

Florida Department of Education

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

LEA: Volusia County 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>Volusia County Schools systematically reviews assessment participation data to ensure that all students—including those with disabilities—are appropriately included in state and districtwide assessments. This process supports informed decision-making to improve instruction, ensure compliance, and promote equitable access to assessments.</p> <p>Key components of this review include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collect and disaggregate participation data by student subgroups (e.g., disability status, race/ethnicity, English learners).• Identify participation rates and determine whether any student groups are underrepresented or overrepresented in general or alternate assessments.• Review the number of students participating in the Florida Alternate Assessment.• Analyze whether Volusia County Schools is meeting state and federal expectations regarding participation in both general and alternate assessments.• Ensure Volusia County Schools teams are applying eligibility criteria for alternate assessments appropriately and consistently.• Verify that students currently participating in alternate assessments continue to meet eligibility requirements.
----	--

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the effectiveness and consistency of training provided to staff responsible for making assessment participation decisions. • Offer targeted professional learning for IEP teams focused on alternate assessment eligibility and decision-making. • Investigate reasons for student nonparticipation in assessments (e.g., absences, exemptions, parent refusals). • Identify patterns or barriers that may need to be addressed systemically. • Monitor the implementation of any changes or interventions based on data findings. • Track participation trends over time to assess the effectiveness of adjustments. • Ensure ongoing compliance with all state and federal assessment guidelines. <p>Through this comprehensive review process, Volusia County Schools ensures that assessment participation is equitable, compliant, and aligned with each student’s educational needs.</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: 1.3774% Math: 1.4341% Science: 2.7655% (5th, 8th, and Biology)</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: 1.3357% Math: 1.2267% Science: 1.3031%</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: 98.6226% Math: 98.5659% Science: 97.2345%</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: 98.6643% Math: 98.7733% Science: 98.6969%</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>A unique circumstance that might draw large numbers of students to live in Volusia County might be related to a natural disaster.</p>
7.	<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): 55.1862% Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): 18.4809% Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI): 19.0476% Other Health Impairment (OHI): 4.2058%</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>Prior to the 2025–2026 school year, students were placed in schools within their designated feeder patterns based on the specific programs in which they participated. These feeder patterns are reviewed annually, with adjustments made after a thorough evaluation of student residences, facility capacity, and other relevant factors.</p> <p>For the 2025–2026 school year, Volusia County revised several program-based feeder patterns to allow more students to attend schools closer to their zoned school—or in some cases, their actual zoned school. These adjustments were made to better align program placements with where students reside, improving both accessibility and community integration.</p>

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.

Volusia County Schools is not currently 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. However, Volusia County Schools does have a process to address disproportionality.

Volusia County Schools will address disproportionality by auditing the IEPs for the subgroups indicated to be sure our District Data Review Process is in place, following the guidelines presented in the Rule 6A-1.0943, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), January 7, 2022, memo. Our District Data Review process consists of our District ESE Coordinators, Program Teachers-On-Assignment (TOAs), District Psychologist, and additional assistance from our the Assistant Director of ESE, and a FLDOE representative, to analyze our current methods of identifying students that we suspect require a modified curriculum and assessment to ensure that our rubrics are culturally sensitive and unbiased and that all assessment protocols are being followed with fidelity. Following the analysis of our current protocols, professional learning will be provided to all administrators and teachers to ensure students are evaluated with objectivity and without bias. Our District Review process: A student's IEP team observes multiple deficits in curriculum and learning, social emotional, independent functioning, communication, and health domains. Evaluations or re-evaluations begin. Documentation of the implementation of 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 adaptation of content, methodology, or delivery of instruction and the student exhibits very limited to no progress in the general education curriculum standards. The student's IEP team collaborates to complete the District Data Review document and follows the flow chart process, including all data. The data collected matches Rule 6A-1.0943, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), January 7, 2022, memo. The data collected is sent to the District Data Review Team, consisting of ESE Coordinators and District Psychologists. The District Data Review Team reviews data and sends feedback back to the school's IEP team and the Student Staffing Specialist for their school. The school IEP team includes the parent, student, and the Student Staffing Specialist.

