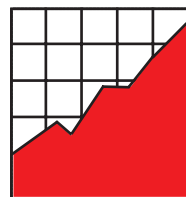


Educational Results for Students with Disabilities: What Do the Data Tell Us?



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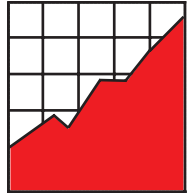
National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE)

Technical Report 23

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Disabilities: What Do the Data Tell Us?**

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Overview

Over the past 10 years there has been an increased demand for accountability for the results of education for all students, especially students with disabilities. There has also been a push to include students with disabilities in school reform activities. While substantial changes have been made in education, there is still a concern that reforms and change initiatives have not led to satisfactory results for students with disabilities.

Very limited data are available on the results of education for students with disabilities. The few reports available generally have presented a bleak picture of outcomes. Most of these reports are from special government studies rather than on-going data collection programs. In the mid-1980s, Congress mandated a longitudinal study that reported on the secondary school experiences of a sample of students with disabilities, as well as post-secondary outcomes in employment, education, and independent living. In this study, Wagner, Newman, D'Amigo, Jay, Butler-Nalin, Marder, and Cox (1991) found that only 15% of students with disabilities attended a post-secondary school one year after high school, 30% had not held a paid job, 40% of those employed only worked part-time, 1 in 5 overall had been arrested, and nearly 40% of youth left school by dropping out.

About one-fourth of youth with disabilities had been enrolled in post-secondary vocational schools or 2-year or 4-year colleges by three to five years after leaving high school, almost twice as many as had been enrolled in the first two years after high school (Wagner, D'Amico, Marder, Newman, & Blackorby, 1992). However, in the general population, nearly 68% of youth were enrolled in some type of post-secondary education. Three to five years after high school, only about one in nine students with disabilities had earned some type of post-secondary education degree, certificate, or license.

Results from the National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) revealed that adults with any type of disability were more likely than those in the total population to perform in the lowest literacy levels (Kirsch, Jungeblut, Jenkins, & Kolstad, 1993). The performance gap between those who reported having a particular disability and those in the total population ranged from 24 to 154 points across the scales used.

More recent analyses of the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS) of 1988 have shown that students identified by teachers and parents as having a disability earned lower high school grades in core courses, scored lower on math and reading proficiency tests, and were more likely to drop out of school than students without disabilities (Rossi, Herting, & Wolman, 1997). Finally, these students also had lower educational expectations for themselves and by their parents. The publication of these data and the lack of a more consistent set of data have resulted in a call to look more closely at the results of education for students with disabilities, with hopes of improving services for these students.

There is also limited information about the inclusion/exclusion of students with disabilities in large-scale assessments. The NELS 1988 sample of students in eighth grade was estimated to have excluded about 5.4% of all potential students due to either limitations in language proficiency or to mental and physical disabilities (Ingels, 1996). This was similar to the percentage of students excluded from the 1988 NAEP study (5.3 percent) (as cited in Ingels, 1996). It was estimated that approximately 2.0 percent were excluded due to language proficiency, leaving about 3.4 percent due to mental or physical disabilities. This translates roughly to about 34 percent of the students with disabilities—meaning that about 66% of these students were included. These figures may be overestimates since both studies excluded students in residential and separate school placements.

Policymakers, researchers, educators, and families attempted to address many needed educational reforms with the signing of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 (P.L. 105-17). This law called for a change in focus from “processes or access to education” to “outcomes,” and for major changes in public reporting and accountability procedures (Ysseldyke, Thurlow, Kozleski, & Reschly, 1998). As of July 1998, state education agencies were required to report on the participation and performance of students with disabilities on statewide assessments.

Numerous states are focusing their efforts on improving reporting practices, but several analyses have revealed that many states fall short of what the new requirements mandate. For example, a survey of special education directors (Erickson & Thurlow, 1997) indicated that data gathered on students with disabilities are not publicly reported in most states, but are used primarily for internal review. Only 32 regular and unique states (e.g., Guam, Palau) reported that they have readily available information on the number of students with disabilities who participate in any of their statewide assessments. Of those states that indicated they report such data, only half were able to provide the numbers when requested to do so. Furthermore, the state directors pointed to the altruistic motivation of parents and teachers to “protect” students from testing and high stakes for schools as the leading reasons for not encouraging students with disabilities to participate in assessment programs. It appears that students with disabilities are not encouraged to participate in statewide testing even when appropriate, and if they do participate, participation data usually have not been reported for them.

Our goal was to report on how students with disabilities are doing academically and non-academically. To do this we used the NCEO framework (Ysseldyke, Krentz, Elliott, Thurlow, Erickson, & Moore, 1998) as the basis for our analysis of public state accountability reports. NCEO’s framework of educational results goes beyond test participation data. This comprehensive framework, initially created by hundreds of nationally-representative stakeholders, includes both academic and nonacademic domains (refer to Figure 1). Stakeholders identified six domains of desired outcomes, including data on responsibility and independence,

