

Florida Department of Education

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

Action Plan (AP)

LEA: Okaloosa School District

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>The FAA data has been reviewed with the state contact, with our ESE Department, and District Testing Coordinator. We have analyzed participation rates for each content area and researched data showing assessments being taken by students not identified on ACCESS standards. This information has been shared with staffing specialists and principals.</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: 1.5% Math: 1.8% Science: 2.2%</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: 1.4% Math: 1.5% Science: 1.5%</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: 97.5% Math: 97.1% Science: 97.3%</p>

<p>5.</p>	<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: 100% Math: 100% Science: 100%</p>
<p>6.</p>	<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>Okaloosa County has a higher percentage of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities for a variety of reasons. Specifically, the presence of multiple military bases in our area draws families who may be seeking the specialized medical, educational, and support services available within Okaloosa School District. Okaloosa County is home to four primary military installations for both Air Force and Army. Military families with children with complex disabilities are sent to these bases at a much higher level due to the two center schools we have in our district.</p> <p>Okaloosa County has a poverty rate of 9.3%. Children participating in voluntary pre-kindergarten programs is approximately 18%. Okaloosa's percentages are above the state average for multiple births, preterm with low birth weight, preterm births (less than 37 weeks), babies born with Down Syndrome, infants in foster care and emergency department visits from non-fatal unintentional falls for babies under one year. Okaloosa is above the state average for births to mothers aged 15-19 years and children in foster care ages 1-4. Instances of domestic violence are also higher than the state level. Okaloosa also has less medical doctors available than the state average for health care.</p> <p>Okaloosa Schools has been serving our neighboring school district, Walton County, for many years by educating their students at our center schools. Over the last three years, Okaloosa has implemented a fading plan to return elementary and middle school students back to their home district for education. All high school and post graduate students have continued to be taught in Okaloosa while they finish their schooling. For the 2025-2026 school-year, we only have two Walton County students left which will graduate this year.</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): 68% Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): 23%</p>

	<p>Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI): .005%</p> <p>Other Health Impairment (OHI): .05%</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>A large percentage of students taking the FAA are enrolled in our two center schools, Silver Sands and Richbourg, that serve our students with the most cognitive disabilities. The other students are either in self-contained settings, or being included in general education in the remaining schools.</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 data shows disproportionate representation for Pacific Islander in ELA and Math. This data is not significant because the count consisted of just five students, and our overall population for this demographic is very low. Low socioeconomic students are also participating at a much higher rate than students not on free and reduced lunch.</p> <p>Title 1 services along with ESE services are being used to reduce the impact on low socioeconomic students. Parent training sessions are also being conducted to assist families.</p>

10.	<p>How will the LEA seek to assess 95% participation in all assessments, including students with disabilities in all grades and subjects? Review your individual educational plan (IEP) data and identification practices to identify the root cause of why the LEA is under the 95% participation rate and over the 1% threshold for students participating in the FAA.</p> <p>Testing window calendars are shared with all stakeholders early in the school-year. With the assistance of the district test coordinator, we regularly review school-level assessment participation rates during and after the testing window to look at percentages of tested. The district testing coordinator communicates with schools by publishing percent tested updates each day during the assessment window. School principals and the ESE office monitors participation and must submit justification for any student that does not test.</p> <p>During annual IEPs, the type of assessment the student will take is reviewed. The FAA Participation Checklist is completed for each student. Students on Hospital Homebound instruction will be administered the state assessments if their condition allows.</p>
11.	<p>How are IEP decisions in all schools within your LEA consistently implementing the state's guidelines and criteria regarding which students should take the FAA? (Please consider using the "Checklist for Course and Assessment Participation" for IEP team meetings within your LEA.)</p> <p>Upon initial consideration of ACCESS standards and alternate assessment, the ESE Specialist will work with the IEP Team to review all supporting data and information to assist with the decision. Okaloosa ensures that IEP decisions regarding participation in the Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA) are made consistently across all schools by aligning practices with the state's guidelines and criteria (Rule 6A-1.0943, F.A.C.) and by requiring the use of the <i>Checklist for Course and Assessment Participation</i> at every IEP team meeting where assessment decisions are discussed. The checklist must be completed, signed, and attached to the IEP whenever FAA participation is selected. Principals, staffing specialists, and ESE district staff review completed checklists to ensure compliance before FAA testing.</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>As stated in our Policies and Procedures:</p> <p><u>Eligibility Criteria</u></p> <p>A student is eligible for specially designed instruction and related services as a student with an InD if the following criteria are met:</p>

