Florida Department of Education

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

LEA: _____Putnam County 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.	How has your LEA reviewed the data for assessment participation to make informed decisions for implementation? -Putnam County School District's Exceptional Student Education Department has developed a Putnam Alternate Assessment Review Committee which consists of the district's Alternate Assessment Coordinator as lead of the committee, and the lead school psychologist, lead Speech and Language Pathologist, lead Staffing Specialist, ESE director and an ESE administrator on special assignment. All students who learn using alternate academic achievement standards, or are being considered to do so, are reviewed against the FAA eligibility checklist from the Checklist for Course and Assessment Participation in PEER prior to their annual IEP meeting to ensure that IEP teams have the data to support initial or continued placement on the access points and for the student to take the FAA. If an IEP team does not have the necessary data to support the decision for a student to learn on access points and take the FAA, the team provides recommendations of reevaluation and/or supports or aids to help the student succeed in their educational environment while additional data is collected for decision making purposes.
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: 3.1% Math: 3.1% Science: 3.7%
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: 2.9% Math: 3.2% Science: 2.6%

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: 97% Math: 97% Science: 96%
5.	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? ELA: 97% Math: 97% Science: 97%
6.	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). -Putnam county's low socio-economic ranking in the state of Florida is evidence of a higher enrollment of students on access courses. Due to county socio-economic ranking, there are a greater number of resources and available programs for families of students with disabilities. These resources and lower cost of living draw families to our district resulting in a higher number of students needing access courses and the Florida Alternate Assessment.
7.	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: Intellectual Disability (InD): Primary-72%, Secondary-Less than 1% Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): Primary-23%, Secondary- Less than 1% Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI): Primary-0, Secondary-0 Other Health Impairment (OHI): Primary-Less than 1%, Secondary- Less than 1%
8.	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? -When reviewing the data on students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, a pattern related to placement in a Less Restrictive Environment emerged in that the majority of our students learning on alternate academic achievement standards are placed in the separate classroom or separate school setting. The district is working with FIN and other state IDEA funded projects to help reduce the increased placement in separate classroom settings and are working to increase the number of minutes students with the most significant cognitive disabilities spend with non-disabled peers as it is appropriate and applicable related to the student's needs.

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9.	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. -There is currently no disproportionate representation of students from the listed subgroups.
10.	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. -District participation on statewide assessments is over the 95% participation rate for students taking the FAST. For students taking the Florida Alternate Assessment, the district is over the 1% threshold. IEP teams and related personnel are trained to ensure that they review eligibility data at each annual IEP to ensure appropriate decisions are made for students concerning their educational program planning. The district is above the 1% threshold due to the number of students with high needs and the high number of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities within the district.
11.	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.) -Each IEP team is responsible to review eligibility criteria for learning on alternate academic achievement standards and taking the Florida Alternate Assessment at each annual IEP. Putnam county uses PEER as our IEP program. PEER incorporates the Checklist for Course and Assessment Participation on the "assessments" page. Even though the boxes are considered "optional" in PEER, students being considered for participation using access points must have data provided to support the IEP team decision of "yes" or "no" for each question on the Assessment page. The provision of data on these questions ensures that IEP teams have the information needed to support the determination of eligibility so that only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities that meet the eligibility criteria outlined in Rule 6A-1.0943 F.A.C. are allowed to learn using access points and take the FAA.
12.	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. -If a student is being considered to learn on alternate academic achievement standards, the IEP team is required to fully complete the "Assessment" page on

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	PEER which asks questions related to eligibility following the Checklist for Course and Assessment Participation. Teams are responsible for detailing evidence to support the answers of yes, no, or not applicable for each question related to eligibility even though data is technically not required by PEER and denotes the data entry section following each question as "optional." If IEP teams have questions or concerns related to eligibility, it is the responsibility of the team to reach out to the Alternate Assessment Coordinator for data review by the AAC and Putnam Alternate Assessment Committee, if applicable, to ensure appropriate decisions are being made for students. This helps to ensure rigorous instruction that supports the needs of our students. While ultimately it is the decision of each IEP team to determine eligibility, the Putnam Alternate Assessment Committee is available to support the IEP team in data collection and in relation to possible supports and aids that might be needed by the students, their families, or their educational teams. Additionally, the district's AAC is available to participate as a member of any IEP team that requests their presence as a support to determining eligibility for initial placement or to determine continued eligibility.
13.	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. -When the Rule 6A-1.0943 F.A.C. was first passed in 2021, the district AAC reviewed all students learning on access points and taking the FAA to ensure IEP teams had documentation of a most significant cognitive disability. In the school year 2021-2022, it was determined that 38 students did not meet the eligibility criteria and their IEP teams determined they should be moved to learn with general education curriculum standards and ensured that they had the supports and aids they needed for success. In that same year, the IEP teams of an additional 55 students requested reevaluations in order to ensure they had up to date, accurate data from which they could determine continued eligibility. In the school year 2022-2023, an additional four students were moved from FAA and access points to participate on general education curriculum standards. In 2023-2024, one student was moved from FAA to general education curriculum standards. Since that time, only students who transferred to our district from another state with different eligibility criteria from Florida were moved to general education curriculum standards based on the eligibility criteria as established in Florida through the use of the Checklist for Course and Assessment Participation.
14.	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? -Parents, families and students are informed of the instruction on access points and participating in the FAA at each IEP meeting annually, or more frequently if

