

## **Fact Sheet**

### **Reporting the Results of Alternate Assessments Based on Modified Academic Achievement Standards<sup>1</sup>**

Reporting of the results from State assessments is an important way to understand which groups of students may require increased instructional supports, accommodations if appropriate, or access to the curriculum. Assessment results also can reveal where instructional programs may not be producing the results that are desired. They also may indicate where insufficient effort has been expended to ensure that students participate in assessment opportunities, often a first step toward meeting accountability provisions. It is important not only for educators, policymakers, and the general public to see the results of State assessments, but also for parents to see and understand the results and implications of State assessment participation and performance results.

There are three ways in which results of assessments are required to be reported – to the public, to federal agencies, and to parents. Both the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) require reporting of participation and performance on reading, math, and science results.<sup>2</sup> Results must be reported for students and student subgroups in grades 3-8 and one grade in high school, and must include both participation and performance for all students assessed. Data reported under NCLB must be disaggregated by student subgroups<sup>3</sup> and must be reported for regular statewide assessments used for accountability and for any alternate assessments administered to students. The alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards, if elected as an option by a State, is subject to the reporting requirements of NCLB and IDEA.

The reporting of participation and performance results is viewed as an integral part of State assessment programs, and thus has been addressed in the regulation for the alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards. The following questions and answers are designed to help States clarify their understanding of the reporting requirements and implications of the new regulations.

#### **1. Why is it important to examine the results of the alternate assessment based on modified achievement standards?**

Examining the participation and performance data from the alternate assessment based on modified achievement standards is critical to understanding (1) who the students are who have actually participated in the assessment, and (2) how they are performing. As you look at participation data, you will be able to ask about the relationship between those who participated and your criteria for participation. Do they agree, or is there a disagreement between who the assessment was designed for and who is participating in the assessment? As you look at performance data, you will be able to ask critical questions about the needs of these students for additional instructional supports, accommodations, and access to the curriculum. You will be able to examine whether these students

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<sup>2</sup> Reading and Math are required now. Science results must be reported beginning in school year 2007-08, although they are required just for one grade each in elementary, middle, and high school.

<sup>3</sup> Gender, disability, limited English proficient, ethnicity, economic status, and migrant status.

seem to have access to and instruction in grade-level content, something considered critical to having the opportunity to achieve at grade level.

## 2. What must be reported for the alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards?

The types of reporting that must occur for the alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards are the same as those that must occur for other alternate assessments. These include: (1) public reporting, (2) reporting to federal agencies, and (3) reporting to parents. Each of these is addressed in a separate question.

## 3. What are the public reporting requirements for the alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards?

States and districts must report on the participation and performance of students with disabilities on the alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards, just as they do for other alternate assessments and for the regular assessment. This public reporting is required by both IDEA and NCLB.

The language of the reporting requirement in IDEA 2004, and in the April 9, 2007 regulation for alternate assessments based on modified academic achievement standards is presented side-by-side below. The language clarifies that the requirements remain the same – the State must report to the public data on the number of students participating in each type of assessment and their performance, with the same frequency and in the same detail as it reports for students without disabilities (or for all students). This holds true for students participating in the alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards, as confirmed by the regulation.

