

Florida Department of Education

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

LEA: Orange County Public Schools

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 ESE department collaborated with other stakeholders and departments in the district to review the data and determine an action plan.</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: 1.1% Math: 1.1% Science: 1.2%</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: 1,162 Math: 1,178 Science/Social Studies: 872</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: 123,482 Math: 118,858 Science: 47,793 Social Studies: 29,706</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: 123,373 Math: 126,234 Science: 45,467 Social Studies: 23,548</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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● OCPS has around 200,000 students which is one of the largest in the state of Florida ● Very diverse population in terms of ethnicity - 44% Hispanic, 24-25% White, 24% Black, 5% Asian and 170 languages from 190 countries ● Approximately 37,800 students in the district are identified at ESE (including gifted) which is about 22% of the population ● Approximately 11.7% of the overall population in Orange County have a reported disability with about 4.7% of residents with "cognitive difficulties" ● OCPS has multiple ESE center schools, alternative education settings, and special schools ● OCPS student enrollment for students taking the general education assessment has decreased. However, our population of students with disabilities and significant cognitive impairments continues to increase in our district due to students entering our district and limited school choice options for this population.
7. BM added information	<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): 38.5% Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): 50.4% Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI): 2 ~1% Other Health Impairment (OHI): 11%</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>Based on the data reviewed, there are schools in our district that had 30 or more students on Alternate Assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access Charter: 109 College Park MS: 34 Cypress Creek HS: 37 Dr. Phillips HS: 30 East River HS: 30 Evans HS: 41 Hospital Homebound: 34 Meadow Woods MS: 35 SunRidge MS: 35 Wekiva HS: 30 West Orange HS: 35 <p>These schools serve our most significant populations of students with disabilities in our very large district.</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>A review of our assessment data from the 2024-2025 school year showed that the male subgroup had a risk ratio of two or slightly greater in ELA, Math, and Science. Our LEA will continue to explicitly monitor IEP team alternate assessment eligibility determinations, especially those involving our male students, to reduce the impact of disproportionality within this population</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>1. Strengthening Assessment Participation Monitoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>The LEA will monitor participation rates across all schools and subgroups—including students with disabilities—throughout the testing windows to ensure at least 95% participation in general and alternate assessments.</i> ● <i>Regular reports will be generated to identify students who have not yet tested, with immediate follow-up by school test coordinators and ESE liaisons.</i> ● <i>Make-up sessions and flexible scheduling options will be implemented to maximize participation.</i> <p>2. Ensuring Appropriate Identification for Alternate Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>The LEA will review eligibility determinations to ensure that only students who meet the state-defined criteria for “most significant cognitive disabilities” are assigned to the alternate assessment.</i> ● <i>IEP teams will receive refresher training on the state’s alternate assessment participation guidelines, emphasizing evidence-based decision-making and appropriate documentation.</i> ● <i>The LEA will conduct random file reviews and provide feedback to schools to ensure compliance and accuracy in participation decisions.</i> <p>3. Collaboration Between General and Special Education Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>The LEA will strengthen collaboration between ESE and general education departments to promote inclusive practices, grade-level access, and the use of accommodations within general assessments.</i> ● <i>Professional development will be provided on instructional scaffolds, accommodations, and universal design principles to reduce over-identification for alternate assessments.</i> <p>4. Family and Stakeholder Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Families of students with disabilities will receive clear information about assessment participation options, including the implications of alternate assessment participation for future academic and diploma pathways.</i> ● <i>The LEA will provide parent-friendly materials and host informational sessions to build understanding and support informed IEP team decisions.</i> <p>5. Continuous Improvement and Accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>The LEA will analyze participation data annually to identify trends and schools with disproportionately high alternate assessment rates.</i> ● <i>Targeted technical assistance will be provided to schools exceeding thresholds, focusing on accurate identification, inclusive instruction, and appropriate use of accommodations.</i> ● <i>Data-driven reflection and annual review of IEP processes will inform ongoing improvement efforts.</i>
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<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>IEP teams receive technical assistance throughout the school year on decision-making for students being considered for eligibility for alternate assessment. Additional monitoring and oversight occurs within the district prior to IEP team determination from key stakeholders including but not limited to ESE senior administrators, school psychologists and social workers. This monitoring and oversight ensures due diligence with implementing the state guidelines and criteria for alternate assessment determination.</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>IEP teams must use the guiding questions in PEER to assure that the student meets state guidelines and criteria when determining eligibility for participation in the FAA. IEP teams must consider all of the following prior to determining a student eligible for alternate assessment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The student must meet the definition of a “most significant” cognitive disability evidenced by an evaluation that includes a global impairment with FSIQ of 67 or below (or falls within the 1st percentile). If a direct FSIQ is unattainable after multiple attempts, the district will follow the extraordinary procedures that have been approved by the Bureau. This includes a DP4 (or other developmental measure) that is used when all direct assessment attempts are unsuccessful. The assessment used must also take into consideration the student’s already identified limitations and impairments to ensure the measure is an accurate representation of the student’s abilities (Evidence: Psychoeducational evaluation, adaptive assessment, current and previous IEPs). 2. The student must not be identified with the exceptionalities of SLD or gifted under the state of Florida criteria and must have an exceptionality that may fall under a “most significant” cognitive impairment which includes the following programs: IND, ASD, OHI and not solely DHH, VI, EBD, OI, LI, SI, or dual