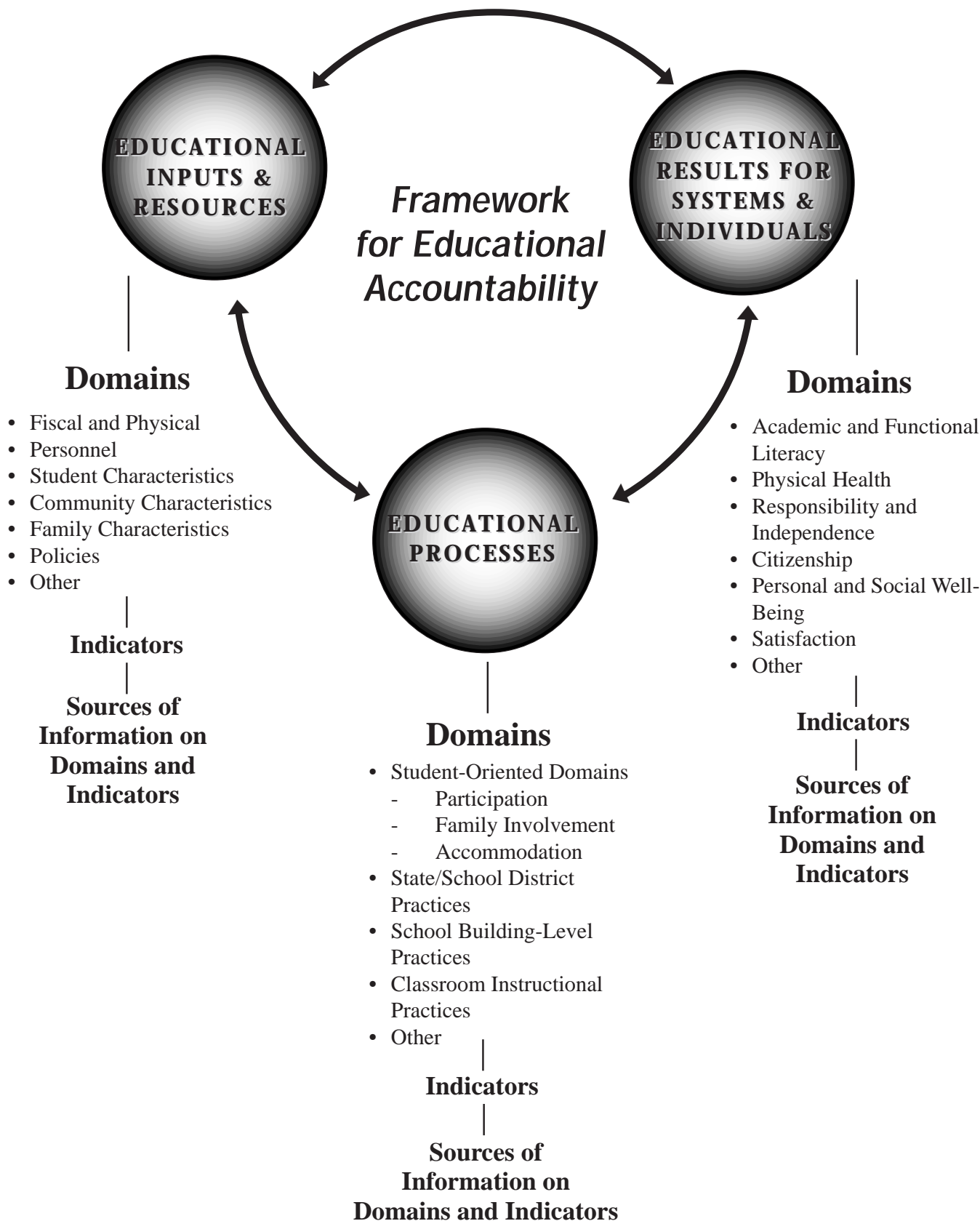


Figure 1. NCEO Framework for Educational Accountability

personal and social well-being, citizenship, academic and functional literacy, physical health, and (student/parent/community) satisfaction. The NCEO framework specifies outcomes, indicators, and sources of data in each of the six results domains. The complete framework shown in Figure 1 includes Inputs/Resources and Educational Processes, as well as Results, but the focus of our analysis was on Results, and certain components of the student-oriented domains within Educational Processes.

Methods

Data for this report were gathered from public documents that report data on the performance of students. The appropriate documents to analyze were identified by using the annual Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) state accountability survey as a guide (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1997, prepublication copy). This annual survey is sent to state accountability offices and used to obtain the titles of each accountability document available from the state. Each state accountability office was contacted by NCEO staff and the documents listed by CCSSO were requested. In addition, NCEO staff requested any additional information specifically on special education that was available from the state. We asked only for *published*, public data, either in paper form or on the World Wide Web.

Data were gathered between October 1997 and March 1998. Though most reports were obtained by the end of November 1997, the last report was collected in March 1998. Since we were interested in publicly available accountability data for students with disabilities, we specifically requested data from state accountability offices rather than state special education offices. In those cases where data were not available on students with disabilities, we also contacted and requested any published data from state special education offices. We attempted to obtain every available accountability document that included students with disabilities. However, reports are continually being produced and sometimes reports available through one unit in a state department of education are unknown to another department. Thus, it was difficult to verify the extent to which we had obtained all available reports. In some cases, where recent data were not obtained in time for our cut-off dates, older data that were available were used. It is important to keep in mind that the reports obtained from states spanned the school years 1995-96 through 1997-98 even though all reports were obtained during 1997-98.

For this analysis, we obtained 115 accountability reports (see Appendix A). Each report was searched thoroughly for data on students with disabilities. Fifty documents contained outcome data on students with disabilities. The data were then coded according to the NCEO framework (Ysseldyke et al., 1998). Enough data for summary analyses were obtained in only two categories: (1) Educational Results for Systems and Individuals, and (2) Educational Processes, specifically Student-Oriented Domains. Sporadic data were obtained in other domains of the NCEO framework.

Wherever possible, data are presented in this report in the same way that states presented them. In some cases, data were taken from larger data bases, or from several different sources and were formatted in order to increase clarity. The data, however, only include information actually stated in the public reports. A summary of cautions about the data included in this report is presented in Table 1.

Specific Data Included in Each Domain

Educational Results. Data from three domains were collected in the area of Educational Results: Academic and Functional Literacy, Personal and Social Well-Being, and Satisfaction. Most of the data included in this area consisted of disaggregated test scores for students with disabilities. When reproducing these data we noted when descriptions of the tests were given and when a description of the scoring rubrics or standards used to determine proficiency were provided. We

Table 1. Cautions

The data presented in this report do not include:

- Regular education scores that do include students with disabilities but do not separate out their scores.
- Data that were not part of published, publicly available reports.
- Data that were not received by March 1998.
- Special studies, grants or projects, or data for subgroups of students with disabilities (e.g., students with learning disabilities).
- District or school level data.
- Preschool data.
- Post-secondary data unless presented as an outcome of secondary education and included as part of a regular or special education accountability report for K-12.
- Data that are reported in the Annual Report to Congress (U.S. Department of Education, 1997), including:
 - Enrollment data.
 - Placement data.
 - Exit status.
 - Personnel and financial data.

Data in this report do include data from school years 1995-96 to 1997-98.

present here the actual data provided, including the scores of students without disabilities for comparison, and definitions of terms used if these were part of the accountability documentation.

Educational Processes. Data from two domains were collected in the area of Educational Processes: Participation and Family Involvement. Most of the data reported by states in these areas are included in the Annual Report to Congress (U.S. Department of Education, 1997), including enrollment, placement, and graduation data. These data are *not* included in our analysis. We do mention, however, when these data are included in public accountability reports, since data in these reports are more widely available to the general public than are the data in the Annual Report to Congress. When reproducing these data we included the following:

- Participation in large scale assessments, including, where provided:
 - The number and percentage of students with disabilities who were included or excluded from testing.
 - The number and percentage of students who took the test with and without accommodations, and the types of accommodations provided.
- Post high school job placement information.
- Information on family involvement in students' education.

