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ABSTRACT

This report provides an analysis and discussion of the participation and performance of eighth-grade students with disabilities on the 1996, 1997, and 1998 Minnesota Basic Standards Tests in Reading and Math. The data show significant increases in participation of students with and without disabilities. In particular, participation of students receiving special education services increased from 71 percent to 89 percent from 1996 to 1998 for the math tests, and from 69 percent to 89 percent from 1996 to 1998 for the reading tests. Students with a primary diagnosis of a learning disability had the highest participation rate in 1998, 97 percent, in both reading and math. The lowest number of participants included students with moderate to severe mental impairments. However, even this group, with participation of only 3 percent in 1996 and 1 percent in 1997, saw an increase of participation to 12 percent in 1998. The performance of students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) on the tests remained between 41 percent and 47 percent lower than that of students without IEPs. Appendices include federal requirements for participation in assessments and a list of allowable testing accommodations on the Basic Standards Tests. (CR)

STATE ASSESSMENT SERIES
Minnesota Report 18

Participation and Performance of Students Receiving Special Education Services on Minnesota's Basic Standards Tests: Reading and Math, 1996 through 1998

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF
Children, Families & Learning

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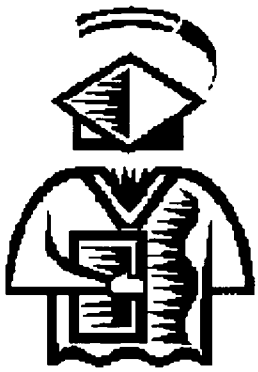

The Minnesota Assessment Project is a four-year, federally funded effort awarded to the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement. The project's goal is to promote and evaluate the participation of students with limited English proficiency and students with disabilities in Minnesota's Graduation Standards. Specifically, the project will examine ways in which students with limited English and students with disabilities can participate in the Basic Standards Exams of reading, mathematics and written composition and in the performance-based assessments of the high standards in the Profile of Learning.

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Introduction

For the past three years, Minnesota's eighth graders have been required to take tests in Reading and Math, and to reach a predetermined level of competency in order to graduate from high school. In the spring of 1996, Minnesota's eighth graders participated in the first round of "Basic Standards Tests," one component of Minnesota's new educational accountability system. This report provides an analysis and discussion of the participation and performance of students with disabilities on the 1996, 1997, and 1998 Basic Standards Tests in Reading and Math. Data were compiled through the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning and analyzed by the Minnesota Assessment Project, a collaborative effort between the Department of Children, Families and Learning and the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) at the University of Minnesota.

The participation and performance of students with disabilities in Minnesota's Basic Standards Tests are important to study, especially in light of the 1997 reauthorization of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This Act sets the expectation that nearly all students with disabilities will participate in statewide assessments, beginning in 1998. In order to continue to receive federal special education funds, states are required to include all students with disabilities in their regular assessments, with accommodations as needed. In addition, states must report the number of students participating in the regular assessment and the performance of those students. This must be done in the same way and with the same frequency as the performance of other students is reported. The reauthorized IDEA has placed greater emphasis on the access of students with disabilities to the general education curriculum and their participation in it, and in the district and state assessments that drive the curriculum. In Minnesota, as in most states, IDEA sets the stage for the initiation of increased participation. (See Appendix A for Assessment Provisions of IDEA.)

Despite the pervasive exclusion of students with disabilities from assessment and accountability systems across the United States in the past, there are a few states that have made significant efforts to include all students and to report the performance of students with disabilities in statewide tests (see Thurlow, Langenfeld, Nelson, Shin & Coleman, 1998). School districts across Minnesota are to be commended for including nearly 90% of eighth graders with disabilities in testing in 1998. Minnesota's 1998 participation rates for students receiving special education services on the statewide assessment are among the highest in the United States (Erickson & Thurlow, 1997). In fact, Minnesota is one of few states where participation rates actually had been calculated before the date at which they were first required by IDEA (July, 1998). Many states do not yet have the capacity to disaggregate statewide assessment data by disability and if they do, they may not be able to calculate the percentage of students with disabilities actually participating in their assessments. Although assessments have been the primary means to evaluate educational accountability, students with disabilities have been

excluded to a great extent (Erickson, Thurlow, & Thor, 1995; Thurlow, Elliott, & Ysseldyke, 1998).

