

Florida Department of Education

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

LEA: Palm Beach

**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?  SDPBC reviews FAA participation data annually through district-level reviews, the 1% self-assessments, and FDOE 1% Data Discussions.
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: 1.2% Math: 1.3% Science: 1.3%
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?  ELA: 1.1% Math: 1.1% Science: 1.3%
4.	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?  ELA: 98.8% Math: 98.5%

	Science: 98%
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: 98.9%  Math:98.9%  Science: 98.7%</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 have been nine Charter Schools located in the boundaries of the School District of Palm Beach County which provide services in an instructional model that has historically required, as a criteria for entry, that the student be identified as working on Access Point standards and participating in Alternate Assessment. While most now offer both general and access standards instruction models, these campuses serve over 300 students determined for access points. These charter schools are the Palm Beach School For Autism, Connections, the Early Learning Center, the Learning Academy, Believers, EdVenture, Bodwell Academy (combined from former Seagull Academy and Potentials), and the Career Academy of the Palm Beaches.</p> <p>In addition, the level of service available within district based programs for students identified and participating in programs that support needs of students on the Autism Spectrum, varies from surrounding districts and provides for language therapy infused throughout the school day. This model of service attracts families to Palm Beach County specifically to access these program models resulting in a disproportionately high rate of students identified on the spectrum within the district. The most recent available Data &amp; Statistics on Autism Spectrum Disorder from the CDC indicate 1 in 31 children are identified on the spectrum; this prevalence is 1 in 51.5 in Palm Beach Schools. (<a href="https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/data/index.html">https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/data/index.html</a>). In addition, there has been a steady increase in overall number of students identified on the spectrum over the past 10 years going from 1,767 or 5% of SWD identified as ASD in the 2015 school year to 6,105 students (18% of SWD) in the 2025-26 school 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): 43.4%  Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): 53.2%  Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI): 0.11%  Other Health Impairment (OHI): 2.8%</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>Alternate Assessment participation rates vary generally across the district; however, they are higher at the ESE Center school and at charter schools established to support students with disabilities with high levels of need.</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>The LEA is not aware of any disproportionate representation of students in any subgroups.</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>SDPBC is at 97.6% participation for SWD in 2024-25 in all statewide assessments in all subjects per Know Your Schools which is over the required rate of participation. The district will continue to implement and monitor statewide assessment practices and policies to require participation for all students, including SWD, in order to continue to meet the 95% participation rate requirement.</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>The LEA has embedded the state’s guidelines and criteria regarding which students should take the FAA into the IEP system requiring completion at any time access points and FAA participation is considered.</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>The decision that a student with a most significant cognitive disability will participate in the statewide alternate assessment program as defined in s. 1008.22(3)(d), F.S. and Rule 6A-1.0943(5)(a), F.A.C., is made by the IEP team and recorded on the IEP.</p> <p>The following criteria are embedded into the IEP process and must all be met based on reviewed student data and documentation including but not limited to: the existing IEP, student state and district assessment scores, psycho-educational and other individual evaluations, Assistive Technology evaluations and data, student schedule and attendance history, intervention data collection, and teacher certification records.</p> <p><u>Inclusionary Criteria</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The student must receive exceptional student education (ESE) services as identified through a current IEP and be enrolled in the appropriate and aligned courses using alternate achievement standards for two (2) consecutive full-time equivalent reporting periods prior to the assessment.</li> <li>2. Even after documented evidence of exhausting all appropriate and allowable instructional accommodations, the student requires modifications to the general education curriculum standards.</li> <li>3. Even after documented evidence of accessing a variety of supplementary instructional materials, the student requires modifications to the general education curriculum standards.</li> <li>4. Even with documented evidence of the provision and use of assistive technology, the student requires modifications to the general education curriculum standards.</li> <li>5. The assessment instrument used to measure the student’s global level of cognitive functioning was selected to limit the adverse impact of already-identified limitations and impairments (e.g., language acquisition, mode of communication, culture, hearing, vision, orthopedic functioning, hypersensitivities and distractibility).</li> </ol>