IDEA 2004 Section 612(a)16(D)	Final Regulation CFR 34 Section 300.160(f)
<p>(D) Reports.--The State educational agency (or, in the case of a districtwide assessment, the local educational agency) makes available to the public, and reports to the public with the same frequency and in the same detail as it reports on the assessment of nondisabled children, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) The number of children with disabilities participating in regular assessments, and the number of those children who were provided accommodations in order to participate in those assessments.</li> <li>(ii) The number of children with disabilities participating in alternate assessments described in subparagraph (C)(ii)(I).</li> <li>(iii) The number of children with disabilities participating in alternate assessments described in subparagraph (C)(ii)(II).</li> <li>(iv) The performance of children with disabilities on regular assessments and on alternate assessments (if the number of children with disabilities participating in those assessments is sufficient to yield statistically reliable information and reporting that information will not reveal personally identifiable information about an individual student), compared with the achievement of all</li> </ul>	<p>(f) Reports. An SEA (or, in the case of a district-wide assessment, an LEA) must make available to the public, and report to the public with the same frequency and in the same detail as it reports on the assessment of nondisabled children, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) The number of children with disabilities participating in regular assessments, and the number of those children who were provided accommodations (that did not result in an invalid score) in order to participate in those assessments.</li> <li>(2) The number of children with disabilities, if any, participating in alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards.</li> <li>(3) The number of children with disabilities, if any, participating in alternate assessments based on modified academic achievement standards.</li> <li>(4) The number of children with disabilities, if any, participating in alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards.</li> <li>(5) The performance results of children with disabilities on regular assessments, alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards, alternate assessments based on modified academic achievement standards, and alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards if- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) The number of children participating in</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p>children, including children with disabilities, on those assessments.</p>	<p>those assessments is sufficient to yield statistically reliable information; and                      (ii) Reporting that information will not reveal personally identifiable information about an individual student on those assessments.</p>
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The language of the reporting requirement in NCLB 2001, and in the April 9, 2007 regulation for alternate assessments based on modified academic achievement standards is presented side-by-side here:

NCLB 2001 Section 1111(h)(1)	Final Regulation CFR 34 Section 200(f)(2)(iii)
<p>(1) ANNUAL STATE REPORT CARD-                      (A) IN GENERAL- Not later than the beginning of the 2002-2003 school year, unless the State has received a 1-year extension pursuant to subsection (c)(1), a State that receives assistance under this part shall prepare and disseminate an annual State report card.                      (B) IMPLEMENTATION- The State report card shall be-                      (i) concise; and                      (ii) presented in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practicable, provided in a language that the parents can understand.                      (C) REQUIRED INFORMATION- The State shall include in its annual State report card--                      (i) information, in the aggregate, on student achievement at each proficiency level on the State academic assessments described in subsection (b)(3) (disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, disability status, migrant status, English proficiency, and status as economically disadvantaged, except that such disaggregation shall not be required in a case in which the number of students in a category is insufficient to yield statistically reliable information or the results would reveal personally identifiable information about an individual student);                      (ii) information that provides a comparison between the actual achievement levels of each group of students described in subsection (b)(2)(C)(v) and the State's annual measurable objectives for each such group of students on each of the academic assessments required under this part;                      (iii) the percentage of students not tested (disaggregated by the same categories and subject to the same exception described in clause (i));                      (iv) the most recent 2-year trend in student achievement in each subject area, and for each grade level, for which assessments under this section are required</p>	<p>(iii) For the purpose of reporting information on report cards under section 1111(h) of the Act—                      (A) A State may include the scores of former limited English proficient students and former students with disabilities as part of the limited English proficient and students with disabilities subgroups, respectively, for the purpose of reporting AYP at the State level under section 1111(h)(1)(C)(ii) of the Act;                      (B) An LEA may include the scores of former limited English proficient students and former students with disabilities as part of the limited English proficient and students with disabilities subgroups, respectively, for the purpose of reporting AYP at the LEA and school levels under section 1111(h)(2)(B) of the Act; but                      (C) A State or LEA may not include the scores of former limited English proficient students or former students with disabilities as part of the limited English proficient or students with disabilities subgroup, respectively, in reporting any other information under section 1111(h) of the Act.</p>

**4. What are the requirements for reporting on the alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards to federal agencies?**

In addition to reporting to the public and to parents (see question 5), States are required to report to federal agencies. Currently, States report to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to meet specific requirements related to State Performance Plans and Annual Performance Reports and to the Secretary of Education to meet their NCLB requirements.

