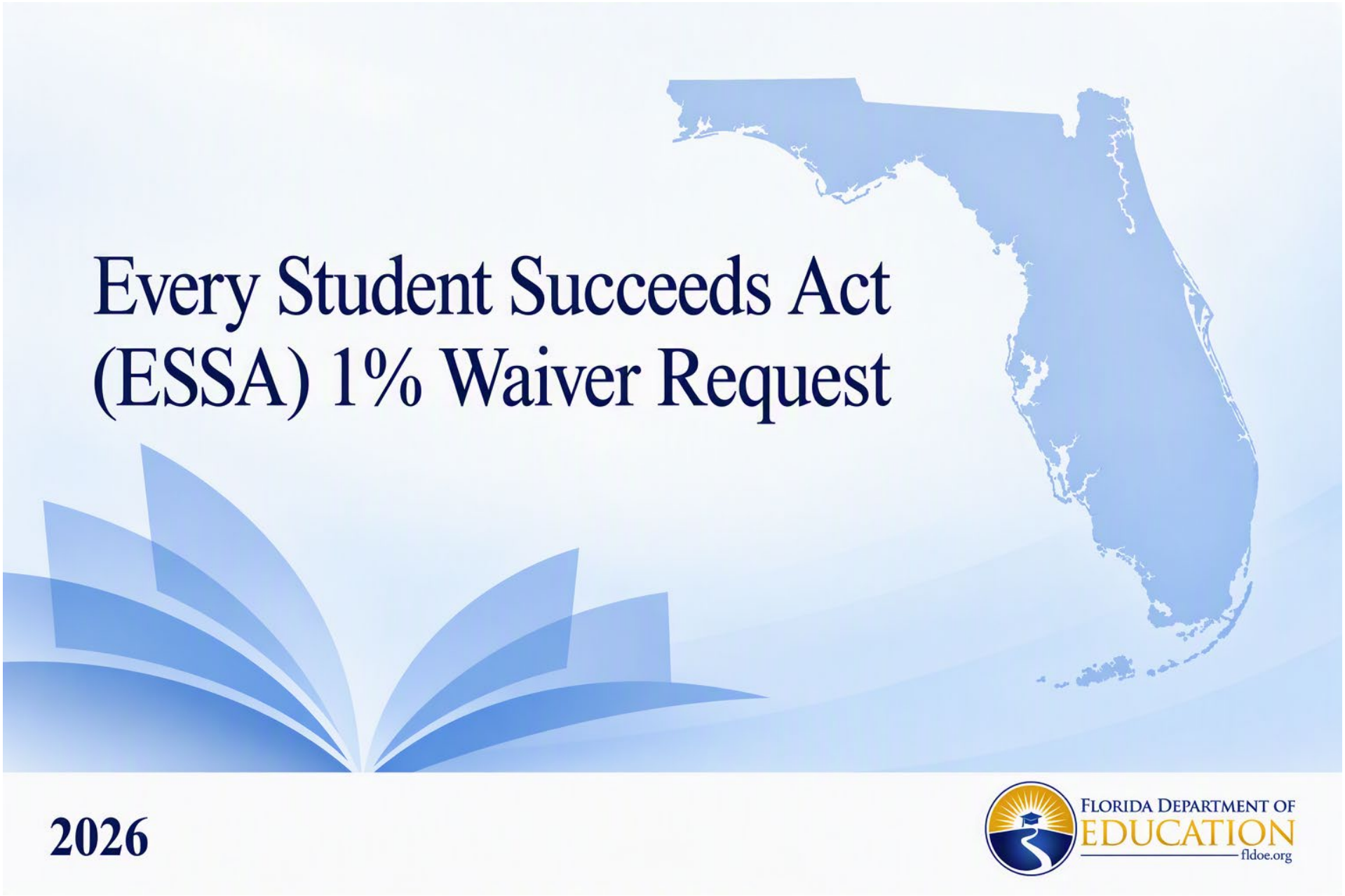

Every Student Succeeds Act
(ESSA) 1% Waiver Request
2026
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
fldoe.org

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Introduction and State Context

Florida is the third-largest state in the country, with nearly 2.8 million students and 67 traditional local educational agencies (LEAs). In the 2025-26 School Year (SY), Florida had 465,038 students with disabilities (SWD), which represents 16.8 percent of the student population, and an increase in the number of SWD from the previous SY. As shown in Table 1, public school enrollment decreased by over 87,000 students, while the number of SWD increased by over 16,000.

