

Florida Department of Education

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

LEA: Walton County

**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? <b>The IEP team reviews all data as required based upon the AA-AAAS participation checklist and ensures documentation in present levels, accommodations and supplementary aids and services matches justification on the AA-AAAS participation checklist within the IEP.</b>
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? <b>ELA: 1.5%</b> <b>Math: 1.3%</b> <b>Science: 1%</b>
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? <b>ELA: 1.4%</b> <b>Math: 1.2%</b> <b>Science: 1%</b>
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? <b>ELA: 99.0%</b> <b>Math: 98.3%</b> <b>Science: 98.6%</b>

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><b>ELA: 99%</b>  <b>Math: 98.3%</b>  <b>Science: 98.6%</b></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). <b>Yes, Walton County is near several large military bases including Eglin Air Force Base, Hurlburt Field, Tyndall Air Force Base and Duke Field. Walton County total population growth since 2020 has had some of the fastest growth in the state with an estimated growth rate of 21% since 2020 which has contributed to significant increase in student enrollment. ESE enrollment numbers have also increased by approximately 37% since 2020. Current percentage of students with disabilities is 16.7% of our total population. Also, a contract with a neighboring county ended in SY 23-24 for ESE Center School Placement resulting in a return of 9 students that increased the number of students participating in the FAA.</b></p>
7.	<p>List the percentages of the following primary/secondary exceptionalty categories in your LEA for students participating in the FAA in the 2025-26 SY for each of the following:</p> <p><b>Intellectual Disability (InD): 52%</b>  <b>Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): 44%</b>  <b>Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI): 0%</b>  <b>Other Health Impairment (OHI): 4%</b></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? <b>Yes, participation rates vary but this is most likely due to population growth patterns county-wide. The fastest growing population center of Freeport, FL has the highest number of elementary students participating in FAA, but this is also the fastest growing city within Walton County and the largest elementary school at 1100+ students in grades K-4. Student enrollment in middle and high schools in the northern part of the county has also increased resulting in larger numbers of students participating in FAA in the middle and high schools.</b></p>

	<p><b>Total numbers participating in FAA remains quite low at 102 students currently projected for SY 25-26.</b></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><b>No, the LEA is not aware of disproportionate representation of students in these sub-groups. It may appear that there is disproportionate representation of Pacific Islanders taking the FAA but the number of students in the target group (1) compared to the total number of students taking FAA (102) skews the risk ratio especially in comparison to the target group numbers of students taking the FAST or EOC assessments.</b></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. <b>Walton was not below 95% participation in all assessments for students with disabilities for 2024-25. ELA participation was at 99%, Math at 98.3% and Science at 98.6%. Current Tier 1 attendance practices are successful at encouraging attendance and ensuring high assessment participation across all categories.</b></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.) <b>The IEP teams, under the guidance of the ESE Staffing Specialist, utilize the Checklist for Course &amp; Assessment Participation to ensure the proper students are taking the FAA. This checklist is also embedded in the PEER platform which is utilized for each IEP completed in Walton County. Each IEP team must answer each question and provide supporting evidence for each criterion point on the participation checklist within the IEP.</b></p>

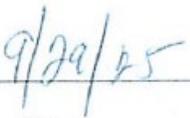
<p>12.</p>	<p>Describe the process and required evidence of finding a student eligible to participate in the FAA using all the criteria in Rule 6A-1.0943, Florida Administrative Code.</p> <p><b>Walton County follows the requirements of Florida Rule 6A.1.0943 which requires a statistically significant cognitive score at or below the 1st percentile (standard score <math>\leq 67</math>), or an approved alternative procedure. Evidence of receiving specially designed instruction on Access Points for two consecutive reporting periods is also required. Documentation of limited progress despite intensive interventions, supplementary aids, and assistive technology is reviewed by the IEP team using the Checklist for Assessment and Course participation. The rule also requires confirmation that the student was present for instruction and taught by a certified teacher for the required percentages of the prior school year. The rationale is explained to parents, along with explanation of the potential impacts of the decision to instruct on Access Points and assessment on Alternate Achievement Standards before written consent is obtained from parents.</b></p>
<p>13.</p>	<p>Has your LEA removed students from participating in the FAA using state guidelines? If so, please provide more information, such as how many, what process was followed and any other feedback. <b>Yes, a student was removed from Access Points and Alternate Achievement assessment this school year because upon return from private school placement, she no longer met updated Florida eligibility requirements. The IEP team completed a formal re-evaluation and reviewed all available data following the requirements of the Course and Assessment checklist and previously outlined procedures.</b></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? <b>Parents, families and students are involved in the IEP team discussion regarding the criteria for instruction in Access Points and participation in the FAA to include the similarities and differences in Access Points and B.E.S.T. standards. Parents are provided information on the implications of the instruction and participation annually through the Parental Consent form for Instruction in the State Standards Access Points Curriculum and Florida Alternate Assessment Administration. If a language other than English is needed, the form will be verbally translated and/or translated using an electronic platform to translate into the native language.</b></p>

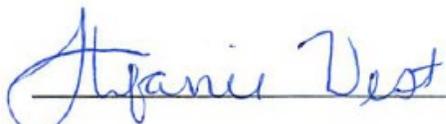
15.	<p>Describe how IEP teams will review the assessment data of students with advanced proficiency or perfect scores in one or more content area, and consider whether these students could participate in the general statewide progress monitoring (FAST) or EOCs with necessary supports and accommodations. <b>Assessment data will be reviewed annually as part of the IEP team determination regarding the appropriate assessment for the student to participate in that will allow demonstration of mastery of the instructional standards. Advance proficiency or perfect scores will be analyzed by the IEP team to consider whether the student could participate in the FAST or EOCs instead of FAA. This data will be reviewed along with IEP goal progress data, work samples and other data points related to student achievement and mastery of instructional standards and goals.</b></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). <b>The Staffing Specialist enters the data into the SIS following IEP meeting which will allow for accurate representation of valid numbers of students taking the FAA. Numbers are verified at FTE survey period 2 and 3 as well as during submission of FAA Assurances by the ESE Coordinator.</b></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. <b>Walton continues to adhere to the established guidelines and criteria provided to IEP teams to determine the appropriate instruction and assessment participation. Annual training and review of the Course and Assessment checklist is provided to Staffing Specialists and ESE teachers. As always, the IEP teams make the final decision based upon the data presented to ensure individualized decisions are made to address specific student needs.</b></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. <b>Walton County's action plan is to maintain and/or reduce the district-wide FAA participation to or below 1.0%, provided this meets the individualized needs of our students. Data will be reviewed at each FTE Survey period 2 and 3 as well as during self-assessment and submission of FAA Assurances. Data sources will be the district SIS and PEER. This will be monitored by the ESE Coordinator.</b></p>

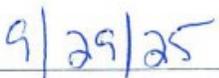
19.	What professional learning will your staff complete for the 2025-26 SY? <b>District Staffing Specialists will participate in annual in-house refresher training related to AA-AAAS participation criteria, data collection and documentation of evidence on IEP. Walton will continue to access supports available through FDLRS and the Access Project to ensure staff understands assessment decision making criteria and how to meet individualized learners' needs through supplementary aids and supports, specialized instruction, assistive technology and other accommodations.</b>
20.	What other additional actions does your LEA plan to implement to ensure the reduction of the percentage of students participating in the FAA? <b>A district review team will review data submitted by IEP teams to ensure that all participation criteria has been addressed prior to IEP team determination meeting.</b>

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