**IDEA** requires that each State have in place a performance plan that evaluates the State's efforts to implement the requirements and purposes of Part B of IDEA, and it must describe how the State will improve such implementation. This State Performance Plan (SPP) is a six-year plan that identifies

compliance and performance indicators for which each State is required to develop baseline, targets, and improvement activities. Indicator 3 of the SPP is the assessment indicator. It includes quantifiable targets for districts meeting NCLB's adequate yearly progress indicator (AYP), participation indicator, and performance indicator.

Then each year for five years after the 2004-2005 SPP for Indicator 3<sup>4</sup>, States are required to include in an Annual Performance Report the following:

- A. Percent of districts (of those that meet the State's minimum "n" size) meeting the State's AYP objectives for the disability subgroup;
- B. Participation rate for children with IEPs in a regular assessment with no accommodations; regular assessment with accommodations; alternate assessment against modified achievement standards; and alternate assessment against alternate achievement standards.
- C. Proficiency rate for children with IEPs against grade level standards, modified achievement standards, and alternate achievement standards.

The information in SPPs and subsequent APRs is to be reported both to OSEP and to the public. It can be a challenge to create reports that present all required information both accurately and in a meaningful, user-friendly way. This will be true as well for the alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards. Devoting attention to reporting is a very worthwhile endeavor – otherwise all the time, effort, and other resources directed to developing and administering a high-quality alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards will be of little value.<sup>5</sup> Public reports must be disseminated in a number of ways including posting on your State's website, distribution to the media, and distribution through public agencies. The reports will be used by many different audiences—and, it is important for you to think about how to provide assessment data in ways that accurately report the information, are comprehensible, and are generally useful.

The language of the reporting requirement in IDEA 2004 is provided here. States are required to have in place a State Performance Plan (SPP) that evaluates the State's efforts to implement the requirements and purposes of Part B, and describe how the State will improve its compliance and performance indicators for which each State is required to develop a baseline, targets, and improvement activities. Indicator 3 of the SPP is the Assessment indicator. Under this Indicator, quantifiable targets are set so that States can measure progress each year of the SPP through the submission of Annual Performance Reports (APRs).

IDEA 2004 Section 616(b)(1)(A)	Final Regulation CFR 34
(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, each State shall have in place a performance plan that evaluates that State's efforts to implement the requirements and purposes of this part and describes how the State will improve	[Not specifically addressed in the Regulation]

<sup>4</sup> States develop six-year plans for each indicator. Because the plan for Indicator 3 was developed in 2004-05, it goes through 2010-11. Another plan will need to be developed using 2010-11 data as baseline, and going out six years from there (through 2016-17).

<sup>5</sup> Goodman, D.P., & Hambleton, R.K. (2004). Student Test Score Reports and Interpretive Guides: Review of Current Practices and Suggestions for Future Research. *Applied Measurement in Education*, 17(2), 145-220.

<p>such implementation.</p> <p>(B) SUBMISSION FOR APPROVAL.—Each State shall submit the State’s performance plan to the Secretary for approval in accordance with the approval process described in subsection (c).</p> <p>(C) REVIEW.—Each State shall review its State performance plan at least once every 6 years and submit any amendments to the Secretary.</p> <p>[20 USC 1416]</p>	
<p>IDEA 2004 Section 616(b)(2)(C)(ii)</p>	
<p>(ii) REPORT.—</p> <p>(I) PUBLIC REPORT.—The State shall report annually to the public on the performance of each local educational agency located in the State on the targets in the State’s performance plan. The State shall make the State’s performance plan available through public means, including by posting on the website of the State educational agency, distribution to the media, and distribution through public agencies.</p> <p>(II) STATE PERFORMANCE REPORT.—The State shall report annually to the Secretary on the performance of the State under the State’s performance plan.</p> <p>[20 USC 1416]</p>	<p>[Not specifically addressed in the Regulation]</p>

**NCLB** requirements include an annual report to the Secretary that details specific information about the development and implementation of assessments, as well as disaggregated information on performance on the assessments. The regulation clarifies that the disaggregated information is to include the number and percentage of students participating in the alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards, as well as the performance results.