Florida's school choice programs include the Family Empowerment Scholarship for Educational Options (FES-EO), Florida Tax Credit Scholarship (FTC), Family Empowerment Scholarship for Students with Unique Abilities (FES-UA) and Personalized Education Program (PEP). For the 2025-2026 SY, 312,166 students received the FES-EO/FTC scholarship and 76,894 students received a PEP scholarship. In 2014, Florida became the second state in the nation to create an Education Savings Account program for children with unique abilities. In its inaugural year, the program served 1,491 students. In 2025-2026 SY, 148,520 students received the FES-UA Scholarship, making it one of the largest programs for students with special needs in the United States.

Students who use these scholarships are publicly funded but not enrolled in public schools and are not required to participate in statewide standardized assessments, including the Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA). The FAA participation percentage depends on both the number of FAA participants and the total assessed population. A smaller assessed population can increase that percentage even when fewer students take the FAA. FDOE continues to examine both measures and validate the accuracy of student assessment decisions. Only students who meet Florida's participation criteria for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities may participate in the FAA.

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Table 1. Public School Enrollment and Students with Disabilities

School Year	Total Number of Students Enrolled	Number of Students Identified as SWD	Percentage of Students Identified as SWD
2016-17	2,816,824	377,153	13.40%
2017-18	2,833,115	385,545	13.60%
2018-19	2,846,857	401,745	14.10%
2019-20	2,858,952	414,352	14.50%
2020-21	2,791,687	406,944	14.60%
2021-22	2,833,179	415,980	14.70%
2022-23	2,870,507	428,213	14.90%
2023-24	2,872,309	441,347	15.40%
2024-25	2,859,655	448,482	15.70%
2025-26	2,772,225	465,038	16.80%
Change from Last Year	-87,430	+16,556	+1.10 percentage points
Change since 2016-17	-44,599	+87,885	+3.40 percentage points

Source: FDOE, Division of Accountability, Research and Measurement (ARM), Survey 2.

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Request for the 1% Waiver

The Florida Department of Education (FDOE) requests a one-year waiver of the statewide 1.0 percent participation cap for alternate assessments aligned with alternate academic standards (AA-AAAS) in English language arts (ELA), mathematics, and science for the 2026-2027 SY. FDOE has been actively involved in providing support to LEAs to ensure adherence to guidelines. FDOE has implemented various initiatives, including an annual assurance process, 1% Data Discussions and revisions to Rule 6A-1.0943, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), to enhance the assessment process for SWD. FDOE has also offered extensive monitoring, tiered support and technical assistance to LEAs, in an effort to reduce the number of students participating in Florida's statewide, standardized alternate assessment. Furthermore, FDOE has collaborated with LEA exceptional student education (ESE) directors to identify trends in participation data and is seeking a waiver to support continued efforts in reducing assessment participation and providing appropriate instruction to every student.

FDOE will continue to engage the State Advisory Panel and content experts and will convene a workgroup that will work collaboratively to develop and revise resources and strategies for implementation of state guidelines. Strategies include the development of an individual educational plan (IEP) decision-making guide for IEP teams, the development of a parent and family flyer for students with most significant cognitive disabilities, and the enhancement of the LEA annual justification process.

Florida's FAA participation rates have slightly increased over the previous year. With increased participation in school choice options that do not require participation in statewide standardized assessments, and the increase in the number of SWD in public schools while the overall student population of public schools is decreasing, the slight increase in FAA participation can be explained.

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Requirement 1. Submission Deadline

Authority: 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(c)(4)(i)

(4) If a State anticipates that it will exceed the cap under paragraph (c)(2) of this section with respect to any subject for which assessments are administered under 34 C.F.R. § 200.2(a)(1) in any school year, the State may request that the Secretary waive the cap for the relevant subject, pursuant to section 8401 of the ESEA, for one year. Such request must—

(i) Be submitted at least 90 days prior to the start of the State's testing window for the relevant subject.