6. The student has a most significant cognitive disability, which means a global cognitive impairment that adversely impacts multiple areas of functional across many settings and is a result of a congenital, acquired, or traumatic brain injury or syndrome and is verified by either:
  1. A statistically significant below average global cognitive score that falls within the 1st percentile rank (i.e., a standard, full-scale score of 67 or under; or
  2. In the extraordinary circumstances when a global full-scale intelligence score is unattainable, a school district-determined procedure that has been approved by FDOE in the district's ESE Policies and Procedures
7. The student must be receiving specially designed instruction, which provides unique instruction and intervention supports, that is determined, designed, and delivered through a team approach, ensuring access to core instruction through the adaptation of content, methodology, or delivery of instruction and is exhibiting very limited to no progress in the general education curriculum standards.
8. The student must be receiving support through systematic, explicit, and interactive small-group instruction focused on foundational skills in addition to instruction in the general education curriculum standards.
9. Even with direct instruction in all core academic areas (i.e., English language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science), the student is exhibiting limited or no progress on the general education curriculum standards and requires modifications.
10. Unless the student is a transfer student, the student must have been available and present for grade-level general education curriculum standards instruction for at least 70 percent of the school year prior to the assessment.
11. Unless the student is a transfer student, the student must have been instructed by a certified teacher for at least 80 percent of the school year prior to the assessment.

Exclusionary Criteria

1. The student is identified as a student with a specific learning disability or as gifted.
2. The student is identified only as a student eligible for services as a student who is deaf or hard of hearing or has a visual impairment, a dual sensory impairment, an emotional or behavioral disability, a language impairment, a speech impairment, or an orthopedic impairment.
3. The student scored a level 2 or above on a previous statewide, general education curriculum standardized assessment administered pursuant to Sections 1008.22(3)(a) and (b), F.S., unless there is medical documentation that the student experienced a traumatic brain injury or other health-related complication subsequent to the administration of that assessment that led to the student having the most significantly below average global cognitive impairment.

	<p>The provisions with regard to parental consent for participation in the FAA program, in accordance with s. 1003.5715, F.S., and Rule 6A-6.0331(10)(b), F.A.C., must be followed. The school district may not proceed with a student's instruction in access points and the administration of an alternate assessment without written and informed parental consent unless the school district documents reasonable efforts to obtain parental consent and the student's parent has failed to respond or the school district obtains approval through a due process hearing. The school district shall obtain written parental consent for the actions described above on the Parental Consent Form – Instruction in Access Points – Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (AP-AAAS) and Administration of the Statewide, Standardized Alternate Assessment, Form 313181 <a href="https://www.flrules.org/Gateway/reference.asp?No=Ref-14585">https://www.flrules.org/Gateway/reference.asp?No=Ref-14585</a>.</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>Since the updated access points and alternate assessment participation criteria changed in July of 2021, the LEA has supported IEP teams in the review of all students previously on access points as well as any students newly being considered. At the time of the change in criteria, approximately 260 students of the 2,320 students reviewed were identified as not meeting the new and specific criteria that replaced the state's previous guidance. The IEP teams reviewed existing data and considered/ completed re-evaluations when appropriate in determining student status and developing new IEPs.</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>Parents, families, and students are informed at least annually at IEP meetings of the access points, the alternate assessment process, and the possible implications of this instruction and participation. This information is provided in the parent's native language through the use of Community Language Facilitators who interpret the IEP meeting whenever needed. IEP documents are provided in the parent's native language as well. Parents are required to sign a consent for participation in instruction on access points as well as the alternate assessment annually.</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 areas, and</p>