<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>Volusia County Schools is committed to meeting the 95% participation requirement for all state assessments, including students with disabilities across all grades and tested subjects. To ensure this, Volusia County Schools will implement the following strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer Multiple Makeup Opportunities: Schools will provide several makeup testing sessions to accommodate students who are absent during the primary testing windows. • Ongoing Training for Test Administrators: Teachers who administer the exams will receive in person and/or virtual training through the Learning Management Modules throughout the school year to address any changes in the testing process and procedures for the exams given. • Ongoing Training for Test Coordinators: School-based testing coordinators will receive training multiple times throughout the year on assessment administration, procedures, and compliance expectations to ensure consistency and accuracy in testing practices. • Daily Monitoring and Communication: Volusia County Schools will run daily participation reports during the testing window to monitor progress. Schools will receive regular updates on their current participation rates, along with lists of students who have not yet completed testing, to support timely follow-up and completion. <p>Volusia County Schools is currently not below the 95% participation rate at this time.</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>Volusia County Schools ensures consistency across all schools in implementing the state’s guidelines and criteria for determining which students should participate in the Florida Standards Alternate Assessment (FAA) by requiring IEP teams to use the Checklist.for.Course.and.Assessment.Participation at every IEP meeting. Student Staffing Specialists are trained to facilitate IEP meetings and guide teams through the checklist to ensure that each criterion in Rule 6A-</p>

	<p>1.0943, F.A.C., is addressed with documented evidence from the checklist. This process helps prevent decisions based on inappropriate factors such as program placement, disability category alone, or behavioral concerns.</p> <p>To further promote fidelity, Volusia County Schools provides multiple professional opportunities for both Student Staffing Specialists and school administrators on the use of the checklist and FAA participation criteria.</p> <p>Volusia County Schools' District ESE staff conduct data reviews to monitor FAA participation rates by school, and the district requires justification for any new FAA recommendation to be submitted and verified through the District Data Review process. This multi-level monitoring ensures that all IEP teams apply the state's criteria consistently, with clear documentation of evidence, data, and rationale for each decision. Through these procedures, Volusia County Schools maintains alignment with state guidelines while safeguarding against under-identification or over-identification of students for FAA participation.</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>The VCS District Data Review team has established a process through which schools can submit students who may qualify for Access Points instruction and the FAA, provided there is supporting evidence.</p> <p>Case Manager requests assistance from the ESE Program TOA via Microsoft Forms; Completes the Access Points Considerations Checklist section of District Data Review Form; Gathers required data sources listed on the form (current IEP, Draft IEP present levels, completed psychological evaluation reports, social history, OT report, Speech/Language Report, graphed IEP goal data from Ed Modified (if applicable); student assessment data (district/state assessments), progress data for reading intervention, current Behavior Plan and data (if applicable), current crisis plan (if applicable), MDR (if applicable), and any in-program data sources.</p> <p>ESE Program TOA reviews Access Considerations section of the data review form for compliance with FLDOE Rule 6A-1.0943 (June 2021); Ensures Eligibility Criteria for Alternate Assessment and Access Points Instruction are met. Program TOA then reviews most recent cognitive assessments/Full Scale IQ; Adaptive scores; Current IEP Present Levels in all four domains; Assistive Technology usage in the IEP; Supporting data for global cognitive deficit; all data submitted by case manager; May conduct an observation if needed.</p>