Submission Timing and Verification

Florida's Response	Evidence
FDOE will submit its waiver request for ELA, mathematics and science at least 90 days before the applicable testing window. Planned submission date: December 1, 2026. Actual submission date: _____.	The published 2026-27 assessment schedule identifies March 1, 2027, as the start of the spring FAA Performance Task window for grades 3-8 ELA and mathematics and grades 5 and 8 science. High school Performance Task testing begins March 8, 2027. December 1, 2026, is 90 days before March 1, 2027.

Reference: Florida Statewide Assessment Program, 2026-2027 Schedule, August 27, 2026: https://www.fldoe.org/file/5663/2627StatewideAssessmentSched.pdf.

Requirement 2A. Statewide Subgroup Participation Data

Authority: 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(c)(4)(ii)(A)

(ii) Provide State-level data, from the current or previous school year, to show—

(A) The number and percentage of students in each subgroup of students defined in section 1111(c)(2)(A), (B), and (D) of the ESEA who took the AA-AAAS.

Tables 2-4 present 2025-26 subgroup participation counts, rates and risk ratios. A risk ratio compares the FAA participation rate of a target subgroup to the rate of all assessed students outside that subgroup. A risk ratio of 1.0 indicates no difference in participation rates. Higher or lower risk ratios may warrant review of participation patterns, subgroup size and assessment decision-making, but do not by themselves indicate inappropriate assessment decisions.

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Table 2. 2025-26 Florida Alternate Assessment Participation by Subgroup — English Language Arts

ELA							
Student Subgroup	Target Group			Comparison Group			Risk Ratio
	FAA Participants	All Assessed Students	FAA Participation Rate	FAA Participants	All Assessed Students	FAA Participation Rate	
American Indian/ Native Alaskan	46	3,620	1.27%	23,259	1,636,127	1.42%	0.89
Asian	655	50,458	1.30%	22,650	1,589,289	1.43%	0.91
Pacific Islander	39	2,771	1.41%	23,266	1,636,976	1.42%	0.99
Black/African American	7,005	335,166	2.09%	16,300	1,304,581	1.25%	1.67
White	6,412	545,235	1.18%	16,893	1,094,512	1.54%	0.76
Multi-racial	981	71,547	1.37%	22,324	1,568,200	1.42%	0.96
Hispanic	8,167	630,950	1.29%	15,138	1,008,797	1.50%	0.86
Economically Disadvantaged	13,913	802,066	1.73%	9,392	837,681	1.12%	1.55
English Language Learners	2,628	319,138	0.82%	20,677	1,320,609	1.57%	0.53

Source: FDOE, ARM.

FDOE was over 1.0 in two target groups in 2024-25 and is over 1.0 in two target groups in 2025-26. For the two target groups that are over 1.0, FDOE realized a decrease in the risk ratio for both groups (Black/African American and Economically Disadvantaged). This is a positive trend in the data.

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Table 3. 2025-26 Florida Alternate Assessment Participation by Subgroup — Mathematics

Mathematics							
Student Subgroup	Target Group			Comparison Group			Risk Ratio
	FAA Participants	All Assessed Students	FAA Participation Rate	FAA Participants	All Assessed Students	FAA Participation Rate	
American Indian/ Native Alaskan	51	3,388	1.51%	22,816	1,541,574	1.48%	1.02
Asian	645	45,292	1.42%	22,222	1,499,670	1.48%	0.96
Pacific Islander	30	2,569	1.17%	22,837	1,542,393	1.48%	0.79
Black/African American	6,788	321,809	2.11%	16,079	1,223,153	1.31%	1.60
White	6,349	505,235	1.26%	16,518	1,039,727	1.59%	0.79
Multi-racial	951	67,259	1.41%	21,916	1,477,703	1.48%	0.95
Hispanic	8,053	599,410	1.34%	14,814	945,552	1.57%	0.86
Economically Disadvantaged	13,608	768,051	1.77%	9,259	776,911	1.19%	1.49
English Language Learners	2,548	313,821	0.81%	20,319	1,231,141	1.65%	0.49

Source: FDOE, ARM.

FDOE was over 1.0 in two target groups in 2024-25 and is over 1.0 in three target groups in 2025-26. For the three target groups that are over 1.0, FDOE realized a decrease in the risk ratio for two groups (Black/African American and Economically Disadvantaged. This is a positive trend in the data. The target group newly over 1.0 is American Indian/Native Alaskan (.99 in 2024-25 to 1.02 in 2025-26).