Data not reproduced, but mentioned in this report include enrollment, placement, and students with disabilities exiting educational programs.

Considerations in Interpreting Data

Every effort was made to gather as much of the publicly available data on students with disabilities as possible, and to be fair, thorough, and consistent in data analysis. When interpreting these data, it is important to keep these considerations in mind:

- States gather and report data at different times. We made every effort to report the most recent data available; thus, not all of the data provided in this report come from the same years.
- States vary in their:
 - Reporting practices.
 - Types of indicators used.
 - Tests, rubrics and standards used to judge performance.
 - Amount and types of data provided in accountability reports.

- In some cases, data are very difficult to interpret because they do not include glossary or summary information, the percentages of students with disabilities tested, or other information that is needed to accurately interpret the data.
- These data are intended to be used as a general overview of the performance of students with disabilities, and should be interpreted with caution. Comparisons between states on the performance of students with disabilities are not appropriate since measures and participation rates for students with disabilities are different from one state to the next.

Results

Of the 115 reports that were analyzed from 50 states, a total of 59 reports (39 states) included data on students with disabilities in the domain(s) of academic and functional literacy and/or in the student-oriented process domains. The actual data of educational results and processes on students with disabilities reported in state accountability reports were collated and are reproduced in this document. Because states often produce multiple reports (see Thurlow, Langenfeld, Nelson, Shin & Coleman, 1998), we opted to analyze all data in terms of state performance (e.g., number of states reporting on test scores or number of students participating in testing).

The reproduced data are presented, categorized by state and domain, in Appendices B and C. In Appendix B are the data on how students with disabilities are doing in domains of Academic and Functional Literacy, Personal and Social Well-Being, and Satisfaction. Descriptions of data sources are provided if the information was in the reports; not all states provided contextual information. Information that states provided on the Student-Oriented Domains of Participation and Family Involvement is listed in Appendix C. Again, any clarifying information in the actual report(s) is included here.

A summary of which states report data on educational results and processes is provided in Table 2. As indicated in the Results area, the most frequent domain for which data were presented was Academic and Functional Literacy. Only two states included other areas (Kansas has Personal and Social Well-Being data; New York has Satisfaction data as well as Academic and Functional Literacy). In the Process area, most states reported on Participation.

Educational Results

Thirteen states disaggregated performance data for students with disabilities in the area of Academic and Functional Literacy (Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Louisiana, Maine, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas,

Table 2. Overall Summary of Data Gathered on Students with Disabilities

State	Educational Results (Academic and Functional Literacy, Personal and Social Well-Being, and Satisfaction)	Educational Processes (Participation, Family Involvement)
AL		P
AK		P*
AZ		P*
AR		
CA		P
CO		P
CT	AFL	P*
DE	AFL	
DC		P
FL		P
GA	AFL	P
HI		P
ID		
IL		
IN		P
IA		P
KS	PSW	P
KY		
LA	AFL	P
ME	AFL	P*
MD		P
MA		P*
MI		
MN		
MS		P
MO		P
MT		
NE		
NV	(AFL**)	
NH	AFL	P*
NJ		P

Table 2. Overall Summary of Data Gathered on Students with Disabilities (continued)

State	Educational Results (Academic and Functional Literacy, Personal and Social Well-Being, and Satisfaction)	Educational Processes (Participation, Family Involvement)
NM		P*
NY	AFL / S	P*
NC	AFL	P*
ND	AFL	P
OH		P
OK		P
OR	(AFL**)	(FI**) / P*
PA		P
RI	AFL	P
SC	AFL	P*
SD		P
TN		P
TX	AFL	P*
UT		P
VT	(AFL**)	P
VA	AFL	P
WA		P
WV		
WI		
WY		

Note: AFL = Academic and Functional Literacy; PSW = Personal and Social Well-Being; S = Satisfaction; P = Participation; FI = Family Involvement.

* These states reported participation in large-scale assessments.

** These states only reported information that was gathered from a special study, not an annually reported indicator.

Virginia). These states provided information on how students with disabilities performed on statewide assessments. Generally, the data are for one year only. There is very little information included in state accountability documents on how students with disabilities are performing over time and whether there is improvement or progress in performance from year to year.

Three states (Nevada, Oregon, Vermont) completed special studies on the academic and functional literacy of students with disabilities. (These unique indicators that were reported are not gathered

annually.) For example, Vermont reported the results of a pilot study on the outcomes of IEP interventions for special education students.

Two states reported on other domains of results for students with disabilities. Kansas, the only state to report on the area of Personal and Social Well-Being, cited the number of violent acts committed by students with disabilities. New York reported data in the domain of Satisfaction: the results of a Consumer Satisfaction Survey on vocational rehabilitation services provided to special education students.

For the 13 states that presented information on statewide assessments, the most frequently reported content areas (see Table 3) were: reading (12 states) and math (11 states). Only six states reported social studies data. Ten states reported on students with disabilities in three or more content areas (Connecticut, Georgia, Maine, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas).

According to CCSSO (1998), 19 states had a high stakes graduation exit exam in 1997. Fifteen of these states reported graduation exam results for regular education students (Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia), and only 47% of the 15 states (7 states: Georgia, Louisiana, New York, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia) reported these results for students with disabilities.

Only a handful of states presented any other types of data in the domain of Academic and Functional Literacy. Georgia reported the results of retests on its graduation exam. New York and Texas both provided extensive data on students with disabilities in the area of Academic and Functional Literacy. These two states have state assessments in place, a graduation exam, and end-of-course assessments that include students with disabilities. Furthermore, both of these states have other unique indicators in this domain. New York has an Occupational Education Proficiency Exam. Texas has an assessment, the Texas Academic Skills Program Test (TASP), that provides results of college entrance exams for students entering Texas institutions of higher education. Both of these states provided clear and concise data on students with disabilities and should be viewed as models for their reporting practices.