1. The measured level of intellectual functioning is more than two standard deviations below the mean on an individually measured, standardized test of intellectual functioning.
2. The level of adaptive functioning is more than two standard deviations below the mean on the adaptive behavior composite or on two out of three domains on a standardized test of adaptive behavior. The adaptive behavior measure shall include parental or guardian input.
3. The level of academic or pre-academic performance on a standardized test is consistent with the performance expected of a student of comparable intellectual functioning.
4. The social developmental history identifies the developmental, familial, medical, health and environmental factors impacting student functioning and documents the student's functional skills outside of the school environment.
5. The student demonstrates a need for special education.

Student Evaluation

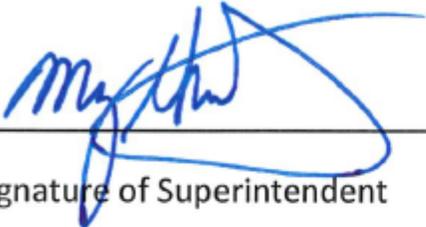
1. In addition to the procedures identified in Rule GA-6.0331, F.A.C., the minimum evaluation for determining eligibility shall include all of the following:
 - a. A standardized individual test of intellectual functioning individually administered by a professional person qualified in accordance with Rule GA-4.0311, F.A.C., or licensed under Chapter 490, F.S.
 - b. A standardized assessment of adaptive behavior to include parental or guardian input.
 - c. An individually administered standardized test of academic or pre-academic achievement. A standardized developmental scale shall be used when a student's level of functioning cannot be measured by an academic or pre-academic test.
 - d. A social developmental history that has been compiled directly from the parent, guardian, or primary caregiver.
2. Eligibility is determined by a group of qualified professionals and the parent or guardian in accordance with Rule GA-6.0331, F.A.C. The documentation of the determination of eligibility must include a written summary of the group's analysis of the data that incorporates the following information:
 - a. The basis for making the determination, including an assurance that the determination has been made in accordance with Rule GA-6.0331, F.A.C.
 - b. Noted behavior during the observation of the student and the relationship of that behavior to the student's academic and intellectual functioning.
 - c. The educationally relevant medical findings, if any.

	<p>d. The determination of the group concerning the effects on the student's achievement level of a visual, hearing, motor, or emotional or behavioral disability; cultural factors; environmental or economic factors; an irregular pattern of attendance or high mobility rate; classroom behavior; or limited English proficiency.</p> <p>e. The signature of each group member certifying that the documentation of determination of eligibility reflects the member's conclusion. If it does not reflect the member's conclusion, the group member must submit a separate statement presenting the member's conclusion.</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>When students are re-evaluated using an IQ test, if the IQ test shows a higher number than the state threshold, the use of ACCESS standards and FAA is reviewed in the IEP Team Meeting. When students transfer from out of state with an eligibility of intellectual disability, records are reviewed and re-evaluations are conducted if the student is not meeting Florida's eligibility criteria. Over the last four years, approximately five students have been able to be moved to general education standards and assessments.</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>Okaloosa Schools informs parents (and students) during the initial IEP meeting when placement on ACCESS standards or Florida Alternate Assessment are being discussed. If found eligible, these are revisited at each annual IEP meeting and interim IEP meeting. On a yearly basis, parents sign the Parental Consent Form Instruction in Access Points - Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (AP-AAAS) and Administration of the Statewide, Standardized Alternate Assessment form.</p> <p>Information is communicated during the IEP and within the PWN and interpreters are included if the families have a language barrier, or materials can be translated for the family.</p>
<p>15.</p>	<p>IEP teams will carefully review the performance data of students who demonstrate advanced proficiency or perfect scores on the Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA) in one or more content areas. When this occurs, the team will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analyze Student Data