The language of the reporting requirement in NCLB 2001, and in the April 9, 2007 regulation for alternate assessments based on modified academic achievement standards is presented side-by-side here:

<p>NCLB 2001 Section 1111(h)(4)</p>	<p>Final Regulation CFR 34 Section 200.6(4)</p>
<p>(4) ANNUAL STATE REPORT TO THE SECRETARY.—Each State educational agency receiving assistance under this part shall report annually to the Secretary, and make widely available within the State—</p> <p>(A) beginning with school year 2002–2003, information on the State’s progress in developing and implementing the academic assessments described in subsection (b)(3);</p> <p>(B) beginning not later than school year 2002–2003, information on the achievement of students on the academic assessments required by subsection (b)(3), including the disaggregated results for the categories of students identified in subsection (b)(2)(C)(v);</p>	<p>Reporting. A State must report separately to the Secretary, under section 1111(h)(4) of the Act, the number and percentage of students with disabilities taking--</p> <p>(i) Regular assessments described in Sec. 200.2;</p> <p>(ii) Regular assessments with accommodations;</p> <p>(iii) Alternate assessments based on the grade-level academic achievement standards described in Sec. 200.1(c);</p> <p>(iv) Alternate assessments based on the modified academic achievement standards described in Sec. 200.1(e); and</p> <p>(v) Alternate assessments based on the alternate academic achievement standards described in Sec. 200.1(d).</p>

(C) in any year before the State begins to provide the information described in subparagraph (B), information on the results of student academic assessments (including disaggregated results) required under this section; . . .	
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## 5. What are the requirements for reporting on the alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards to parents?

Communication with parents about assessment participation and results is important. This message is emphasized in both IDEA 04 and NCLB, and reinforced in the regulation for the alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards. NCLB requires schools to communicate with the parents of each child attending the school and to ensure that, regardless of the method or media used, it provides information in an understandable and uniform format including alternative formats on request. States are also required to provide individual student results for each student's assessment, which will include the alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards. The Regulation requires States to ensure that parents of students selected to be assessed based on alternate or modified academic achievement standards are informed that their child's achievement is being measured on those achievement standards (which are different from the grade-level achievement standards on which most students are assessed).

States are encouraged to think about how to report student information to parents in ways that inform and enlighten them. The following suggestions were made at a recent panel session on reporting results:<sup>6</sup>

- Keep reports for parents short. The information that parents want and need can generally be reported in a 2 page report.
- Make sure that the readability level is no higher than 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Use an easy-to-read font style that is at least 12 points.
- Whenever possible avoid the use of acronyms.
- Organize information using headings or a question and answer format.
- Use well-designed tables and figures that present information in a concise user-friendly manner.

Small details can make a real difference. One State recently grappled with whether the individual student reports should say: "*Your Student . . .*", "*The Student . . .*", "*This Student . . .*", or use the student's name. This state thoughtfully considered not only which wording sounded friendlier, but also which wording would be most appropriate. For example, there were discussions about whether foster parents would be offended by the use of the term "*Your Student . . .*". You will need to consider many small details similar to these to ensure that reports accurately convey information to parents in a user-friendly manner.

The language in IDEA 2004, and in the April 9, 2007 regulation for alternate assessments based on modified academic achievement standards is presented side-by-side here:

IDEA 2004 Section 614(d)(1)(A)(i)(VI)(bb)	Final Regulation CFR 34 Section 300.160(3)
[General information is included that infers the	(e) <i>Inform parents.</i> A State (or in the case of a district-wide

<sup>6</sup> These suggestions are based on the presentation by Candace Cortiella in the panel session on *What Should We Say and How Should We Say It? Honest Reporting of Test Results*, Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), Large Scale Assessment Conference. Nashville: June 17-20, 2007. The presentation is available at <http://www.ccsso.org/content/PDFs/13%2DCandace%20Cortiella.pdf>.