A synthesis of the state achievement test data of students with disabilities is presented in Table 4. Because it is difficult to aggregate and analyze achievement data of states due to differences in tests, standards, rubrics, the time of year given, content difficulty of tests, accommodations given, exclusion of students, the grade the test was given, or the year the data were collected, we decided to examine how students performed relative to standards set by the states. We used the percentage of students above the passing score or other index of “adequate” performance. As indicated in Table 4, approximately 30-50 percent fewer students with disabilities are meeting standards than are students without disabilities. Looking at score results within states, students

Table 3. Educational Results: Summary for Academic & Functional Literacy, Personal and Social Well-Being, and Satisfaction

State	Content Areas					Graduation Exam	End-of-Course Assessments	Other Unique Indicator(s)
	Rdg/Lang	Math	Writ	Sci	S. S.			
AL								
AK								
AZ								
AR								
CA								
CO								
CT	•	•	•					
DE			•					
DC								
FL								
GA	•	•		•	•	•		
HI								
ID								
IL								
IN								
IA								
KS**								
KY								
LA	•	•				•		
ME	•	•	•	•	•			
MD								
MA								
MI								
MN								
MS								
MO								
MT								
NE								
NV								Provides a matrix of characteristics of schools (% of SpEd) and their effects on test scores (+ or -)*
NH	•	•		•	•			
NJ								
NM								

Table 3. Educational Results: Summary for Academic & Functional Literacy, Personal and Social Well-Being, and Satisfaction (continued)

State	Content Areas					Graduation Exam	End-of-Course Assessments	Other Unique Indicator(s)
	Rdg/Lang	Math	Writ	Sci	S. S.			
NY***	•	•	•	•	•	•	• U.S History, Biology	Performance on Occupational Ed. Proficiency Exam
NC	•	•	•			•	• Algebra, Biology, Economic, Legal & Political Systems, U.S. History	
ND	•	•		•	•			
OH								
OK								
OR	(• *)	(• *)						Status of delivery of transition services*
PA								
RI	•	•	•					
SC	•	•	•	•		•		
SD								
TN								
TX	•	•	•	•	•	•	• Algebra, Biology, English, U.S. History	Results of college entrance exam for students entering Texas institutions of higher education (TASP)
UT								
VT								Outcomes of IEP interventions for SpEd students*
VA	•					•		
WA								
WV								
WI								
WY								

* Refers to indicators from a special study that was completed, not an annually reported indicator.

** Kansas also reports on Personal and Social Well-Being, specifically violent acts committed by students with disabilities.

*** New York also reports on Satisfaction, specifically on consumer satisfaction with services provided to special education students receiving vocational rehabilitation services.

Table 4. State Achievement Test Data of Students with Disabilities Passing State Criteria

State, Grade & Year Test was Given	Test Used	Criteria Used by States or Report Authors	Achievement Testing									
			Reading		Math		Writing		Science		Social Studies	
			SWD	All	SWD	All	SWD	All	SWD	All	SWD	All
CT Gr 8 1995-96	CT Mastery Test	At or above state goal	SpEd 25.6	58.9	SpEd 14.3	47.3	SpEd 19.3	45.3	No Assessments			
DE Gr 8 1997	DE Writing Assess.	At or above 2.0 scoring rubric of 1-4*	No Assessments				Sp Ed 53.0	85.0	No Assessments			
GA Gr 11 1996	GA H.S. Grad. Tests	Percent passing	SpEd 52.0	91.0	SpEd 45.0	85.0	No Assess.		SpEd 25- 31.0	67- 73.0	SpEd 40.0	79.0
LA Gr 7 1996-97	CRTs	Percent attaining the state scaled score	SpEd 51.0	89.0	SpEd 41.0	82.0	No Assessments					
LA Gr 11 1996-97	Grad. Exam	Percent attaining state scaled score	SpEd 46.0	86.0	SpEd 49.0	78.0	SpEd 72.0	94.0	SpEd 57.0	83.0	SpEd 65.0	89.0
ME Gr 8 1996	ME Ed. Assess.	Percent basic or above	Dis. 44.0	86.0	Dis. 37.0	75.0	Dis. 65.0	93.0	No Assessment results			
NH Gr 6 1996	NH Ed. Assess.	Percent basic or above	Dis. 14.0	62.0	Dis. 9.0	44.0	No Assess.		Dis. 8.0	33.0	Dis. 12.0	50.0
NY Gr 6 1996	PEP	Above state reference points	SpEd 31.6	82.0	SpEd 63.7	94.0	No Assessments					
NY Gr 6 1996	Regents Comp. Tests	Percent passing	SpEd 48.0	75.5	SpEd 49.6	67.1	SpEd 62.8	82.7	SpEd 47.6	65.8	SpEd 41.7	54.5
NC Gr8 1995-96	End-of- Grade Tests	Percent proficient	17.7% for Special Education students and 61.2% for all students—no content area is specified for the end-of-grade tests									
NC Gr 7 1995-96	Annual Writing Assess.	Percent at or above 2.5	No Assessments				SpEd 19.5	54.9	No Assessments			
ND Gr 8 1996	CTBS IV	NP of the NCE	IEP 25.0	66.0	IEP 21.0	65.0	No Assess.		IEP 29.0	68.0	IEP 34.0	70.0
RI Gr 8 1996	MAT/7	Percent scoring in the middle or high ranges	SpEd 28.8	61.5	SpEd 27.3	61.8	SpEd 22.5	63.5	No Assessments			
SC Gr 8 1996	BSAP	Percent scoring from the 51-99 percentiles	Dis. 30.2	74.5	Dis. 26.7	68.2	Dis. 42.6	84.4	Dis. 22.6	55.2	No Assess.	
TX Gr 8 1995	TAAS	Percent passing	SpEd 36.8	75.5	SpEd 19.8	57.3	SpEd 31.3	75.3	SpEd 47.0	77.2	SpEd 30.1	65.9
VA Gr 6 1995-96	VA Literacy Passport Test	Percent passing	SpEd 30.0	70.0								

* DE does not identify which of its four point rubric comprises an adequate or “passing.” For purpose of display, we selected the 2.0 level as “passing.”

Note: BSAP = South Carolina’s Basic Skills Assessment Program; CRTs = Criterion-referenced tests which are part of the LA Educational Assessment Program; CTBS IV = California Test of Basic Skills, 4th Edition (Achievement test); Dis. = Students with an identified disability; IEP = Students with an Individualized Education Program; NP of the NCE = National percentile of the normal curve equivalent; Regents Comp. Tests = New York’s Regents Competency Tests; SpEd = Special education students; SWD = Students with disabilities; TAAS = Texas’ Assessment of Academic Skills.

with disabilities generally performed similarly on math and reading assessments. Yet a couple of states did have significant discrepancies between the number of students who met their state’s standard in these content areas. For example, 31.6% of special education students in New York passed state standards on the Pupil Evaluation Program (PEP) assessment in reading while 63.7% passed the PEP assessment in math.