Minnesota's Basic Standards Tests

Minnesota's Basic Standards Tests in Reading and Math were administered statewide for the first time in 1996. Districts could choose whether to participate in the first testing year. In 1997, participation in testing was required, but districts could choose to use the state-issued tests or different tests. In 1998, all districts were required to give the state tests in both Reading and Math. In addition to the Basic Standards Tests, which will include writing for tenth graders in 1999, students in the class of 2002 (ninth graders in school year 1998-99) will be required to complete a set of 24 high standards within 10 learning areas to receive a high school diploma.

There are three levels of participation allowed on Minnesota's Basic Standards Tests for students with Individualized Educational Programs or 504 Accommodation Plans. Students can either take the state tests as generally administered (with accommodations as needed—see list of approved accommodations in Appendix B), take a modified version of the tests and receive the notation "pass-individual" on their high school transcript, or be exempt from testing all together. Minnesota Rule describing the participation of students with IEPs and 504 plans can be found in Appendix C. As of July 1, 2000, this rule may change, since students who were previously exempt from testing will be included through the provision of alternate assessments (see Appendix A: IDEA Requirements: Participation in Assessment).

Method

The Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning collected the data compiled for this report through MARSS, one of Minnesota's data management systems. Statistical analyses were then run on these data by Minnesota Assessment Project researchers. Finally, the analyses were translated into tables and discussed by the entire MAP team, after which this report was written. Before publication, special education and assessment consultants at the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning reviewed this report.

There are several cautions to consider in the interpretation of the data presented in this report. These cautions fall into four areas: reporting by grade, reporting by primary disability, reporting only students with disabilities who receive special education services, and other considerations.

Reporting by grade. The data included in this report are presented by student grade and disability. Student grade is defined as the grade a student is in during the testing year. The participation rate is calculated by dividing the number of students tested in a particular grade by the total number of students in that grade.

The official special education child count that is reported to the federal government is calculated on December 1, but these numbers cannot be used to calculate test participation rates because tests are administered by grade, not by age. Other problems exist with pupil enrollment information, which calculates enrollment by grade, but does so on October 1 of the testing year. This raises some concern, since there are about five months between the child count date and test administration, during which time some students move in and out of schools, and in and out of the state.

Reporting by primary disability. Students are reported only by their primary disability, even though many of them have additional disabilities (e.g., a student with a speech impairment and a learning disability may only be reported as having a learning disability). Using only primary disabilities reduces child count error by ensuring that no student is reported more than once. Unduplicated child count data are essential for calculating participation rates—these data become the denominator. However, the fact that a child may have more than one disability increases the number of factors that may contribute to student performance. We cannot draw inferences about the data in these more complex ways because we do not have the information needed to do so.

Reporting only students with disabilities who receive special education services. Throughout this report, we refer to the group under consideration as "students receiving special education services" or "students with IEPs," rather than the more common description of "students with disabilities." This is because the students counted in this report include only those receiving special education services during the testing year. We are not able to disaggregate participation and performance data for students on 504 accommodation plans, or students with disabilities who do not qualify or choose not to receive special education services. Along the same vein, students not receiving special education services cannot simply be referred to as "students without disabilities" or "nondisabled students" because this group includes a number of students with some form of disabling condition. In this report we distinguish between students who do or do not receive special education services, or those who do or do not have a currently active IEP.

Additional reporting considerations. There are three additional reporting considerations in this report. The first is that data from a small number of students are not included because the data were incorrect or incomplete. Second, there are some students who are included in the child count who did not take the Basic Standards Tests because they receive their education in private or home-schools. Third, students in the special education category of "Deaf Blind" are not included in these analyses because the group is too small in number to maintain the anonymity of individual students.