	<p>sensory impairment (Evidence: Prior and current IEPs, eligibility paperwork).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. In reviewing the student’s prior historical statewide general education standardized assessments, the student must not have scored a level 3 or above (Evidence: Skyward assessment history, current and previous IEPs) 4. The student must have been enrolled in two consecutive FTEs and enrolled in the appropriate aligned access point courses while receiving ESE services (Evidence: Student schedule in Skyward, FTE survey 2 and 3 student reports). 5. The student must be receiving systematic and explicit intervention and small group instruction in addition to ESE services (Evidence: Current and previous IEPs, MTSS Tier 2 and Tier 3 data, teacher lesson plans/logs). 6. The student requires modifications to the general education curriculum even when exhausting all appropriate and allowable accommodations (Evidence: Current and previous IEPs, intervention data, accommodation logs). 7. The student requires modifications to the general education curriculum even when exhausting all appropriate and allowable supplementary aids (Evidence: Current and previous IEPs, intervention data, supplementary aid logs). 8. The student requires modifications to the general education curriculum even with the provision and use of assistive technology (Evidence: Current and previous IEPs, intervention data, assistive technology logs). 9. The student must have been present for instruction at least 75% of the time during the two FTE windows prior to the assessment (Evidence: Skyward attendance logs between survey 2 and 3). 10. The student must have been instructed by a certified teacher at least 80% of the time during the two FTE windows prior to the assessment (Evidence: FLDOE certification verification, district certification verification/school staffing report).
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>There are students in our district who have been removed from an alternate assessment who enrolled in OCPS as an out-of-state transfer. These students new to our district were provided with comparable services until an initial evaluation of the student</p>