	<p>If criteria are met: ESE Program TOA notifies Case Manager to proceed. If criteria are NOT met: ESE Program TOA provides guidance; the form is not submitted until all criteria are satisfied.</p> <p>Next steps: Case Manager, ESE Program TOA, Administrator, and Behavior Specialist (if applicable) complete section L, verify data sources from section M, and sign section N.; Case Manager uploads signed form and all data sources to Microsoft Forms.</p> <p>Feedback is provided to the school and Student Staffing Specialist through the following process: Provided via Microsoft Forms; Case Manager shares feedback with SSS, ESE Program TOA, and Administrator.</p> <p>Recordkeeping: Case Manager places the ESE District Data Review Form in the student’s ESE work folder.</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>During the previous school year, Volusia County Schools (VCS) removed one student from participating in the Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA), in full alignment with state guidelines.</p> <p>This change was initiated at the request of the student’s IEP team, parent, and legal representative. A comprehensive reevaluation was conducted, which included updated cognitive testing. The student's Full-Scale IQ (FSIQ) no longer met the state eligibility criteria for alternate assessment, which requires a score of 67 or below.</p> <p>All relevant student data—including academic performance, cognitive assessments, and progress monitoring—were thoroughly reviewed by the IEP team. Based on this review, the IEP team determined that the student no longer qualifies for instruction through Access Points and is no longer eligible to participate in the Florida Alternate Assessment Performance Task.</p> <p>As a result, the student has been placed in general education classes with support facilitation services and will now participate in the FAST assessments with appropriate accommodations.</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>Volusia County Schools ensures that parents, families, and students are fully informed of instruction in Access Points – Alternate Academic Achievement Standards and participation in the Florida Standards Alternate Assessment (FAA), as well as the long-term implications of these instructional and assessment pathways. This information is provided during IEP meetings, where Student Staffing Specialists and school-based staff explain the nature of Access Points instruction, how it differs from general education standards, and the potential impact on diploma options, post-secondary opportunities, and future career pathways. Parents and families are given procedural safeguards that outline this information in detail, and Student Staffing Specialists are trained to facilitate clear and accurate discussions with families to support informed decision-making. Parental consent is obtained on the Parental Consent Form: Instruction in the State Standards Access Points Curriculum and Florida Alternate Assessment in the parent’s native language.</p> <p>To ensure equitable access, Volusia County Schools provides this information in the parent’s and/or student’s native language translated through a district interpreter at IEP meetings. Information is communicated not only at the time of the initial eligibility and IEP development but also reviewed annually at every IEP meeting and whenever a change in assessment participation is considered. By providing consistent, clear, and linguistically accessible communication, Volusia County Schools ensures that families and students understand both the instructional approach of Access Points and the implications of participation in the FAA.</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 area, and consider whether these students could participate in the general statewide progress monitoring (FAST) or EOCs with necessary supports and accommodations.</p> <p>During the IEP team meeting in Volusia County Schools, the team will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analyze performance trends to determine whether the student is accessing and mastering grade-level content at or above expected levels.• Discuss whether statewide assessments provide the most accurate and rigorous measure of the student’s academic achievement.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the supports and accommodations needed to ensure equitable access (e.g., extended time, small-group setting, assistive technology, presentation accommodations). • Document the decision-making process, including the rationale for participation in the general assessment system, in alignment with state and federal guidelines. <p>By reviewing data in this way, the IEP team ensures that students with advanced proficiency can demonstrate their knowledge on statewide assessments, while still receiving the individualized supports and accommodations necessary for success.</p>
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>Volusia County Schools has established a comprehensive assurance process to assist schools in verifying the validity of alternate assessment participation. Student Staffing Specialists play a central role in this plan, having received training to ensure students are neither under- nor over-identified. These specialists provide direct guidance to IEP teams, review documentation, and help staff apply eligibility criteria with consistency and fidelity. Student Staffing Specialists are trained multiple times a year to ensure that students are not under or overidentified. Through the assurance process in October and November of each year student data is reviewed after FTE survey 2 and compared with the number of students who have not yet met the two consecutive FTE survey periods. This comparison is presented in a report and shared with Student Staffing Specialists. Student Staffing Specialists will then review the student list provided to ensure all eligibility requirements have been met before students are placed on either Datafolio or Performance Task Alternate Assessments following the checklist for course and assessment participation as a guide. Volusia County Schools will continue to monitor the number of students who are eligible to take the Alternate Assessment Quarterly and will provide Professional Learning to the Student Staffing Specialists at that time.</p> <p>To monitor progress, the assurance process includes multiple data review checkpoints throughout the year, during which schools must provide justification and supporting documentation for each student recommended for alternate assessment participation. We cross-check student scheduling with their IEP to ensure students are placed in the correct Access Point Instruction course codes and aligned with FAA. These reviews go beyond compliance checks and are used</p>