The percentage of students with disabilities meeting state standards in reading achievement ranged from 27.5% to 50.4% (see Table 5). Figure 2 depicts the differences between percentages of students meeting standards in reading. The three states that had the smallest discrepancy between the percentage of students with and without disabilities were New York (on one of two tests), Rhode Island, and Connecticut.

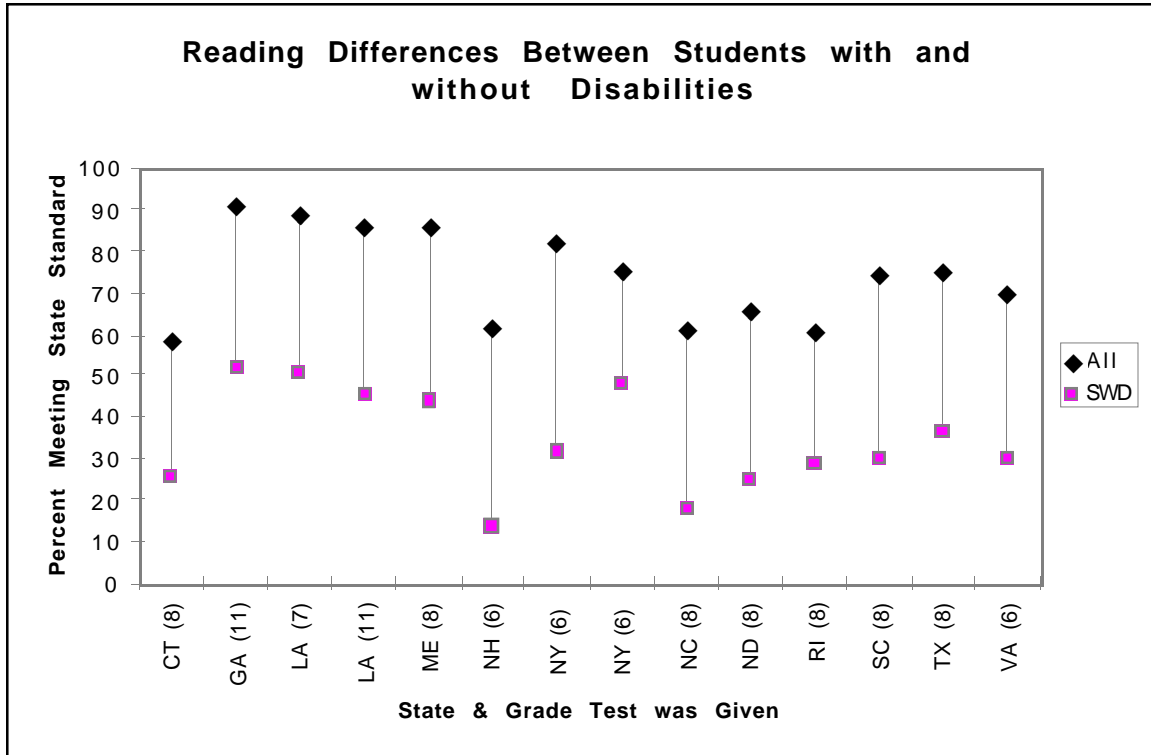
Educational Processes

In the area of Student-Oriented Domains, 38 states reported on students with disabilities (see Table 2). Although this number is greater than for the area of Academic and Functional Literacy, approximately 25 percent of states are not reporting in this area. In Table 6 we provide a summary of educational process data, specifically Participation and Family Involvement data. In the area

Table 5. Reading Achievement Differences Between Students With and Without Disabilities

State	All (%)	Students with Disabilities (%)	Difference (%)
CT (Gr 8)	58.9	25.6	33.3
GA (Gr 11)	91	52	39
LA (Gr 7) CRTs	89	51	38
LA (Gr 11) Grad Exam	86	46	40
ME (Gr 8)	86	44	42
NH (Gr 6)	62	14	48
NY (Gr 6) PEP	82	31.6	50.4
NY (Gr 6) Regents Compt. Tests	75.5	48	27.5
NC (Gr 8)	61.2	17.7	43.5
ND (Gr 8)	66	25	41
RI (Gr 8)	61.5	28.8	32.7
SC (Gr 8)	74.5	30.2	44.3
TX (Gr 8)	75.5	36.8	38.7
VA (Gr 6)	70	30	40

Figure 2. Reading Achievement Differences Between Students With and Without Disabilities



of Participation, states reporting on such indicators as the number of students with disabilities participating in large scale assessments, graduation or exit data, enrollment data, dropout rates, or time spent in various settings are noted in Table 6.

The only Educational Process indicators that were not part of federal reporting requirements when these documents were produced were participation in large-scale assessments and family involvement. Twelve states included these data in reporting on students with disabilities (see Table 6). Approximately the same number of states (13) did not report on any Participation indicators. Six states reported on four or more indicators in the area of Participation (Connecticut, Louisiana, New Jersey, New York, South Dakota, Texas). Overall, only 25% of the states reported on educational process indicators of Student-Oriented domains that they are not required to report to Congress. Thus, little educational process data are reported on students with disabilities that are not already federally mandated.

Information on family involvement was scarce in state reports. Only one state included any information in the domain. Oregon included the number of families and children served through a special parent education program for families considered to be at-risk for having children with disabilities.

Table 6. Educational Processes: Summary for Participation and Family Involvement

State	Participation in Large Scale Assessment	Graduation Rates/Exit Data	Enrollment	Drop-Out Rates	Time Spent in Various Settings	Other Unique Participation Indicators	Family Involvement
AL			•				
AK	•	•					
AZ	•		•				
CA			•				
CO		•	•	•			
CT	•	•	•				
DE							
DC			•				
FL			•				
GA		•	•	•			
HI			•				
ID							
IL							
IN			•				
IA			•				
KS			•	•			
KY							
LA		•	•	•	•		
ME	•		•	•			
MD			•				
MA	•		•				
MI							
MN							
MS		•	•				
MO			•				
MT							
NE							
NV							
NH	•						
NJ	•	•	•	•	•		
NM			•				
NY	•	•	•	•	•	a	
NC	•						
ND			•				
OH			•				

Table 6. Educational Processes: Summary for Participation and Family Involvement (continued)

State	Participation in Large Scale Assessment	Graduation Rates/Exit Data	Enrollment	Drop-Out Rates	Time Spent in Various Settings	Other Unique Participation Indicators	Family Involvement
OK			•			b	
OR	•		•		•		c
PA			•				
RI			•		•		
SC	•		•				
SD		•	•	•	•		**27.
TN			•				**28.
TX	•	•		•	•	d	**29.
UT			•		•		
VT			•				
VA		•		•			
WA			•		•		
WV							
WI							
WY							

• = States that included information on student-oriented domain of participation.

a = Failure to graduate; post education outcomes; students returning to general education.

b = Post-high school experiences and employment.

c = Number of families served in parent education programs for families considered to be at-risk for having children with disabilities.

d = Completion of advanced courses; retention courses.