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Table 4. 2025-26 Florida Alternate Assessment Participation by Subgroup — Science

Science							
Student Subgroup	Target Group			Comparison Group			Risk Ratio
	FAA Participants	All Assessed Students	FAA Participation Rate	FAA Participants	All Assessed Students	FAA Participation Rate	
American Indian/ Native Alaskan	20	1,353	1.48%	9,115	599,957	1.52%	0.97
Asian	275	18,961	1.45%	8,860	582,349	1.52%	0.95
Pacific Islander	15	1,055	1.42%	9,120	600,255	1.52%	0.94
Black/African American	2,667	121,403	2.20%	6,468	479,907	1.35%	1.63
White	2,685	202,685	1.32%	6,450	398,625	1.62%	0.82
Multi-racial	389	25,434	1.53%	8,746	575,876	1.52%	1.01
Hispanic	3,084	230,419	1.34%	6,051	370,891	1.63%	0.82
Economically Disadvantaged	5,414	284,357	1.90%	3,721	316,953	1.17%	1.62
English Language Learners	862	107,847	0.80%	8,273	493,463	1.68%	0.48

Source: FDOE, ARM.

FDOE was over 1.0 in four target groups in 2024-25 and is over 1.0 in three target groups for 2025-26. For the two target groups that are still over 1.0, FDOE realized a decrease in the risk ratio for these target groups (Black/African American and Economically Disadvantaged). Two of the target groups over 1.0 in 2024-25 are under 1.0 in 2025-26 (American Indian/Native Alaskan and Pacific Islander). This is a positive trend in the data. The target group newly over 1.0 is Multi-racial (.98 in 2024-25 to 1.02 in 2025-26).

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Requirement 2B. Overall Assessment Participation

Authority: 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(c)(4)(ii)(B)

(ii) Provide State-level data, from the current or previous school year, to show—

(B) The State has measured the achievement of at least 95 percent of all students and 95 percent of students in the children with disabilities subgroup under section 1111(c)(2)(C) of the ESEA who are enrolled in grades for which the assessment is required under 34 C.F.R. § 200.5(a).

Florida's Response	Evidence
The reported 2025-26 overall assessment participation exceeds 95 percent for all students and SWD in each requested subject. From 2024-25 to 2025-26, FAA counts increased by 49 in ELA and decreased by 435 in mathematics and 273 in science. The overall assessed student population in Florida declined by 42,751 in ELA, 45,436 in math and 33,409 in science.	Tables 2-4 present subgroup counts, participation rates and risk ratios. Table 5 presents overall assessment participation for all students and SWD. Tables 6-8 present statewide assessed counts and FAA-only participation.

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Table 5. Overall Statewide Assessment Participation Rates

Year	ELA			Mathematics			Science		
	All students tested	SWD tested	FAA only	All students tested	SWD tested	FAA only	All students tested	SWD tested	FAA only
2017-18	97.57%	94.99%	1.40%	96.95%	95.00%	1.53%	97.36%	94.33%	1.46%
2018-19	99.20%	98.40%	1.54%	98.40%	97.30%	1.63%	99.20%	96.10%	1.56%
2019-20*	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
2020-21	95.70%	92.90%	1.40%	92.90%	89.90%	1.54%	91.60%	87.50%	1.56%
2021-22	98.60%	97.40%	1.46%	97.20%	95.70%	1.60%	96.50%	94.50%	1.53%
2022-23	98.30%	97.00%	1.42%	97.90%	96.70%	1.48%	97.50%	95.70%	1.51%
2023-24	98.39%	97.15%	1.38%	98.01%	96.73%	1.44%	97.62%	95.81%	1.42%
2024-25	98.44%	97.13%	1.39%	98.06%	96.71%	1.48%	97.65%	95.85%	1.48%
2025-26	98.47%	97.10%	1.42%	98.01%	96.49%	1.50%	97.64%	95.62%	1.52%

Source: FDOE, ARM.

*The 2019-20 assessments were canceled under FDOE Emergency Order No. 2020-EO-01.