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o In school-based PLCs and MTSS, case managers will examine FAA results data, along with classroom performance, progress monitoring data, and work samples to confirm mastery in the tested area(s). o Review previous FAA results data to look at trends and proficiency during past FAA assessment cycles. Students that have been proficient and shown mastery on more than one assessment cycle will be reviewed carefully. <p>2. Consider Appropriateness of Assessment Participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o If the student is showing proficiency or mastery on the FAA the team will determine if participation in the general statewide progress monitoring system (FAST) or End-of-Course (EOC) assessments would be better assessment tools for the student. o Review student's accommodations and supports being used while being assessed on the FAA, and if accommodations and supports could be increased for the general education (FAST) assessment. <p>3. IEP Team Decision and Documentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o If the IEP team determines that participation in general statewide assessments (FAST and EOCs) is appropriate, the change will be documented in the IEP, along with the rationale and supporting evidence. The student placement on ACCESS standards will also be addressed to analyze continued need. o If the team determines continued FAA participation is appropriate, justification must be provided, referencing the criteria in Rule 6A-1.0943, F.A.C. <p>4. Annual Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o This determination is revisited each year during the IEP review to ensure assessment decisions remain aligned with the student's instructional needs, performance data, and long-term academic goals.
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>Okaloosa Schools will require schools to submit documentation for all students recommended for the alternate assessment, including eligibility checklists and IEP evidence, which will be verified by district ESE staff. Staffing specialists, case managers, and school IEP teams will receive targeted training, and random audits will be conducted to ensure consistency. Participation data will be reviewed quarterly, comparing trends across schools and flagging anomalies. If over-identification or errors are found, schools must correct errors, and receive additional training. Parent input and engagement will also be documented to ensure validity.</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>Okaloosa Schools implemented compliance reviews of students submitted for taking the FAA. FOCUS reports were generated numerous times during the year to monitor students on ACCESS standards and alternate assessment.</p> <p>We have been working with the ACCESS Project to review eligibility requirements, and FAA assessment. The ESE Director, ESE Program Director, and a 12-month staffing specialist attended the Pearson FAA training during the summer of 2025 to have a better understanding of FAA and the data folio portion.</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>Okaloosa has an Action Plan to ensure compliance of 95% or more participation and to reduce the overall percentage rate of students taking the FAA. Increased staff professional learning activities on Rule GA-1.0943, F.A.C., use of the Checklist for Course and Assessment Participation, ACCESS standards instruction and FAA assessment implications. Data will be disaggregated for FAST. EOCs, and the FAA participation. Monthly audits by staffing specialist will be conducted to sample compliance.</p>
19.	<p>What professional learning will your staff complete for the 2025-26 SY?</p> <p>Okaloosa works closely with the ACCESS Project and FDLRS to train our case managers, ESE teachers and itinerants, staffing specialists and school psychologists with updated training opportunities on quality IEPs, present level, accommodations and modifications, and IDEA rules and regulations. School administrators receive professional learning on eligibilities, and many aspects of compliance for students with disabilities.</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>The ESE Director and ESE Program Director, along with a staffing specialist, attended State FAA training to learn more about the data folio process. Student data will be reviewed to consider the most appropriate assessment for each student. District staff will conduct annual audits of FAA eligibility decisions and documentation at both the district and school levels.</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

10/01/25

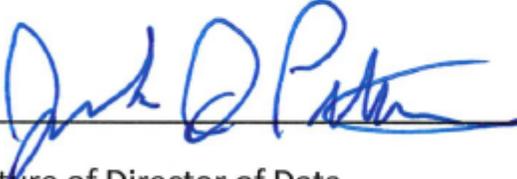
Date



Signature of Exceptional Student Education
Director

10/01/25

Date



Signature of Director of Data

10/01/25

Date