

	<p>Furthermore, our district has seen an increase in transfer requests from families in neighboring school districts who are seeking access to our comprehensive campuses. These families are often drawn to the specialized programs, services, and supports that our LEA offers for students with complex needs.</p> <p>Taken together, these factors result in a higher than-typical concentration of students eligible for alternate assessment, which causes our district to exceed the 1.0% FAA participation cap despite adherence to state eligibility criteria.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<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): 50% (77) Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): 41.5% (64) Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI): 0.65% (1) Other Health Impairment (OHI): 7.8% (12) Total 154</p> <p>Some students have primary and secondary exceptionalities that include two of the above exceptionalities.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<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>Martin County School District maintains a consistent, district-wide process for determining Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA) eligibility across all schools, classrooms, and placements, regardless of observed participation trends. Every student considered for FAA participation receives an individualized, IEP team-driven review using identical state-defined criteria from Rule 6A-1.0943, F.A.C. This comprehensive review examines formal cognitive assessments, instructional access to Alternate Achievement Standards, the student's need for extensive individualized supports, and confirms that exclusionary factors are not influencing the decision.</p> <p>Although certain schools show higher FAA participation concentrations, including those with specialized self-contained ESE programs, residential placements, or ESE Center Charter School, the eligibility determination process remains standardized and evidence-based throughout the district. All IEP teams must complete a mandatory FAA Participation Checklist embedded within the IEP and provide triangulated data to support their decisions, regardless of the student's school or educational setting.</p> <p>This standardized approach ensures assessment decisions are based on individual student needs rather than program placement or disability category alone. The district reinforces consistent implementation through internal audits, targeted professional</p>

	<p>learning, and disproportionality reviews, all designed to promote standardized application of FAA eligibility criteria district-wide.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<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>Our LEA consistently assembles a district team comprised of district administrators, a school psychologist, and program staff trained in compliance protocols to proactively address and prevent disproportionate representation of students in the Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA). Upon identifying any disparities, the team performs a detailed analysis of data to uncover root causes. This collaborative approach supports the promotion of fair assessment practices and the resolution of issues contributing to disproportionality.</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 aims for 95% participation in state assessments for all students, including those with disabilities, while striving to have the FAA participation under 1%. The plan involves reviewing IEP data and practices, progress monitoring, analyzing attendance barriers, collaborating with teams and families, providing professional learning, and implementing ongoing monitoring systems to ensure compliance with federal and state requirements. Our ESE program specialist oversees our FAA data, analyzes trends and looks at the participation of students districtwide.</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 LEA uses a structured, data-driven IEP process to ensure consistent adherence to state guidelines for Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA) participation across all schools. The “Checklist for Course and Assessment Participation” is embedded into any IEP when alternate assessment is considered. Documented evidence required to support eligibility decisions is also reviewed. To ensure districtwide consistency, targeted professional learning and training, internal IEP audits, and ongoing technical assistance</p>

	<p>are completed by ESE program specialists and ESE administrators on a monthly basis. These measures support accurate, compliant FAA participation decisions throughout the district.</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>To be considered eligible for the Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA), a student must meet several specific criteria. First, the student must have a significant cognitive disability, verified through formal assessments that initially include two cognitive scores that indicate the student meets the criteria. In the Martin County School District (MCSD), updated cognitive assessments are required at each educational level; elementary, middle, and high school, as part of the reevaluation process. Second, the student must receive instruction aligned to the appropriate Access Courses, which are Florida’s alternate academic achievement standards. Third, there must be documented evidence of the student's need for extensive, individual support across all educational settings. This support should be clearly demonstrated through the problem-solving process and/or progress monitoring of the Individual Educational Plan (IEP), along with a comprehensive and ongoing review of the support and services rendered to ensure access to instruction.</p> <p>The IEP team is responsible for reviewing and ruling out any exclusionary factors, such as poor attendance, lack of active engagement, any cultural or socio-economic factors, or other underlying disability(ies) before making a determination. Once eligibility is established, the decision is clearly documented in the student’s IEP. This documentation must include a statement confirming that all eligibility criteria are met, a description of all supporting data, a rationale, evidence of instruction aligned with Access Points, and a plan to review eligibility on an annual basis.</p> <p>Parent involvement is a critical part of the eligibility process. Families must be fully informed about what participation in the FAA means, particularly regarding how it may impact diploma, post-secondary opportunities, and career options. All information is communicated to the family in their native language, with translation services provided as needed to ensure understanding.</p> <p>Each year, the IEP team is responsible for reviewing the student’s data, reassessing eligibility, and thoroughly documenting the decision in the IEP.</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>Yes, our LEA has removed students from FAA participation in accordance with state policy. At the onset of the change, a districtwide audit was completed to verify correct placements and to ensure compliance with Rule 6A1.0943, F.A.C.</p> <p>During this process, IEP teams worked with School Psychologists to reexamine cognitive data under the updated eligibility standards. Students no longer meeting the criteria were flagged for consideration of reevaluation, as appropriate, to gather updated cognitive scores and/or updated achievement scores for educational planning when needed.</p> <p>IEP teams reconvened, with parent participation, to reconsider eligibility, using current evidence and data to inform their decisions. For those students determined to no longer qualify as having “most significant cognitive disabilities,” the transition to general education instruction and assessments (with accommodations) was documented clearly in the IEP. The review took place concurrently with the change in criteria and the teams included a review for special education services and the levels of support to ensure students were supported through their transition to access general education standards.</p> <p>Moving forward, IEP teams utilized the same protocol for out-of-district and out-of-state transfer students, ensuring that students entering our district (or relocating within the state) meet the current criteria. This approach supports our goal to align with the 1 % cap. However, transfer students can sometimes increase our numbers when transferring in during certain survey periods, as we are compelled to honor the incoming IEP pending the outcome of reevaluation results when needed. Our LEA is committed to ongoing transfer document review and annual eligibility reviews to uphold compliance and guarantee appropriate assessment placement.</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>At the onset of any proposal to transition a student from general education standards to Alternate Achievement Standards (AAS), and during each annual review, the Martin County School District ensures that a thorough explanation is provided to the parents.</p>

