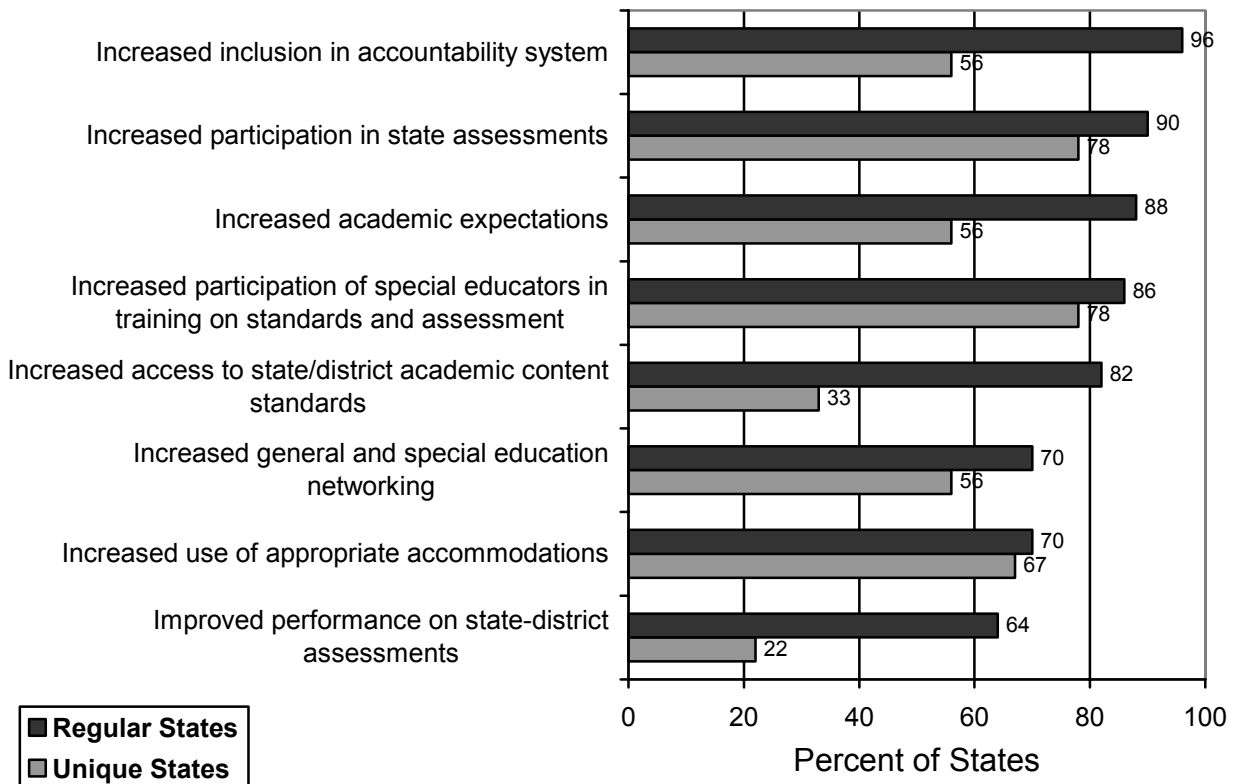


**Consequences of Inclusive Assessment and Accountability:  
Excerpts from the National Center on Educational Outcomes’  
2003 Survey of State Directors of Special Education**

The “bottom line” – the consequences of inclusive assessment and accountability – continues to be an important topic for states. In the 2003 survey, states were asked to identify the positive and negative consequences of the participation of students with disabilities in state standards, assessment, and accountability systems that they had observed since 2001 when NCEO last asked them this question. In 2003, the states started from a list based on their 2001 responses. Figure 1 lists the percentages of regular and unique states indicating each of the consequences.

The most often selected positive consequences among the regular states were increased inclusion in the accountability system (96%) and increased participation in state assessments (90%). The most often selected positive consequences among the unique states were increased participation in state assessments (78%) and increased participation of special educators in training on standards and assessment (78%). The least often selected positive consequence was improved performance for both regular states (64%) and unique states (22%).