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Table 6. Statewide Florida Alternate Assessment Participation — English Language Arts

ELA			
School Year	**Number of Total Students Tested**	**Number of Students Whose Only Subject Text was an FAA**	**Percentage of Students Whose Only Subject Text was an FAA**
2018-19	1,705,251	26,243	1.54%
2019-20*	/	/	/
2020-21	1,637,903	22,876	1.40%
2021-22	1,697,158	24,790	1.46%
2022-23	1,691,688	24,138	1.43%
2023-24	1,692,098	23,328	1.38%
2024-25	1,678,754	23,256	1.39%
2025-26	1,636,003	23,305	1.42%
Change from Last Year	-42,751	+49	+0.03 percentage points
Change Since 2018-19	-69,248	-2,938	-0.12 percentage points

Source: FDOE, ARM.

*The 2019-20 assessments were canceled under FDOE Emergency Order No. 2020-EO-01.

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Table 7. Statewide Florida Alternate Assessment Participation — Mathematics

Mathematics			
School Year	**Number of Total Students Tested**	**Number of Students Whose Only Subject Text was an FAA**	**Percentage of Students Whose Only Subject Text was an FAA**
2018-19	1,576,300	25,744	1.63%
2019-20*	/	/	/
2020-21	1,492,811	22,923	1.54%
2021-22	1,539,116	24,556	1.60%
2022-23	1,583,047	23,441	1.48%
2023-24	1,572,070	22,618	1.44%
2024-25	1,569,857	23,302	1.48%
2025-26	1,524,421	22,867	1.50%
Change from Last Year	-45,436	-435	+0.02 percentage points
Change Since 2018-19	-51,879	-2,877	-0.13 percentage points

Source: FDOE, ARM.

*The 2019-20 assessments were canceled under FDOE Emergency Order No. 2020-EO-01.

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Table 8. Statewide Florida Alternate Assessment Participation — Science

Science			
School Year	**Number of Total Students Tested**	**Number of Students Whose Only Subject Text was an FAA**	**Percentage of Students Whose Only Subject Text was an FAA**
2018-19	616,991	9,621	1.56%
2019-20*	/	/	/
2020-21	577,461	8,986	1.56%
2021-22	622,568	9,506	1.53%
2022-23	620,713	9,377	1.51%
2023-24	617,695	8,802	1.42%
2024-25	633,244	9,408	1.49%
2025-26	599,835	9,135	1.52%
Change from Last Year	-33,409	-273	+0.03 percentage points
Change Since 2018-19	-17,156	-486	-0.04 percentage points

Source: FDOE, ARM.

*The 2019-20 assessments were canceled under FDOE Emergency Order No. 2020-EO-01.

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Requirement 3A. Participation Guideline Verification

Authority: 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(c)(4)(iii)(A)

(iii) Include assurances from the State that it has verified that each LEA that the State anticipates will assess more than 1.0 percent of its assessed students in any subject for which assessments are administered under 34 C.F.R. § 200.2(a)(1) in that school year using an AA-AAAS—

(A) Followed each of the State's guidelines under paragraph (d) of this section, except paragraph (d)(6).

Florida's Response	Evidence
Before submission of the 1% waiver request, FDOE will continue to verify that every LEA anticipated to assess more than 1.0 percent of assessed students using the FAA in a requested subject has followed Florida's participation guidelines under Rule 6A-1.0943, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), and the applicable requirements of 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(d), except paragraph (d)(6). FDOE will verify the LEAs' Exceptional Student Education (ESE) policies and procedures, superintendent assurances that the appropriate students are being assessed on the alternate assessment, justifications on why the LEA is anticipated to exceed the 1.0 percent threshold; that LEA staff are participating in FDOE approved technical assistance and professional learning sessions. FDOE will continue to audit a random sample of student records through the LEA monitoring process to ensure students are being assessed appropriately.	FDOE requires each LEA to annually justify if they anticipate exceeding 1.0 percent, identify any trends in subgroup participation and the reasons for exceeding the cap. LEAs must submit an action plan with benchmarks to demonstrate progress on a defined schedule. The Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS) reviews ESE policies and procedures and uses the AA-AAAS compliance protocol to validate individual educational plan (IEP) assessment decisions, cognitive disability evidence, required instructional supports, course enrollment, parent consent and exclusionary criteria. BEESS selects student records to review and compare LEA source documents to ensure and issue findings as appropriate.