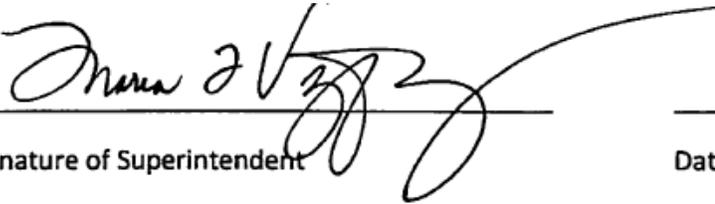
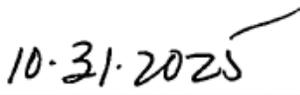
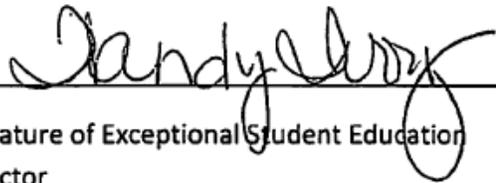
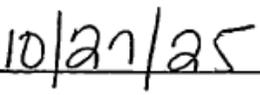
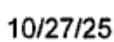
	<p>confirmed they were not eligible for an alternate assessment according to state guidelines and criteria.</p>
<p>14.</p>	<p>Describe how the LEA informs parents, families and students of the instruction in Access Points – Alternate Academic Achievement Standards and participation in the FAA, as well 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>Parents are provided meaningful participation during IEP team meetings in which initial eligibility for alternate assessment is being considered and at the student’s annual review. The LEA representative reviews the implications with the parent and provides the Instruction in the State Standards Access Points Curriculum and Florida Alternate Assessment Administration Form in their native language. These forms are available and directly linked in PEER in multiple languages. Consent is obtained at least once per year prior to the Spring assessment and typically occurs at the student’s annual review.</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>Each year, IEP teams determine the need for alternate assessment either through initial eligibility determination or the continued eligibility for alternate assessment. IEP teams will use the guiding questions in PEER to facilitate a team discussion based on multiple sources of data which include prior statewide and districtwide assessments. Should the student demonstrate advanced proficiency on an alternate assessment, this data will be considered to determine if it is appropriate for the student to participate in a general education assessment with accommodations.</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><i>1. Training and Guidance for IEP Teams</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>The LEA will provide annual training to school-based IEP teams on the state’s participation criteria for alternate assessments, emphasizing evidence-based decision-making and documentation requirements.</i> ● <i>Guidance documents, decision-making flowcharts, and exemplar IEP justifications will be distributed to all schools to ensure consistent understanding of eligibility standards.</i> ● <i>Training will highlight the distinction between accommodations within the general assessment and criteria for alternate assessment participation to prevent over-identification.</i> <p>2. Pre-Submission Verification Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Prior to test registration, the LEA will require each school to submit a verification roster of students recommended for alternate assessment participation.</i> ● <i>School administrators and ESE specialists will review and sign off on each student’s eligibility based on IEP documentation and adherence to state criteria.</i> ● <i>The LEA’s ESE department will cross-check these lists for completeness, accuracy, and alignment with prior-year data to detect anomalies or sudden increases in participation.</i> <p>3. File Reviews and Quality Assurance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>The LEA will conduct targeted file reviews at schools with higher-than-average alternate assessment rates to verify that participation decisions are properly justified and documented in students’ IEPs.</i> ● <i>Feedback will be provided to school teams following each review, with required corrective action if participation decisions are found to be inconsistent with state criteria.</i> ● <i>All findings will be documented and used to guide future professional development and compliance monitoring.</i> <p>4. Data Monitoring and Validation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>The LEA assessment office will analyze participation data during the test registration window and post-assessment to verify consistency across grade levels, subgroups, and schools.</i> ● <i>Any discrepancies or unexpected increases will trigger a review of individual student records and consultation with school-based teams to validate participation decisions.</i> <p>5. Ongoing Technical Assistance and Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Schools will receive ongoing technical assistance from the LEA’s ESE and assessment departments regarding appropriate identification, documentation, and test registration procedures.</i> ● <i>The LEA will maintain open communication with the state assessment office to clarify borderline cases and ensure alignment with current policy guidance.</i> ● <i>Results and findings from the annual verification process will inform updates to training, guidance materials, and support structures.</i>
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>Our alternate assessment participation is trending downwards with our recent assessment for the 2024-2025 SY slightly over the 1% in ELA, Math, and Science. This is a direct reflection of the progress and effective practices our district has made in providing technical assistance to IEP teams and continued monitoring of student eligibility determination for alternate assessment.</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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Monthly monitoring and review of district data: Students enrolled in OPCS enrolled in access point courses and projected to take the FAA in Spring of 2026. Stakeholders will review this data to monitor projected participation rates and determine interventions as appropriate. ● Implementation of the Consideration for the Instruction in Access Point and Alternate Assessment Guidance for IEP teams. Prior to a student being considered for initial eligibility for alternate assessment, schools must submit the appropriate data for district review. The school psychologist, social worker, and ESE senior administrator will review the data to determine if it supports consideration of alternate assessment and provide feedback for IEP teams prior to
<p>19.</p>	<p>What professional learning will your staff complete for the 2025-26 SY?</p> <p>Professional learning has already been or will be implemented during the 2025-2026 SY in the following ways:</p> <p>June 2025: Leadership Institute for School-Administrators June 2025: Staffing Specialist Institute for LEA Representatives September 2025, January 2026, March 2026: Districtwide Staffing Specialist Training for LEA Representatives October 2025: Mini Compliance Training for LEA Representatives Technical Assistance as Necessary to Schools</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>

	Implementation of updated Consideration for the Instruction in Access Point and Alternate Assessment Guidance for IEP teams. This technical assistance document will assist IEP teams with decision-making for students aligned to state guidelines and criteria.
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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	 _____ Date
 _____ Signature of Exceptional Student Education Director	 _____ Date
 _____ Signature of Director of Data	 _____ Date