	the meeting is a more frequent IEP meeting. In each IEP meeting, the team reviews the checklist on the PEER assessment page and ensures that accurate data are entered in each question to ensure continued eligibility is appropriate. Parents are provided the "Parental Consent Form: Instruction in the State Standards Access Points Curriculum and Statewide, Standardized Alternate Assessment" as downloaded from PEER and the staffing specialist reviews eligibility, possible implications, and participation information from that form. If the parent or student's native language is not English and they are in need of an interpreter, the team ensures that interpretation in the native language is provided through a district approved interpreting service for the entire IEP meeting including the discussion of participation on access points and the FAA if appropriate for the student. Additionally, forms are available to print and provide in Arabic, Chinese, French, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese from the BEESS Resource and Information page (linked in PEER for ease of use).
15.	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. -At each student's annual IEP meeting, as a part of reviewing the student's continued eligibility to learn on alternate academic achievement standards and take the FAA, the IEP team reviews achievement on the previous year's assessment to determine if the student is demonstrating advanced proficiency or has earned a perfect score. If a student demonstrates advanced proficiency or has earned a perfect score, the team considers that information as part of the determination for continued eligibility. Additionally, the Alternate Assessment Coordinator reviews student achievement scores each summer when the assessment results are released and flags students with high achievement or perfect scores for additional discussion and review by the Putnam Alternate Assessment Review committee to determine if a recommendation to the IEP team should be made regarding student eligibility to continue learning on alternate academic achievement standards.
16.	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). -The district's Alternate Assessment Coordinator maintains a roster of all students determined to learn on alternate academic achievement standards and take the FAA with key eligibility information documented on the roster. A review is conducted at the beginning of the school year, prior to October FTE, and then quarterly to ensure enrollment data, student placement, and course enrollment are accurate for students learning on access points and taking the FAA.

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	Additionally, the AAC has been tasked with attending as many IEP meetings for students learning on access points as possible to ensure a rigorous program is provided, and reviews the IEP data of every student who is learning using access points and taking the FAA prior to the IEP being finalized to ensure teams have documented all relevant and necessary information related to eligibility and student placement.
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. -The district is working to increase the placement of students learning on access points and taking the FAA in increasingly less restrictive environments to ensure the provision of a rigorous and robust educational program for all students. Working with IDEA funded projects such as FIN and the ACCESS Project to provide training on student centered scheduling, the provision of access points in the general education setting, and collaborative teaching practices has helped the district increase the number of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities learning in the general education classroom setting from approximately 5 students in 2023-2024 to approximately 9 students in 2024-2025. This year (2025-2026), the district currently has approximately 14 students with the most significant cognitive disabilities learning in the least restrictive environment of general education setting. Additionally, there has been a significant increase in the number of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities learning in a resource setting where they previously were classified to learn in the separate classroom setting and they now spend an increased amount time with their non-disabled peers. This is a change from their placement in previous years to help support their acquisition of state standards and to support their learning in the most appropriately rigorous setting available.
18.	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. -The district Alternate Assessment Coordinator is responsible for supporting IEP teams, ensuring the inclusion of data to determine eligibility on IEPs, facilitating conversations and meetings of the Putnam Alternate Assessment Committee, maintaining the database of students learning on access points, and double checking the appropriate enrollment of students in the correct courses. Additionally, the AAC provides training to teachers, administrators and other school staff and monitors the implementation and use of the district's alternate academic achievement curriculum. The AAC is responsible for the completion of assurances and the implementation and monitoring of this action plan for the district.
19.	What professional learning will your staff complete for the 2025-26 SY? -In August at a district wide meeting of all teachers working with ESE students and responsible for writing IEPs, training was provided regarding IEP progress

	reports, what is required, and how they should be done. Also, during that training, a presentation was given regarding the Checklist for Course and Assessment Participation which included suggested data to support the decision-making process for each eligibility question, answered questions related to eligibility, and outlined the district policy for IEP teams to review and consider the option of students learning on access points and taking the FAA. Professional learning is conducted at each school by request as related to the provision of providing alternate academic achievement standards in the general education classroom. Principals and other support personnel can request training for individual or small groups of general education teachers through the use of in person on-demand training, Professional Learning Communities, and one-on-one question and answer sessions for teachers who need support. Additionally, on Putnam County's fall in-service day in October, the ESE department is partnering with the state IDEA funded project, FIN, to provide the training "Collaborative Teaching Partnerships."
20.	What other additional actions does your LEA plan to implement to ensure the reduction of the percentage of students participating in the FAA? -There are no additional actions that the district plans to implement at this time.

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.
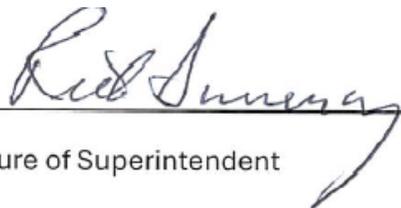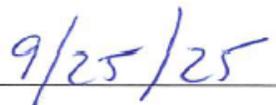
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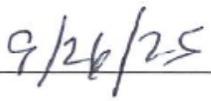
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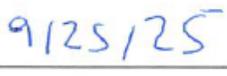
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