Of those requirements that are mandated to be reported in the Annual Report to Congress, the majority of states (33) reported on the enrollment of students with disabilities, making it the most common indicator reported for these students. Ten states (Colorado, Georgia, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, New Jersey, New York, South Dakota, Texas, Virginia) reported drop-out data on students with disabilities in their public reports. Graduation/exit data on students with disabilities were reported by 11 states (Alaska, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Jersey, New York, South Dakota, Texas, Virginia). Eleven states reported on students with disabilities' time spent in various settings (Connecticut, Louisiana, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Washington). Three states (New York, Oklahoma, Texas) had unique indicators on students with disabilities—failure to graduate, post-education outcomes, number of students returning to general education, advanced course completion, and retention rates.

Table 7 is a compilation of the participation data available in the state accountability reports. Data provided in this table include:

- Participation numbers or rates for all students (column 3).
- Participation numbers or rates for students with disabilities; rates presented are the number of students with disabilities who took the test divided by the total number of students with disabilities (column 4).
- Participation numbers or rates; rates presented are the number of students with disabilities who took the test divided by the total number of students (with and without disabilities) who took the test (column 5).
- Exemption numbers or rates; rates presented are the number of students with disabilities who were exempted divided by the total number of students with disabilities (column 6).
- Exemption numbers or rates; rates presented are the number of students with disabilities exempted divided by the total number of students (with and without disabilities) enrolled (column 7).

Twelve states provided some type of participation data of students with disabilities in statewide assessments. Only two states (Connecticut and Maine) provided participation data as the number of students with disabilities who took the test, divided by the population of all students with disabilities at the grade level being tested. Three states (New Jersey, Oregon, and South Carolina) provided just the number of students with disabilities tested. Exemption data, giving the percentage of all students with disabilities who were excluded from testing, were provided by five states (Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, Oregon, and Texas). Arizona provided only the number of students who were excluded from testing. From the data available (using both participation data in column 4 and exemption data in column 6), it appears that between *50 and 80%* of students with disabilities are participating in testing in the 12 states that reported participation data.

Discussion

States are beginning to report data on students with disabilities. The data presented in this report, which were obtained from state reports, are intended to be used as a general overview of the performance of students with disabilities, and should be interpreted with caution for a number of reasons. States gather and report data at different times. States vary in their reporting practices,

Table 7. Participation Data of Students with Disabilities in Statewide Testing

States	Test	All Students Partic. in Testing (No./%)	SWD Partic. in Testing (No./% of SWD)	SWD Partic. in Testing (No./% of total tested)	SWD Excluded or Exempted (No./%)	No./% of Total Students Excluded or Exempted as Special Education
AK	CAT/5/Grades 4,8,11	23,987/89.6%				1,061/4.7% (includes LEP)
AZ	ITBS/Grades 4,7 TAP/Grade 10	156,339 (4,7,10)			7,424 (4,7,10)	
CT	CMT/Grades 4,6,8		14,125/80.1% ^a		983/5.6% ^a	
ME	MEA/Grade 8	14,693/85.0%	1,060/49.0%			1,087/6.0%
MA	MEAP/Grade 4	90.0%			2.0%/10.0%	
	MEAP/Grade 8	89.0%			3.0%/15.0%	
	MEAP/Grade 10	85.0%			8.0%/15.0%	
NH	3rd Grade English Language Arts (ELA)			?/10%		660/4%
	3rd Grade Math			?/12%		340/2%
	6th Grade ELA			?/11%		363/2%
	6th Grade Math			?/12%		272/2%
	6th Grade Science			?/12%		245/2%
	6th Grade Social Studies			?/12%		255/2%
	10th Grade ELA			?/9%		203/2%
	10th Grade Math			?/9%		170/1%
	10th Grade Science			?/9%		179/1%
	10th Grade Social Studies			?/9%		178/1%
NJ ^d	EWT Reading/Grade 8	81,667 ^b	8300/?			
	EWT Math/Grade 8	81,667 ^b	8,260/?			
	EWT Writing/Grade 8	81,667 ^b	8,217/?			

Table 7. Participation Data of Students with Disabilities in Statewide Testing (continued)

States	Test	All Students Partic. in Testing (No./%)	SWD Partic. in Testing (No./% of SWD)	SWD Partic. in Testing (No./% of total tested)	SWD Excluded or Exempted (No./%)	No./% of Total Students Excluded or Exempted as Special Education
NJ ^d	HSPT Reading/ Grade 11	13,572 ^b	1335/?			
	HSPT Math/ Grade 11	12,397 ^b	1229/?			
	HSPT Writing/ Grade 11	10,288 ^b	1129/?			
NY	PEP/Grade 3/ Reading				2,227/9.0%	
	PEP/Grade 3/ Math				1,977/8.0%	
	PET/Grade 4/ Science				1,793/7.0%	
	PEP/Grade 5/ Writing				1,874/7.3%	
	PEP/Grade 6				2,304/8.4%	
	PET/Grade 6/ Social Studies				2,362/9.2%	
	PET/Grade 8/ Social Studies				2,243/10.1%	
NC	End-of-Grade Tests/Grade 3	90,594		10,003/11.0%		
	End-of-Grade Tests/Grade 4	89,115		10,072/11.3%		
	End-of-Grade Tests/Grade 5	89,237		9,994/11.2%		
	End-of-Grade Tests/Grade 6	87,310		10,467/12.0%		
	End-of-Grade Tests/Grade 7	87,457		8,261/9.4%		
	End-of-Grade Tests/Grade 8	85,997		7,174/8.3%		
	Writing Assess./ Grade 4	90,638		10,295/11.4%		
	Writing Asses./ Grade 7	88,422		9,252/10.5%		
OR ^c	SRA/Grade 3		2,808/?		2,287/44.9%	
	SRA/Grade 5		3,682/?		1,557/29.7%	
	SRA/Grade 8		3,223/?		799/19.9%	
	SRA/Grade 11		2,224/?		440/16.5%	