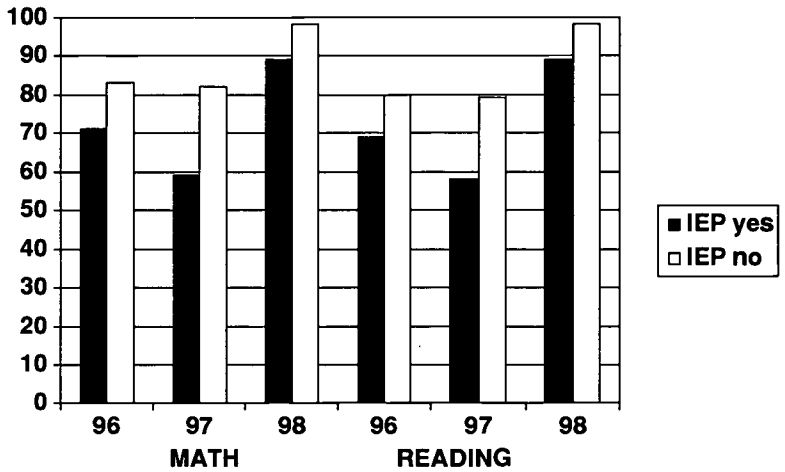
As you view the figures and tables throughout this report, keep in mind that the numbers and percentages represent a broad number of factors. Only if all things were equal could we look at a change in percentage rate and say it truly represented a change in test participation or performance. Still, these data are among the first to portray participation and performance across multiple years.

Participation

The class of 2000 is the first group of Minnesota students required to pass Basic Standards Tests in Reading and Math in order to graduate from high school. A minimum of 70% of the items on each test must be answered correctly in order for students in this cohort to pass. This percentage, often referred to as a "cut-score," was raised to 75% for the eighth graders in the class of 2001. The cut-score remained at 75% for the class of 2002 (students who took the Basic Standards Tests as eighth graders in 1998). Even though participation in the first administration of Minnesota's Basic Standards Tests in 1996 by eighth graders in the class of 2000 was voluntary for school districts, about 83% of Minnesota's eighth graders without IEPs participated in Math and about 80% in Reading. Participation of students receiving special education services the first year was lower, with an overall participation rate of about 71% in Math and 69% in Reading. Figure 1 shows participation rates of eighth graders with and without IEPs from 1996 to 1998.

As shown in Figure 1 and in more detail in Table 1, participation rates dropped slightly for all students in 1997, probably due to the fact that some districts chose not to use the state tests. There was a notable increase in participation of students receiving special education services from 1996 to 1998 (71% in 1996 to 89% 1998, an increase of 18%). In focus groups of teachers and school administrators held after the initial testing cycle, some school districts reported an initial reluctance to test students with disabilities before actually seeing what the tests were like, so that they could make more informed decisions about the ability of their students to participate (Spicuzza, Erickson, Thurlow, & Hurley, 1996). Participation within districts the first year ranged from including every student to excluding nearly all students with disabilities. Issues raised in the focus groups ranged from, "Why include these kids—they won't pass anyway," to "we would have included more students if we had known what accommodations were available," to "we tested everyone because we thought we had to." As noted throughout this report, Minnesota has come a long way in only three years toward alleviating many of these initial concerns.

Figure 1. Percent of 8th Graders With and Without IEPs Participating in the Basic Standards Tests



Participation of the Class of 2000

Since the class of 2000 is the first cohort of students required to pass the Basic Standards Tests in order to graduate from high school, it will be important to follow the participation and performance of students in this group throughout their high school years. Students can retake the Basic Standards Tests during their high school years until they pass them.

As reported earlier, about 70% of the eighth graders receiving special education services in the class of 2000 participated in testing (71% in Math, 69% in Reading). The percentage of ninth grade students with IEPs participating in the Basic Standards Tests was 45% in Math and 50% in Reading. Reasons for being tested in ninth grade could include not meeting the passing level of 70% in eighth grade, or taking the test for the first time in ninth grade. These participation rates are about double the ninth grade participation rates of non-IEP test takers.

Table 1. Participation of 8th Graders in Basic Standards Tests

	Child Count	No. Tested Math	% Tested Math	No. Tested Reading	% Tested Reading
96 IEP	8,846	6,256	71%	6,132	69%
96 Non IEP	56,801	47,350	83%	45,648	80%
97 IEP	8,022	4,725	59%	4,620	58%
97 Non IEP	57,912	47,204	82%	45,766	79%
98 IEP	8,426	7,522	89%	7,529	89%
98 Non IEP	58,100	56,874	98%	56,872	98%

In tenth grade there continued to be a high number of students with IEPs participating in testing (38% of the tenth graders with IEPs tested in Math and 45% in Reading). Figure 2 shows participation rates of the class of 2000 from eighth to tenth grade. Note that the number of students retaking at least one of the tests decreases at a much slower rate for students with IEPs than for students without IEPs. Note also that the number of repeat test-takers in Reading is much higher than in Math. Table 2 shows both the number and percent of test takers from the class of 2000.