<p>need for approval of parents for assessment participation decision – nothing except the requirement for the alternate based on alternate achievement standards is as specific as this requirement – see that statement here:          (bb) if the IEP Team determines that the child shall take an alternate assessment on a particular State or districtwide assessment of student achievement, a statement of why—          (AA) the child cannot participate in the regular assessment; and          (BB) the particular alternate assessment selected is appropriate for the child;          [20 USC 1414]</p>	<p>assessment, an LEA) must ensure that parents of students selected to be assessed based on alternate or modified academic achievement standards are informed that their child’s achievement will be measured based on alternate or modified academic achievement standards.</p>
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## Resources

The National Center on Educational Outcomes routinely collects States’ publicly reported information on State assessment participation and performance for students with disabilities and summarized the information in annual reports. These reports and other valuable resources are available on the NCEO Web site ([www.nceo.info](http://www.nceo.info)). NCEO also summarizes the assessment information that States submit in the Annual Performance Reports and in their State Performance Plans. These also are available on the NCEO Website. Other reports of interest have summarized data (see NCLD report), reporting requirements (see Forum report), or research and suggestions for best practice in reporting to parents (see Good and Hambleton). Direct links to several of these reports are listed below.

**Forum.** (2007, February). *Public and Parent Reporting Requirements: NCLB and IDEA Regulations: inForum*. Alexandria, VA. Available at:  
<http://projectforum.org/docs/PublicandParentReportingRequirements-NCLBandIDEARegulations.pdf>.

**Goodman, D.P., & Hambleton, R.K.** (2004). Student Test Score Reports and Interpretive Guides: Review of Current Practices and Suggestions for Future Research. *Applied Measurement in Education*, 17(2), 145-220.

**Hambleton, R., Snider, M.A., Cortiella, C.** (2007). *What Should We Say and How Should We Say It? Honest Reporting of Test Results*. Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO): Large Scale Assessment Conference held in Nashville TN, June 17-20. The presentations are available at:  
<http://www.ccsso.org/content/PDFs/13%2DRonald%20Hambleton.pdf>;  
<http://www.ccsso.org/content/PDFs/13%2DMary%20Ann%20Snider.pdf>;  
<http://www.ccsso.org/content/PDFs/13%2DCandace%20Cortiella.pdf>.

**NCEO.** (2007, April). *Nearing the Target in Disaggregated Subgroup Reporting to the Public on 2004-2005 Assessment Results* (Technical Report 46). Available at  
[www.nceo.info/OnlinePubs/Technical43.html](http://www.nceo.info/OnlinePubs/Technical43.html).

**NCEO.** (2006, March). *Uneven Transparency: NCLB Tests Take Precedence in Public Reporting for Students with Disabilities* (Technical Report 43). Available at:  
[www.nceo.info/OnlinePubs/Technical43.html](http://www.nceo.info/OnlinePubs/Technical43.html).

**NCEO.** (2005, May). *Steady Progress: State Public Reporting Practices for Students with Disabilities after the First Year of NCLB (2002-2003)*. Available at: [www.nceo.info/OnlinePubs/Technical40.html](http://www.nceo.info/OnlinePubs/Technical40.html).

**NCEO.** (2007, in press). *Annual Performance Reports: 2004-2005 State Assessment Data*. Soon to be available at: [www.nceo.info/OnlinePubs/APR2003-04.pdf](http://www.nceo.info/OnlinePubs/APR2003-04.pdf)

**NCEO.** (2006, June). *Annual Performance Reports: 2003-2004 State Assessment Data*. Available at: [www.nceo.info/OnlinePubs/APR2003-04.pdf](http://www.nceo.info/OnlinePubs/APR2003-04.pdf)

**NCEO.** (2005, June). *Annual Performance Reports: 2002-2003 State Assessment Data*. Available at: [www.nceo.info/OnlinePubs/APR2002-03.pdf](http://www.nceo.info/OnlinePubs/APR2002-03.pdf)

**NCLD.** (2007, June). *Rewards & Roadblocks: How Special Education Students are Faring Under NCLB*. Available at [www.nclld.org](http://www.nclld.org)