States	Test	All Students Partic. in Testing (No./%)	SWD Partic. in Testing (No./% of SWD)	SWD Partic. in Testing (No./% of total tested)	SWD Excluded or Exempted (No./%)	No./% of Total Students Excluded or Exempted as Special Education
SC ^d	MAT/7/Grade 4/ Reading	46,541	3,857/?			
	MAT/7/Grade 4/ Math	46,797	4,114/?			
	MAT/7/Grade 4/ Language	46,484	3,845/?			
	MAT/7/Grade 4/ 3 R's Battery	46,321	3,772/?			
	MAT/7/Grade 5/ Reading	47,020	3,349/?			
	MAT/7/Grade 5/ Math	47,214	3,536/?			
	MAT/7/Grade 5/ Language	46,934	3,307/?			
	MAT/7/Grade 5/ 3 R's Battery	46,773	3,231/?			
	MAT/7/Grade 7/ Reading	47,531	2,929/?			
	MAT/7/Grade 7/ Math	47,537	2,970/?			
	MAT/7/Grade 7/ Language	47,307	2,886/?			
	MAT/7/Grade 7/ 3 R's Battery	46,944	2,805/?			
	MAT/7/Grade 9/ Math	49,828	2,745/?			
	MAT/7/Grade 9/ Math	49,817	2,735/?			
	MAT/7/Grade 9/ Language	49,677	2,718/?			
	MAT/7/Grade 9/ 3 R's Battery	48,908	2,650/?			
	MAT/7/Grade 11/ Reading	31,584	809/?			
	MAT/7/Grade 11/ Math	31,127	768/?			
	MAT/7/Grade 11/ Language	31,047	760/?			
	MAT/7/Grade 11/3 R's Battery	30,218	714/?			

Table 7. Participation Data of Students with Disabilities in Statewide Testing (continued)

States	Test	All Students Partic. in Testing (No./%)	SWD Partic. in Testing (No./% of SWD)	SWD Partic. in Testing (No./% of total tested)	SWD Excluded or Exempted (No./%)	No./% of Total Students Excluded or Exempted as Special Education
SC ^d	BSAP Total			?/10.2%		
	BSAP/Grade 3/ Reading	45,925	4,993/?			
	BSAP/Grade 8/ Reading	47,925	3,502/?			
	BSAP/Grade 10/ Reading	39,986	1,871/?			
	BSAP/Grade 3/ Math	46,266	5,268/?			
	BSAP/Grade 8/ Math	47,982	3,538/?			
	BSAP/Grade 10/Math	40,013	1,876/?			
	BSAP/Grade 6/ Writing	47,329	3,621/?			
	BSAP/Grade 8/ Writing	47,619	3,415/?			
	BSAP/Grade 10/Writing	39,764	1,844/?			
	BSAP/Grade 3/ Science	45,979	4,954/?			
	BSAP/Grade 6/ Science	47,337	3,571/?			
	BSAP/Grade 8/ Science	47,646	3,386/?			
TX	TAAS/Math				?/52.6%	?/6.9%
	TAAS/Reading				?/54.8%	?/7.3%
	TAAS/Writing				?/55.9%	?/7.0%

* Blank spaces indicate no information was available or could not be determined from the information given.

^a = An additional 2,534 students (14.4%) with disabilities were reported as status not recorded.

^b = Includes regular, special education, limited English proficient students, and voided student answer folders.

^c = SWD who participate under modified conditions or are exempted from testing.

^d = Gives exempted data, but do not disaggregate SWD exemptions.

the types of tests, rubrics and standards used to judge performance, and the amount of data collected on students with disabilities.

Table 8 summarizes the information obtained from state reports in the area of educational results. Although most of the data on students with disabilities provided in state reports were educational process data, approximately 26% of the states did disaggregate performance data on statewide assessments. Generally, the data represented only one year; little information was available on how students with disabilities performed over time and whether there was improvement or progress in performance from year to year. Looking at score results within states, students with disabilities performed similarly on math and reading assessments, yet a couple states did have significant discrepancies between the number of students with disabilities who met the state's criteria in the two areas. For example, 31.6% of special education students in New York passed state criteria on the Pupil Evaluation Program (PEP) assessment in reading while 63.7% passed the PEP assessment in math. The low reading achievement is comparable to the NALS results that adults with any type of disability were more likely than those in the total population to perform in the lower literacy levels (Kirsch et al., 1993). Despite some consistencies in data across states, and with national data, states are only beginning to report these types of achievement data on students with disabilities, making it impossible to generalize these results to all 50 states.

Table 9 summarizes the information obtained from state reports in the area of Educational Processes, excluding those federal requirements for state reporting. In the area of Student-Oriented Domains, 38 states reported on students with disabilities. Though many of the states reported only enrollment information, 25% of the states did not report any process data on students with disabilities. Twelve states did include participation in large-scale assessment or family involvement information about students with disabilities. Oregon reported on family involvement, and this included the number of families and children served through a special parent education program for families considered to be at-risk for having children with disabilities. This information is pertinent to understanding the extent to which students with disabilities and their families are actively participating in public education.

It was difficult to determine and interpret participation rates in the 12 states that reported such data because it was still not clear exactly what proportion of students with disabilities were participating in tests. Some states only provided the number of students with disabilities tested, leaving out those students with disabilities who were excluded from testing. From the data available, it appears that between 50 and 80% of students with disabilities did participate in testing. This is similar to the estimated 66% of students included in both the 1988 NELS sample and the 1988 NAEP sample (Ingels, 1996). This is still far from the recommended 85% of students with disabilities who should be participating in statewide assessments (Ysseldyke, Thurlow, McGrew, & Shriner, 1994).