	<p>to provide coaching, retraining, and technical assistance when needed. If trends of over-identification or under-identification are identified, Student Staffing Specialists intervene by working directly with schools to provide targeted support. This multi-layered approach ensures validity in participation decisions, addresses challenges proactively, and promotes consistent practices across Volusia County Schools.</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>During the 2024–25 school year, Volusia County Schools implemented several improvement activities to strengthen decision-making related to student assessment participation. The enhanced district IEP process to ensure FAPE implementation of services from Day 1 and maintains consistency and accuracy when students enter Volusia County Schools from other schools or districts. The enhanced transfer process procedures for Student Staffing Specialists include a thorough review of incoming IEP documentation, contacting the previous schools and asking probing questions (classroom environments, staffing and supports, behavioral/functional information, and other contextual info regarding student placement). Student Staffing Specialists will then log detailed notes in FOCUS to summarize their findings, escalate if needed when assistance is needed due to questions or uncertainties of placement, supports, or how to implement the IEP.</p> <p>The District Data Review Process was developed to provide students with more access to the general curriculum, ensuring FAPE for all students, and reduce inappropriate placements on Access Points Instruction and Florida Standards Alternate Assessment (FAA).</p> <p>In addition, a report that focuses on 2 Consecutive FTE Reporting periods was created to improve monitoring and accountability of student assessment participation and service delivery to validate student participation in Access Points Instruction. Volusia County Schools continues to provide multiple trainings to Student Staffing Specialists and administrators to ensure they have a strong understanding of FAA participation criteria so that IEP teams feel supported in making appropriate determinations of student placement to meet student FAPE. These activities have been effective in increasing consistency across schools, improving data accuracy, and strengthening supports for</p>

	<p>students, which has contributed to a reduction in inappropriate FAA participation.</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>Volusia County School' Action Plan uses a.District.Data.Review process that requires information regarding a student's global and significant delays to be documented and reviewed by a District Data Review Team. The District Data Review Team then provides feedback to the IEP committee for consideration and determination of the appropriate curriculum and assessment pathway. The District Data Review Team reviews all evaluation data and student performance data, as well as interventions and strategies used with the student, to provide guidance to the IEP team in determining the appropriate curriculum and assessment pathway. The District Data Review Team is comprised of District ESE Elementary and Secondary Coordinators, ESE Compliance Coordinator, as well as the District Coordinator of School Psychologists. Based on the information reviewed, the District Data Review Team collaborates with appropriate staff to ensure that students are not inappropriately identified as eligible for Access Points/FAA. Students with primary exceptionalities of SLD, Language Impaired, Visually Impaired, and/or E/BD are not appropriate for Access Points/FAA. Students with scores on FAST assessments higher than a level 1 are not eligible.</p> <p>Volusia County School District recognized the need to address the inappropriate identification of students participating in Access Points. The District Placement and ESE Program TOAs bring information/data about a student that the IEP team is considering placing onto Access Points. The District Data Review Team reviews the data and provides feedback to the IEP team as to whether there is sufficient information to place the student. While our District has been able to reduce the numbers of students placed in Access courses with primary exceptionalities considered inappropriate for Access courses, we have also decreased the numbers of students with all other exceptionalities as well, except for ASD.</p> <p>Volusia County Schools will address disproportionality by auditing the IEPs for the subgroup indicated to be sure our Access More Intensive Services (MIS) Process is in place, following the guidelines presented in Rule 6A-1.0943, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), January 7,2022 memo. Our VCS Access More Intensive Services (MIS) process consists of our District ESE coordinators, program Teachers-On-Assignment (TOAs), District psychologist, and additional assistance from our the Assistant Director of ESE, and a FLDOE representative, to analyze our current methods of identifying students that we suspect require a</p>