One of the assumptions that can be made from the large number of students with IEPs participating in testing in ninth and tenth grade, is that the decision to pass students at a modified level is not being made as early as was initially thought. It appears that students who do not pass are willing

Figure 2. Percent of the Class of 2000 from 8th to 10th Grade Tested

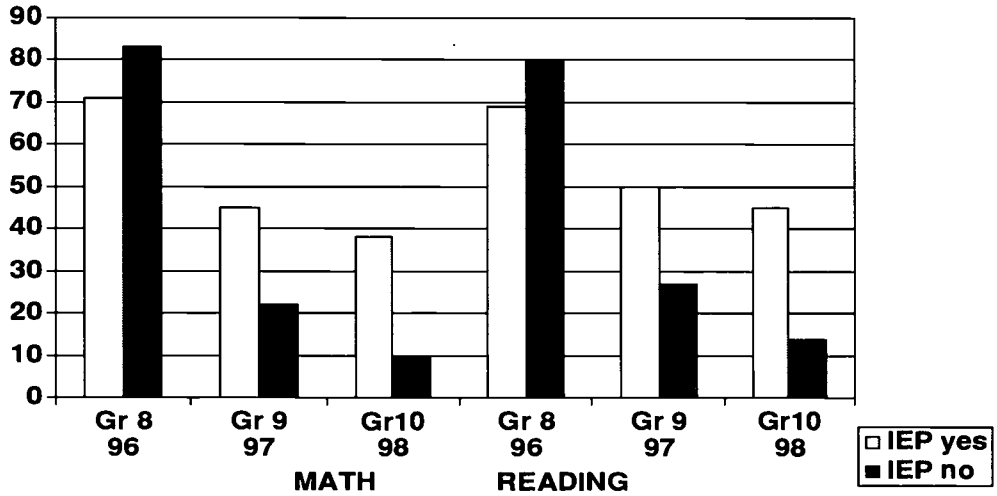


Table 2. Participation in Testing for the Class of 2000

	Child Count	No. Tested Math	% Tested Math	No. Tested Reading	% Tested Reading
Grade 8 IEP	8,846	6,256	71%	6,132	69%
- 1996 no IEP	56,801	47,350	83%	45,648	80%
Grade 9 IEP	7,649	3,427	45%	3,862	50%
- 1997 no IEP	60,945	13,711	22%	17,449	27%
Grade 10 IEP	7,360	2,794	38%	3,330	45%
- 1998 no IEP	61,056	6,059	10%	8,483	14%

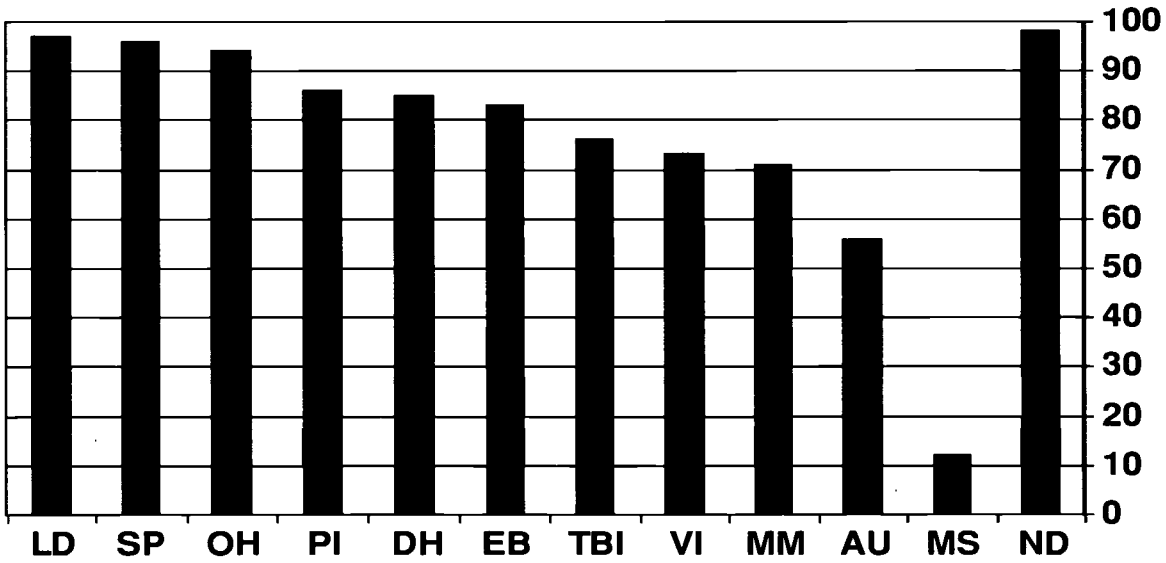
to keep trying and that IEP teams are taking the approach that it is important for these students to earn a diploma by the same criteria as other students. This finding reflects the information obtained from focus groups involving educators after the first round of testing (Spicuzza et al., 1996). Most participants thought that the "Pass-Individual" and "Exempt" options should be considered secondary choices or ones used only for students with the most severe disabilities. One district reported that it planned to work on curriculum with students not passing until January of twelfth grade, then consider "Pass-Individual" or "Exempt." This district had developed its own remediation planning process as a way to provide extra help for students (with and without disabilities) who did not initially reach the "Pass-State" criterion. Another testing coordinator commented that knowing about the option of later exemption would probably cause teachers to encourage students with disabilities to participate in the same way as other students, with the later option of changing. Many teachers believed that most parents would be open to the idea of their child attempting to pass at the "State" level. A participant from one of the metropolitan districts that has been administering graduation tests for several years, reported that it was cause for celebration by families when their child passed at the level expected in general education.