	<p>This explanation is delivered with the support of a translator, in the parent’s or student’s native language, to promote full understanding and informed decision-making.</p> <p>To support this process, the district provides families with key informational resources via an informational brochure, which includes links to the <i>Parent Pamphlet: FAQs about AA-AAAS and FAA</i>, as well as the <i>Access Points Brochure</i> developed by the ACCESS Project. These materials offer up-to-date information and are shared to ensure that parents and guardians have access to clear, relevant, and ongoing support as they navigate their child’s educational path.</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>IEP teams triangulate all available data, including assessment outcomes, to identify the appropriate supports and services required for access to instruction. This comprehensive analysis evaluates whether the student’s performance justifies transitioning them to general education standards and general statewide assessments, such as Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) Progress Monitoring or End-of-Course (EOC) exams, with appropriate accommodations. If the data confirms the student is nearing grade-level expectations, the IEP team would reconvene more frequently to change the instruction from Alternate Achievement Standards (AAS) and Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA) to general education standards and assessments, ensuring placement and instruction in the most inclusive and least restrictive instruction and assessment.</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>The LEA’s plan to validate alternate assessment participation consists of three main components. First, the Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Department will conduct internal IEP Review Audits following the guidelines outlined in the AA-AAAS Compliance Protocol. This process requires IEP teams to use specific, triangulated data, such as cognitive scores and classroom performance, to support decisions regarding each student’s participation. Second, the LEA will provide Targeted Professional learning for IEP teams, focusing on state eligibility criteria, identifying students approaching grade-level expectations, and understanding the implications of restricting curriculum access. Third, the Accountability and Exceptional Student Education departments will conduct a Disproportionality Data Deep Dive by generating reports disaggregated by race, disability, and grade level to flag any schools or subgroups exceeding internal participation thresholds for timely review and intervention.</p>

<p>17.</p>	<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>During the 2024-25 school year, the LEA implemented comprehensive strategies to improve alternate assessment participation validity, including mandatory IEP protocols with integrated documentation and compliance questions, targeted professional development, state eligibility criteria, continued school assurance checks, and district-wide internal IEP audits. These efforts resulted in improved documentation quality and enhanced team understanding, though the need for continued professional development is evident across schools. To address this demonstrated need, the LEA has planned enhanced strategies including more frequent data review monitoring, expanded training incorporating real-life case studies, targeted coaching for improved follow-up, and a direct support feedback loop to better assist IEP teams in making informed decisions.</p>
<p>18.</p>	<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 LEA’s Action Plan is an approach designed to ensure accurate and appropriate participation in the Alternate Assessment. The plan emphasizes adherence to eligibility criteria using updated state guidance and ongoing professional development for IEP teams on eligibility standards, Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), and curriculum access. The plan reinforces IEP team accountability through required justification and documentation of each student’s instructional history. It also incorporates regular data reviews to identify schools exceeding the 1% participation cap, proactive parent engagement through workshops, and targeted instructional support for ESE teachers, particularly in scaffolding and assistive technology.</p> <p>To measure effectiveness, the LEA will implement progress monitoring activities: reviews of participation data, monthly IEP documentation audits, tracking of staff training completion, monitoring of parent workshop attendance, and scheduled instructional walkthroughs. Monitoring responsibilities are shared across district personnel.</p> <p>1. Maintain And Communicate Clear Eligibility Criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to align district criteria with Florida Department of Education (FDOE) guidance and IDEA requirements. <p>2. Professional Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to train IEP team members (teachers, school psychologists, staffing specialists, program specialists, administrators) on FAA eligibility, alternate achievement standards, documentation, and implications. • Include training on Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), standards-based instruction, and assessment security and implementation.