Requirement 3B. Assurance to Address Disproportionality

Authority: 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(c)(4)(iii)(B)

(iii) Include assurances from the State that it has verified that each LEA that the State anticipates will assess more than 1.0 percent of its assessed students in any subject for which assessments are administered under 34 C.F.R. § 200.2(a)(1) in that school year using an AA-AAAs—

(B) Will address any disproportionality in the percentage of students in any subgroup under section 1111(c)(2)(A), (B) or (D) of the ESEA taking an AA-AAAS.

Florida's Response	Evidence
FDOE will address disproportionality in FAA participation among the required ESEA subgroups. Before submitting the 1% waiver request, FDOE will verify that every LEA anticipated to exceed 1.0 percent in a requested subject has an action plan to address identified disproportionality and students are being appropriately assessed. Each LEA's action plan must include benchmarks and demonstrate progress on a defined schedule.	Tables 2-4 identify the highest statewide risk ratios are for Black/African American students—1.67 in ELA, 1.60 in mathematics and 1.63 in science—and economically disadvantaged students—1.55 in ELA, 1.49 in mathematics and 1.62 in science. Other ratios above 1.0 will also be reviewed in context. Each LEA anticipated to exceed 1.0 percent will review subject-specific subgroup data and submit an action plan with responsible staff, deadlines and measures of effectiveness. FDOE will verify these necessary actions through the justification and monitoring process. Follow-up will assess implementation and the accuracy of student-level decisions. Subgroup membership will not determine FAA eligibility.

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Requirement 4A. Improve Participation Guideline Implementation

Authority: 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(c)(4)(iv)(A)

(iv) Include a plan and timeline by which—

(A) The State will improve the implementation of its guidelines under paragraph (d) of this section, including by reviewing and, if necessary, revising its definition under paragraph (d)(1), so that the State meets the cap in paragraph (c)(2) of this section in each subject for which assessments are administered under § 200.2(a)(1) in future school years.

Florida's Response	Evidence
Florida audits a random sample of student records as part of our monitoring process to ensure implementation of state guidelines. BEESS will continue to engage with stakeholders on any potential rule or guideline revisions.	Florida revised Rule 6A-1.0943, F.A.C., on June 10, 2021, to clarify the definition of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The definition addresses global cognitive impairment affecting multiple areas of functioning across settings, verified through a global cognitive score within the first percentile rank (a standard, full-scale score of 67 or under), or an FDOE-approved LEA procedure when a global, full-scale intelligence quotient score is unattainable. In September 2025, FDOE published Frequently Asked Questions About Access Points – Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (AP-AAAS) and FAA to support informed parent decisions. By January 2027, BEESS will disseminate participation technical assistance and review FAA assurances. January through March record reviews will identify errors requiring individualized correction and ensure students are assessed appropriately. By June 2027, FDOE will evaluate recurring errors and revise guidance, training or monitoring tools as needed. By September 2027, BEESS and ARM will review the 2026-27 results in the following areas:

Florida's Response	Evidence
	• FAA participation; • Access course enrollment; • Parental consent; and • Exceptionality identification of a most significant cognitive disability (i.e., traumatic brain injury, intellectual disability, autism or other health impairment). BEESS will take action with specific LEAs based on these results.

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Requirement 4B. Additional Local Educational Agency Support and Oversight

Authority: 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(c)(4)(iv)(B)

(iv) Include a plan and timeline by which—

(B) The State will take additional steps to support and provide appropriate oversight to each LEA that the State anticipates will assess more than 1.0 percent of its assessed students in a given subject in a school year using an alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards to ensure that only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities take an AA-AAAS. The State must describe how it will monitor and regularly evaluate each such LEA to ensure that the LEA provides sufficient training such that school staff who participate as members of an IEP team or other placement team understand and implement the guidelines established by the State under paragraph (d) of this section so that all students are appropriately assessed.

Florida's Response	Evidence
FDOE will continue to provide technical assistance and oversight to each LEA anticipated to exceed 1.0 percent participation in the alternate assessment through our monitoring process.	October-November 2026: BEESS will identify all LEAs anticipated to exceed 1.0 percent and complete verification of assurances before submission. January-March 2027: BEESS will review assurances and random student records through FDOE's monitoring process. FDOE will ensure all LEA staff participate in approved technical assistance and professional learning. February-May 2027: BEESS will conduct LEA data discussions, evaluate action plans and provide focused technical assistance. Record reviews will examine implementation of training. April-June 2027: BEESS will require correction of noncompliance as soon as possible and no later than one year after identification under 34 C.F.R. § 300.600(e), with earlier student-specific deadlines when applicable.