Table 8: Summary of Educational Results Data on Students with Disabilities

Educational Results

- Thirteen states disaggregated performance data for students with disabilities (CT, DE, GA, LA, ME, NH, NY, NC, ND, RI, SC, TX, VA).
- The most frequently reported content areas for assessment are: reading (12 states) and math (11 states).
- Ten states tested and reported on students with disabilities in three or more content areas (CT, GA, ME, NH, NY, NC, ND, RI, SC, TX).
- While 15 states reported graduation exam results for regular education, only 47% (7 states; GA, LA, NY, NC, SC, TX, VA) reported these results for students with disabilities.
- It is difficult to aggregate and analyze achievement data of states due to differences in: tests, standards, rubrics, the time of year given, content difficulty of tests, accommodations given, exclusions of students, the grade the test was given, or the year the data was collected.
- Thirty to fifty percent fewer students with disabilities are meeting state standards on large-scale assessments compared to students without disabilities.
- Standards vary from state to state. ME and NH provide good examples of the issues encountered in trying to compare test scores across states. While they both use the standard “percent basic or above,” the actual percentage of students passing their state standards varied considerably (refer to Table 4).
- Only a handful of states present any other types of data in the domain of Academic and Functional Literacy. For example, New York included test scores on Occupational Education Proficiency examinations in areas such as communication systems, clothing and textiles, health occupations, etc. Texas provided data for students with disabilities’ performance on its college entrance exam (TASP). Georgia reported the results of retests on its graduation exam.
- Three states (NV, OR, VT) completed special studies on students with disabilities’ Academic and Functional Literacy. (These unique indicators that were reported are not gathered annually.) For example, Vermont reported the results of a pilot study on the outcomes of IEP interventions for Special Education students.
- Kansas reports data in the domain of Personal and Social Well-Being. Kansas cited the number of violent acts committed by students with disabilities.
- New York reports data in the domain of Satisfaction. New York reports on a Consumer Satisfaction Survey on vocational rehabilitation services provided to special education students.

Table 9: Summary of Educational Processes Data on Students with Disabilities

Educational Processes

- The majority of states (33) reported on the enrollment of students with disabilities, making it the most common indicator.
- The only Educational Process indicators that were not part of federal reporting requirements when these documents were produced were Participation in Large Scale Assessment and Family Involvement. Twelve states included these data in reporting on students with disabilities (AK, AZ, CT, ME, MA, NH, NJ, NY, NC, OR, SC, TX).
- Of those 12 states that reported participation data, approximately 50–80% of students with disabilities participated in testing.
- Ten states reported drop-out data on students with disabilities (CO, GA, KS, LA, ME, NJ, NY, SD, TX, VA).
- Eleven states reported graduation/exit data on students with disabilities (AK, CO, CT, GA, LA, MS, NJ, NY, SD, TX, VA).
- Eleven states reported on students with disabilities' time spent in least restrictive settings (CT, LA, NJ, NY, OR, RI, SD, TX, UT, VT, WA).
- Three states (NY, OK, TX) had unique indicators on students with disabilities. New York included failure to graduate, post-education outcomes, and the number of students returning to general education. Texas included completion of advanced courses and retention rates. Oklahoma provided data on post high school experiences and employment.
- A few states (6) reported on four or more indicators in the area of Participation (CT, LA, NJ, NY, SD, TX).
- A number of states (13) did not include any indicators in the area of Participation in their regularly published accountability documents (AR, DE, ID, IL, KY, MI, MN, MT, NE, NV, WV, WI, WY).
- One state included information on Family Involvement. Oregon included the number of families and children served through a special parent education program for families considered to be at-risk for having children with disabilities.

There were many difficulties in determining and interpreting participation rates. These difficulties remain the same as those identified by Erickson, Thurlow, and Ysseldyke (1996). Erickson et al. (1996) defined participation rates as “the number of students with disabilities who take the test, divided by the population of all students with disabilities at the particular age or grade level being tested” (pp. 3-4). Erickson et al. (1996) also provided the following recommendations to help states report on the participation of students with disabilities in large-scale assessments:

(1) *Identify students with disabilities in statewide assessment programs.* Since 13 states published disaggregated data on students with disabilities, we know that this is being done in at least these states.

(2) *Standardize procedures for calculating participation rates.* Assessments often are not conducted in alignment with December 1st Child Count data (Erickson et al., 1996), so it is difficult to determine the actual percentage of students with disabilities who took the test. For example, New Hampshire provided the total number and percentage of test-takers whose test booklets were coded that the person had a disability. In a separate section of the report, they also provided the number and percentage of students who were excluded from testing. With these two numbers, we can add to get the total number of students with disabilities at the time of testing (provided this number does actually reflect *all* students with disabilities) and calculate a participation rate. However, New Hampshire does not report participation rates on its own, and most states do not provide actual participation rates at all.

These data are additionally difficult to interpret due to lack of information on important factors, such as the number and percentage of students with disabilities who took the test with and without accommodations, who took parts but not all of the tests, or were tested below grade level. Exemption data may also fail to include those students with disabilities who were not “excluded” from the test, but were still not tested due to factors such as attendance, or parent preference. For example, in Connecticut, 5.6% of students with disabilities were fully exempted from testing, but an additional 14.4% of students with disabilities were reported as “status not recorded.” It is clear from these data that additional information as well as standardization across states would make it easier to assess the participation rates of students with disabilities in large-scale testing.

Although states are beginning to report on the performance and progress of students with disabilities, it is still important to look at why more are not reporting these data. There are several possible explanations for the limited amount of information on students with disabilities:

- It is possible that students with disabilities are not included in state assessments and thus, are not included in state reports.
- It is possible that students with disabilities are included in state assessments, but are excluded from state reports.
- In some states, students with disabilities are included in district and school reports and excluded in state reports.
- In some states, inclusion means that all student data are reported together (no separation or disaggregation of data on students with disabilities).

- Students with disabilities could be included in state assessments, but report authors do not explicitly describe the population sample.
- Data on students with disabilities may be collected but are only reported in fugitive documents and not published for public use.
- These data were collected before the new IDEA requirements were put into place.

With the recently passed IDEA Amendments, states are now federally mandated to report on the participation and performance of students with disabilities. In order to successfully fulfill these requirements, it is imperative that states have clear guidelines about what is expected for reporting practices. Having models or frameworks as examples of best practices can help in expediting this process.

Our data reflect that states were just beginning to report on students with disabilities. In many states, students with disabilities were still “out of sight.” However, we do not know the extent to which they also were “out of mind.” We should see dramatic changes in reporting practices when we analyze 1998 state reports. Hopefully, these changes will reflect the belief that reporting practices must be more inclusive if we are to have any hope for monitoring the progress and performance of students with disabilities.

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Appendix A

State Accountability Reports Included in Analysis

State Accountability Reports Included in Analysis

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* *Indicates state reports that were collected but did not contain information on students with disabilities (n=55).*



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