3. IEP Team Accountability

- Continue to require justification for FAA participation using FDOE's "Checklist for Course and Assessment Participation."
- Require documentation of instructional history and access to general education curriculum.

4. Data Review and Auditing

- Conduct audits of FAA participation rates by school, grade, and disability category.
- Flag schools exceeding 1% for review and support.

5. Parent Engagement

- Ensure the sharing and distribution of informational materials explaining FAA implications with families.
- Ensure that FAA informational materials are translated and made available in additional commonly spoken languages to support accessibility for diverse populations.

6. Instructional Support

- Continuing work to increase access to grade-level content through differentiated instruction and assistive technology.
- Provide coaching for ESE teachers on scaffolding, instructional strategies, differentiation and accommodations to support students to receive instruction on general education standards.

Activity/Data Source

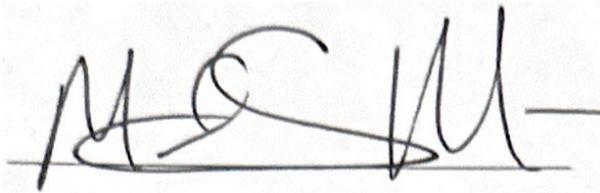
- FAA Participation Rate review / assessment data, and district testing records
- IEP Documentation and Data Tracking Audit /Checklist for Course and Assessment Participation
- Training Completion Logs / PD attendance records, evaluation surveys
- Parent Workshop(s) / Sign-in sheets, feedback forms
- Instructional Walkthroughs / Observation rubrics, coaching logs

Responsible Personnel

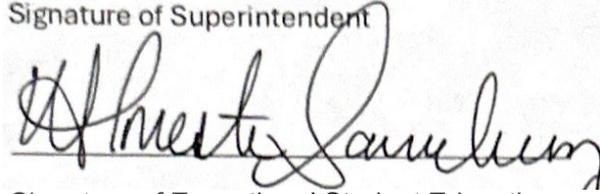
- **Director of Exceptional Student Education and ESE Coordinators**– Oversees implementation and compliance.
- **ESE Program Specialists** – Provides professional learning, clarifies eligibility decisions, monitors compliance, and supports proper documentation.
- **ESE Parent Liaisons** – Coordinates outreach and engagement efforts.
- **ESE Staffing Specialists** – Support IEP teams, and coach teachers to ensure appropriate eligibility decisions and compliant documentation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment Coordinator – Tracks FAA participation data and flags anomalies, provides professional development, performs audits and feedback. • Principals – Ensure school-level adherence and support professional development.
<p>19.</p>	<p>What professional learning will your staff complete for the 2025-26 SY?</p> <p>For the 2025–26 school year, the LEA has developed a comprehensive professional learning plan focused on improving the accuracy of alternate assessment decisions. Training on Alternate Assessment Eligibility and Compliance will continue to be updated and aligned with the AA-AAAS Compliance Protocol, with an emphasis on the use of triangulated data, proper documentation, and identifying students who may be ready to transition to general education standards and assessments. ESE teachers will receive targeted training on evidence-based instructional practices for the Access Points Curriculum, focusing on student engagement, functional skill development, and individualized goal-setting. IEP teams will participate in hands-on training to strengthen data-based decision-making, learning to interpret cognitive assessments, adaptive behavior scales, and progress monitoring data through practical case studies. Lastly, the plan includes professional development on disproportionality awareness to promote fairness and reduce bias in assessment participation decisions. It also includes training on developing IEPs that are informed by data and aligned with students' present levels of academic and functional performance.</p>
<p>20.</p>	<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 has established a comprehensive monitoring system with six key activities: IEP audit reports conducted by the ESE Department, participation rate tracking using district data, professional learning attendance logging, individual student, school, and district disproportionality reviews, case review summaries, and annual feedback collection from IEP teams through completion of assurances.</p> <p>The district will measure effectiveness through five key indicators: a measurable decrease in FAA participation rates trending toward or below the 1% threshold, increased alignment between IEP documentation and state eligibility criteria, greater consistency across schools in FAA eligibility determinations, reduced disproportionalities across race/ethnicity and disability categories in FAA participation, and positive feedback from IEP teams regarding training, support, and clarity of expectations.</p> <p>This comprehensive action plan demonstrates Martin County School District's dedication to ensuring fair, compliant, and student-centered assessment decisions through integrated training, oversight, data analysis, and support structures, with ongoing monitoring and adjustments to meet the 1% FAA participation target.</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



Signature of Exceptional Student Education Director



Signature of Director of Data

0-25

Date

9-30-2025

Date

9-30 25

Date