Requirement 4C. Address and Evaluate Disproportionality

Authority: 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(c)(4)(iv)(C)

(iv) Include a plan and timeline by which—

(C) The State will address any disproportionality in the percentage of students taking an AA-AAAS as identified through the data provided in accordance with paragraph (c)(4)(ii)(A) of this section; and

Florida's Response	Evidence
FDOE will continue to analyze subgroup trends and patterns, through student record reviews and evaluation of improvement activities through FDOE's monitoring process.	October-November 2026: BEESS will review available subgroup data and verify that each LEA anticipated to exceed 1.0 percent has a plan and timeline to address identified subgroup trends and patterns. February-March 2027: BEESS will discuss subgroup trends and patterns with each LEA anticipated to exceed 1.0 percent. By May 2027: BEESS will require action plans identifying the subgroup trends and patterns, benchmarks and measurable progress on a defined timeline. Quarterly through September 2027: BEESS will review each LEA anticipated to exceed 1.0 percent implementation evidence and subsequent records to ensure students are appropriately assessed.

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Implementation Timeline

The following timeline presents reported activities for 2025-26 and planned activities for 2026-27.

Date	Activity and Supporting Evidence
September 2025	BEESS published frequently asked questions for parents on Access Points, alternate academic achievement standards and the FAA on the FDOE 1% waiver webpage.
October 1-December 31, 2025	The Access Project provided LEAs with technical assistance on participation guidelines, Access Points instruction and FAA participation in Quarter 1.
November 4, 2025	BEESS provided small-sized LEAs with targeted technical assistance at the Regional Intellectual Disabilities Contacts Meeting.
November 5, 2025	BEESS provided medium-sized LEAs with targeted technical assistance at the Regional Intellectual Disabilities Contacts Meeting.
November 6, 2025	BEESS provided large/very large-sized LEAs with targeted technical assistance at the Regional Intellectual Disabilities Contacts Meeting.
November 13, 2025	BEESS conducted on-site monitoring of AP-AAAS implementation.
January 2026	FDOE staff reviewed and enhanced AA-AAAS monitoring processes.
January 1-March 31, 2026	The Access Project provided LEAs with technical assistance on participation guidelines, Access Points instruction and FAA participation in Quarter 2.
January 12-14, 2026	BEESS conducted on-site monitoring of AP-AAAS implementation.
January 19, 2026	LEAs uploaded FAA assurances to the Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE) for State review.
January 19-February 23, 2026	BEESS reviewed FAA assurance data and selected student records for desktop monitoring.
February 2026	BEESS developed LEA-level 1% data-analysis files.
February 23, 2026	BEESS sent student-selection correspondence for AA-AAAS desktop monitoring to all LEAs.

Date	Activity and Supporting Evidence
March 4, 2026	BEESS sent invitations for LEA 1% data discussions to all LEAs.
March-May 2026	BEESS conducted LEA 1% data discussions.
April 1-June 30, 2026	The Access Project provided LEAs with technical assistance on participation guidelines, Access Points instruction and FAA participation in Quarter 3.
April-May 2026	BEESS provided individualized technical assistance to LEAs with AA-AAAS monitoring findings.
June 2026	BEESS updated the 1% waiver webpage with the monitoring protocol.
June 22-24, 2026	BEESS provided technical assistance to all LEAs at the Bureau of School Improvement Academy in Orlando. The Access Project shared AA-AAAS resources at the expo.
July 1-September 30, 2026	The Access Project provided LEAs with technical assistance on participation guidelines, Access Points instruction and FAA participation in Quarter 4.
August 2026	ARM calculated the 1% participation data and provided the analysis to BEESS.
August-September 2026	FDOE participated in Institute for Small and Rural Districts meetings to support LEA improvement plans and appropriate FAA participation.
September 2026	BEESS provided technical assistance and in-person training with the Institute for Small and Rural Districts, Fernandina Region, on appropriate AA-AAAS participation.
September 15-16, 2026	BEESS hosted the ESE Leadership Summit for ESE and Student Services Directors in Orlando. The Access Project shared AA-AAAS resources at the expo.