	<p>consider whether these students could participate in the general statewide progress monitoring (FAST) or EOCs with necessary supports and accommodations.</p> <p>IEP teams meet at least annually to review student progress towards IEP goals and overall performance in relation to standards. Teams are encouraged to review all assessment data related to standards based instruction on access points, including but not limited to FAA-PT and FAA-DF. If students are demonstrating perfect score(s) in one or more of the content areas, a re-evaluation may be appropriate to determine if the student continues to meet state criteria to remain on access points. Considerations of the team would include multiple data points and trends, not solely a single score on a single Alternate Assessment. The LEA has developed a Power BI interactive data dashboard for Florida Alternate Assessment-Performance Task to allow school, regional, and district leaders to monitor student progress in FAA-PT.</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>To assist schools in verifying the validity of students taking the alternate assessment, the LEA has developed an FAA verification training for 2025-26, which is mandatory for all ESE Contacts (school based LEA representatives) and District ESE Compliance staff. Offered in September and October of 2025, the professional learning includes the why behind the assurance process and what steps the school LEA needs to take in order to ensure that the student meets criteria to take the FAA. The verification process focuses on the following items: 1) review names of enrolled students 2) verify FLEID 3) verify signed parental consent (annually) 4) verify aligned core access courses 5) middle and high school reminders regarding Civics, Algebra, Geometry, US History, Biology, ELA1 and ELA2. Participation eligibility under state criteria is also reviewed in this training.</p> <p>Additionally, as part of the LEA’s AP, the LEA has developed a District Review Process for Access Criteria to ensure that school LEA’s and teams are addressing all of the State indicators outlined in statute prior to making a determination for eligibility for access points modified curriculum standards instruction.</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>Palm Beach County provided an in depth professional learning session to all ESE Contacts (School LEAs) on February 11, 2025, of the state statute and indicators 1-14 along with examples and non examples. A District process was developed in order to review indicators and data for students being considered for access points modified curriculum standards by their Child Study Teams. 29 requests were submitted for review during the 2024-25 school year. The LEA added a monitoring data field into the Student Information System to indicate reviews that occurred. With this ongoing professional learning and review process found to be effective, in 2025-26 the review process continues with support of the LEA's ESE compliance teachers who directly support school teams.</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 to support schools includes district review of student data with professional learning and individual support provided to schools in the determination of instruction on access points and modified curriculum for students. The district is focused on providing guidance to address identified cases and to initiate re-evaluations for students as needed in order to make appropriate decisions based on current data.</p> <p>Progress monitoring of the AP includes maintaining attendance logs for professional learning sessions provided as well as follow up quizzes completed by attendees. Additionally, the LEA maintains a list of students that have been submitted for review prior to consideration and email communication back to the school. District reviews are documented in the Student Information System (SIS). The ESE Department Manager for Curriculum and Assessment and the ESE Manager for ESE Program Support will monitor the progress of the LEA Action Plan in collaboration with the ESE Department Executive and Associate Directors.</p>
<p>19.</p>	<p>What professional learning will your staff complete for the 2025-26 SY?</p> <p>School based ESE Contacts and ESE District Compliance staff will participate in the mandatory FAA Verification Training offered prior to the release of the roster from the FLDOE. In August and September of 2025, ESE District Compliance teachers have received refresher training on the process of reviewing eligibility for access points in order to continue to support the school based LEAs. District staff new to positions as school based ESE Contacts receive job specific training sessions including the state statute and criteria for instruction in access points and participation in alternate assessment.</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 LEA will participate and attend the IND Annual Meeting. Additionally, the LEA will continue attending the monthly AAC (Alternate Assessment Coordinator) meetings provided by the FLDOE. The LEA will continue to participate in Access Project Discussions and collaboration to support effective instruction for students on modified curriculum standards.</p>
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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.




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Signature of Superintendent

9/30/25

Date




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[Kevin McCormick \(Sep 29, 2025 13:18:29 EDT\)](#)

Signature of Exceptional Student Education Director

09/29/2025

Date




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Signature of Director of Data

9/29/25

Date