Participation by Disability Category

In 1998, participation in the Basic Standards Tests rose to 98% of eighth graders without IEPs and 89% for students with IEPs. Students with a primary diagnosis of learning disability had the highest participation rate in 1998—nearly as high as students without IEPs—97% in both Reading and Math. Students with primary disabilities in the areas of speech and other health impairments also participated at high rates of at least 93%. As might be expected, the lowest number of participants included students with moderate to severe mental impairments. However, even this group, with participation of only 3% in 1996 and 1% in 1997, saw an increase of participation to 12% in 1998. Low participation was also experienced overall by students with autism, although the percentage of students participating nearly doubled between 1996 and 1998, from 29% to 56% percent. Participation rates by disability category for 1998 are shown in Figure 3. A description of the participation of students in each primary disability area follows.

Learning disability. This is the largest group of students with disabilities, representing nearly half of all eighth graders receiving special education services. The number of eighth graders receiving special education services for learning disabilities decreased by over 350 students from 1996 to 1997 (4,139 to 3,785) and then increased by about 200 (3,995) in 1998. In 1996, 83% of eighth graders with learning disabilities were tested in Math compared to 71% of all eighth graders with IEPs. In 1998 the percent rose to 97%—a rate nearly as high as that of students without IEPs. Over half of the ninth graders with learning disabilities in the class of

Figure 3. Participation Rates By Disability Category for 1998



Key: LD = Learning Disability; SP = Speech Impairment; OH = Other Health Impairment; PI = Physical Impairment; DH = Deaf/Hard of Hearing; EB = Emotional/Behavioral Disorder; TBI = Traumatic Brain Injury; VI = Visual Impairment; MM = Mild to Moderate Mental Impairment; AU = Autistic; MS = Moderate to Severe Mental Impairment; ND = No Disability requiring special education services

2000 participated in testing (53% in Math and 61% in Reading), many for the second time. As tenth graders 41% of these students were tested again in Math and 53% in Reading. (See Table 3.)

Speech impairment. The participation of eighth graders receiving special education services for speech impairments increased from 87% to 96% between 1996 and 1998, with a drop to 69% in 1997. Students receiving speech services participated at nearly as high a rate in 1998 as students not receiving special education services. Many students discontinued special education services for speech impairments between eighth and ninth grade. For example, in the class of 2000 there were 693 eighth graders receiving speech services. This dropped by 409 students in

Table 3. Participation and Performance of Students by Disability Category: Learning Disabilities

DISABILITY CATEGORY: SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES							
			Reading				
Gr.	Yr.	Count	# Tested	% Tested	# Passing	% Passing	Mean
8	96	4139	3371	81%	596	18%	–
8	97	3785	2466	65%	398	16%	54%
8	98	3995	3864	97%	859	22%	56%
9	97	3578	2181	61%	330	15%	55%
9	98	3780	2744	73%	775	28%	61%
10	98	3321	1760	53%	555	32%	64%

Table 3. Participation and Performance of Students by Disability Category: Learning Disabilities (continued)