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Improvement Plan

The following plan presents anticipated activities for 2026-27.

Date	Planned Activity
October 2026	In collaboration with the Institute for Small and Rural Districts, Heartland Region, FDOE staff continues to provide ongoing technical support and in-person training to ensure that only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are participating in AA-AAAS.
November 4, 2026	BEESS will provide small-sized LEAs with targeted technical assistance at the Regional Intellectual Disabilities Contacts Meeting.
November 5, 2026	BEESS will provide medium-sized LEAs with targeted technical assistance at the Regional Intellectual Disabilities Contacts Meeting.
November 6, 2026	BEESS will provide large/very large-sized LEAs with targeted technical assistance at the Regional Intellectual Disabilities Contacts Meeting.
December 2026	In collaboration with the Institute for Small and Rural Districts, Panhandle Region, FDOE staff will continue to provide ongoing technical support and in-person training to ensure that only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are participating in AA-AAAS.
January 2027	FDOE will continue to disseminate a guide for LEAs and IEP teams to use in determining participation in the FAA.
January 2027	LEAs will upload the 26-27 FAA Assurances into the state assessment system for AA-AAAS desktop monitoring.
January 2027	BEESS will complete the FAA Desktop Monitoring Random Student Selection from the 26-27 FAA Assurances.
January 2027	BEESS will provide LEAs with student selection correspondence for AA-AAAS desktop monitoring.
February 2027	BEESS will provide LEAs with the annual 1% data analysis files.
February 2027	BEESS will provide the annual 1% Data Discussion communications to all LEAs exceeding the 1% cap.

Date	Planned Activity
February-May 2027	BEESS will conduct the annual 1% Data Discussion meetings with all LEAs.
March 2027	BEESS will provide student selection correspondence for validation of AA-AAAS desktop monitoring to all LEAs with students participating in the 25-26 FAA.
April 2027	BEESS will conduct its Size-Alike Intellectual Disabilities Contacts' meetings.
April-May 2027	BEESS will provide individual technical assistance to all LEAs with findings of noncompliance for AA-AAAS desktop monitoring.
June 2027	FDOE staff will present at the 29th Annual Family Café, a large annual conference for parents, educators, and other stakeholders to provide an overview of AP-AAAS. Information will be presented to inform families of the eligibility criteria for students being instructed in the AP-AAAS and participating in the FAA. A high-level overview of access course enrollment versus class placement will be addressed and more information about available support for students with cognitive impairments in the regular education classroom will be provided. Potential implications of instruction in the AP-AAAS and participation in alternate assessments will also be discussed.
August 2027	ARM will provide the calculated 1% data analysis will be calculated and sent to BEESS.
August 2027	LEAs will update their ESE policies and procedures to include LEA justifications for exceeding the 1% cap.

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Public and Local Educational Agency Comments and Florida Department of Education Responses

FDOE will solicit public comment through the Florida Administrative Register and the BEESS webpage. LEA comments will be solicited through statewide communication, including a Chancellor's memorandum, BEESS Weekly and communication to LEA ESE directors. The final request will document the notice date, comment period, comments received and FDOE responses.

The proposed comment period closes November 6, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. The comment summary and FDOE responses will be completed after the period closes.

Submitted Comment	FDOE Response
[To be completed after the comment period]	[To be completed after review]

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Supporting Resources

Participation in Alternate Assessments Based on Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (AA-AAAS) — Compliance Protocol 2025-2026

Frequently Asked Questions About Access Points - Alternate Academic Achievement Standards and Florida Alternate Assessment

Florida 1% Cap on Alternate Assessment Participation Waiver

Public LEA Justifications, Data and Assurances

Approved Exceptional Student Education Policies and Procedures

Florida Statewide Assessment Program 2026-2027 Schedule

Federal Assessment Subjects and Parent Information — 34 C.F.R. § 200.2

Federal Assessment Grades and Frequency — 34 C.F.R. § 200.5

Federal Alternate Assessment Requirements — 34 C.F.R. § 200.6

Federal Noncompliance Correction Requirement — 34 C.F.R. § 300.600(e)

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