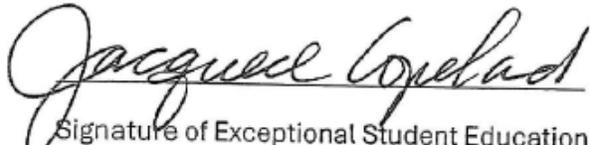
	<p>modified curriculum and assessment to ensure that our rubrics are culturally sensitive and that all assessment protocols are being followed with fidelity.</p> <p>Following the analysis of our current protocols, professional development will be provided to all ESE administrators and teachers to ensure students are evaluated with objectivity and without bias. Our Access More Intensive Services (MIS) process: A student’s IEP team observes multiple deficits in curriculum and learning, social emotional, independent functioning, communication, and, possibly, in their health. Evaluations or re-evaluations begin. Documentation of the implementation of 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 adaptation of content, methodology, or delivery of instruction and the student exhibits very limited to no progress in the general education curriculum standards. The student’s IEP team collaborates to complete Volusia County’s More.Intensive.Services.(MIS).process and collects all necessary data. The data collected matches Rule 6A-1.0943, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), January 7,2022 memo. The data collected is sent to the District Data Review Team, consisting of ESE coordinators and district psychologists. The district team evaluates data and sends feedback back to the school’s IEP team and student staffing specialist for their school. The school IEP team, which includes the parent and student, with the student staffing specialist facilitating, holds an IEP meeting to make a team decision for the student.</p> <p>The people in charge of monitoring the Action Plan are: Stephanie DiGrazia--ESE Coordinator of Secondary Programs, Lida Grillo—ESE Elementary Coordinator of Elementary Programs, and James Barringer—Coordinator of School Psychological Services.</p>
19.	<p>What professional learning will your staff complete for the 2025-26 SY?</p> <p>To decrease the percentage of students on the Florida Standards Alternate Assessment (FAA), Volusia County Schools will provide targeted professional learning that focuses on strengthening staff knowledge of FAA participation criteria to ensure accurate and appropriate eligibility decisions. Student staffing specialists will receive specialized training to lead IEP teams in applying the state’s criteria consistently, ensuring that FAA placement is reserved only for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. In addition, staff will engage in Datafolio and Performance Task training (in-person and virtually through the Learning Management System) to enhance their ability to administer these assessments with fidelity to avoid any misadministration of the exams.</p>

	<p>These professional learning opportunities will equip educators with the tools and expertise needed to support students in accessing the general curriculum through Access Points Instruction while maintaining fidelity to FAA participation guidelines.</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>To ensure the reduction of students participating in the Florida Standards Alternate Assessment (FAA), Volusia County Schools will provide professional development to IEP teams on participation criteria and diploma implications, while requiring district-level review and approval for all new FAA recommendations through the MIS process. The district will conduct quarterly reviews of participation data and require schools to submit justification for any student considered for the FAA. In addition, the Volusia County Schools will expand access to academic and behavioral support by strengthening MTSS/RTI implementation, increasing inclusive instructional practices, and leveraging assistive technology. Transition planning will be emphasized at IEP meetings beginning in middle school, with a focus on connecting students and families to career exploration, vocational programs, and community-based learning opportunities that align with standard diploma pathways.</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

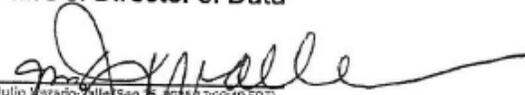
10/1/25
Date


Signature of Exceptional Student Education Director

9/25/25
Date


Signature of Director of Data

9.25.25
Date

Signature: 
Email: jnazario@volusia.k12.fl.us

Julia Nazario (All) (Sep 25, 2025 17:00:49 EDT)