**Figure 1. Positive Consequences of the Participation of Students with Disabilities in Standards, Assessments, and Accountability**



In addition to the positive consequences listed in Figure 1, state directors made these comments:

“Perhaps the biggest benefit for children with disabilities has been the focus of general education on improving the quality of education for children with disabilities. As schools make their plans for school improvement, they focus efforts on children with disabilities for the purpose of increasing the number of students scoring at the proficiency level. Because students with disabilities comprise a disproportionate share of students who are not at the proficiency level, they are the direct beneficiaries of district wide efforts to improve student performance.”

“Districts and schools are starting to use disaggregated student achievement data to focus on the learning outcomes of students with disabilities.”

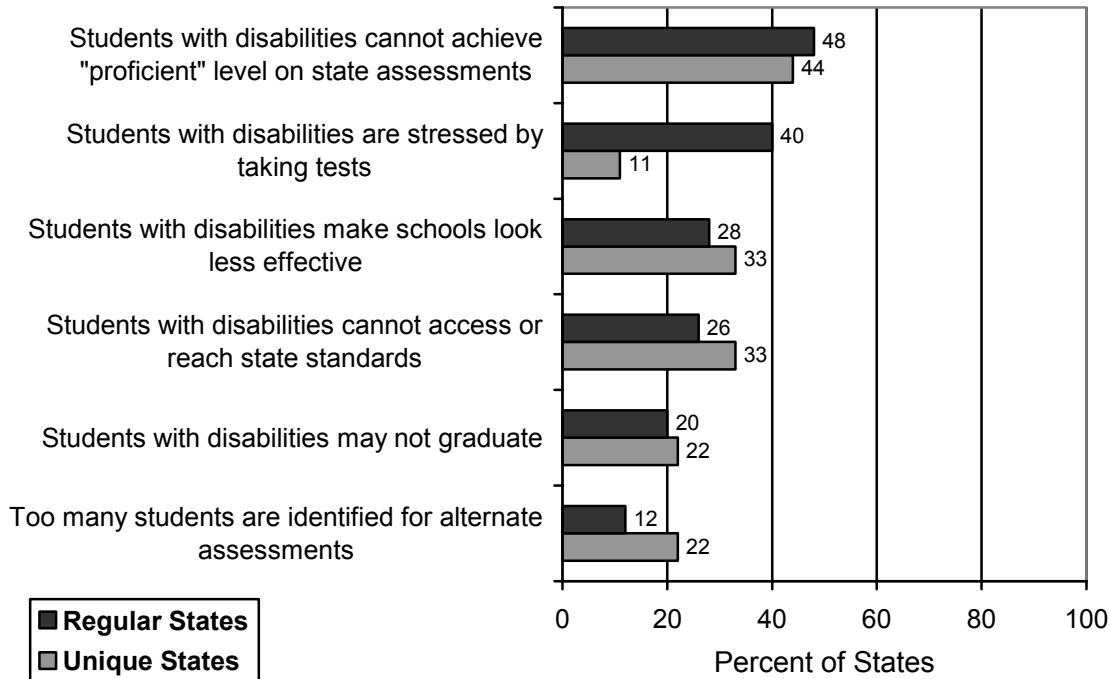
“Quality of IEPs has improved.”

“Improved data based instruction and higher expectations for students with significant cognitive disabilities.”

“NCLB has at least made district and school administrators make sure they know every student that is enrolled in their district or building is accounted for so they get credit for every student in the NCLB participation rate and AYP calculations.”

Far fewer state directors selected negative outcomes than positive, as shown in Figure 2. The greatest fear is that students with disabilities will not be able to achieve proficiency on state assessments.

**Figure 2. Negative Consequences of the Participation of Students with Disabilities in Standards, Assessments, and Accountability**



In addition to the negative consequences listed in Figure 2, state directors made these comments:

“Use of accommodations and alternate methods of assistance is labor intensive and more costly.”

“Small schools and those that house center-based programs with scores reported to the school of instruction can be negatively impacted by the scores of students with IEPs.”

“Immediate referrals to special education when assessment scores are low with the expectation that they are automatically eligible, causing conflicts between general education and special education.”

“Resistance to placement of students with disabilities in school buildings when perception is that they will bring down the school’s scores.”

“Many teachers of students participating in the alternate assessment don’t like the idea of being held accountable for their students’ performance. They have had a pass on this for too many years and are now very nervous about it.”