DISABILITY CATEGORY: SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES							
			Math				
Gr.	Yr.	Count	# Tested	% Tested	# Passing	% Passing	Mean
8	96	4139	3430	83%	1167	34%	–
8	97	3785	2536	67%	659	26%	62%
8	98	3995	3869	97%	1011	26%	58%
9	97	3578	1904	53%	378	20%	61%
9	98	3780	2475	65%	566	23%	58%
10	98	3321	1359	41%	252	19%	59%

ninth grade to 284. A similar drop was experienced in the class of 2001, which showed a child count of 441 fewer students receiving services in ninth grade than eighth grade. Of students continuing speech services in ninth grade, 73% took the Math test and 88% took the Reading test. These students either did not pass in 1996 and were taking the tests for the second time or were taking the tests for the first time. It is possible that the majority of students who discontinued services passed the tests, while those who did not pass as eighth graders continued receiving special education services. The high test participation rate in ninth grade continued into tenth grade where 58% of the tenth graders receiving speech services took the Math test and 71% took the Reading test for the first, second, or third time. (See Table 4.)

Other health impairment. The number of eighth graders with other health impairments increased each year (1996: 322; 1997: 387; 1998: 485). Educators across the state have attributed this increase primarily to the recent increase in students diagnosed with attention deficit disorders. The participation of eighth graders with other health impairments in testing increased by nine percent from 1996 to 1998 (85% to 94%), with a drop to 74% in 1997. These students participated

Table 4. Participation and Performance of Students by Disability Category: Speech Impairment

DISABILITY CATEGORY: SPEECH IMPAIRMENT							
			Reading				
Gr.	Yr.	Count	# Tested	% Tested	# Passing	% Passing	Mean
8	96	693	598	86%	286	45%	–
8	97	725	503	69%	238	47%	68%
8	98	771	739	96%	374	51%	71%
9	97	284	249	88%	57	23%	60%
9	98	299	281	94%	105	37%	66%
10	98	223	159	71%	53	33%	65%

Table 4. Participation and Performance of Students by Disability Category: Speech Impairment (continued)

DISABILITY CATEGORY: SPEECH IMPAIRMENT							
			Math				
Gr.	Yr.	Count	# Tested	% Tested	# Passing	% Passing	Mean
8	96	693	602	87%	372	62%	–
8	97	725	501	69%	293	58%	75%
8	98	771	733	95%	396	54%	72%
9	97	284	207	73%	43	21%	62%
9	98	299	234	78%	64	27%	61%
10	98	223	129	58%	21	16%	59%

in testing at a rate only slightly lower than students receiving no special education services. The number of students in this group for the class of 2000 also increased between eighth and tenth grade (322 to 382), whereas child counts in other disability areas tended to stay about the same or decrease throughout high school. This could imply that more students are being identified for services after not passing the tests. About half of the ninth graders with other health impairments were tested. By tenth grade, over one third of the students in this cohort continued to participate in testing. (See Table 5.)

Physical impairment. The participation of eighth graders receiving special education services for physical impairments increased from 79% to 86% between 1996 and 1998, with a drop to 55% in 1997. The participation rate of these students in 1998 was about 12% lower than that of students not receiving special education services. The total number of students with physical impairments dropped from 98 to 88 between eighth and ninth grade with 30% tested in Math in ninth grade and 26% tested in Reading. There was little change in the percentage of students with physical impairments tested between ninth and tenth grade. (See Table 6.)

Table 5. Participation and Performance of Students by Disability Category: Other Health Impairment

DISABILITY CATEGORY: OTHER HEALTH IMPAIRMENT							
			Reading				
Gr.	Yr.	Count	# Tested	% Tested	# Passing	% Passing	Mean
8	96	322	271	84%	86	32%	–
8	97	387	285	74%	72	25%	60%
8	98	485	450	93%	144	32%	62%
9	97	331	184	56%	35	19%	59%
9	98	430	267	62%	96	36%	63%
10	98	382	147	39%	62	42%	66%

Table 5. Participation and Performance of Students by Disability Category: Other Health Impairment (continued)

DISABILITY CATEGORY: OTHER HEALTH IMPAIRMENT							
			Math				
Gr.	Yr.	Count	# Tested	% Tested	# Passing	% Passing	Mean
8	96	322	275	85%	124	45%	–
8	97	387	288	74%	92	32%	65%
8	98	485	454	94%	124	27%	59%
9	97	331	156	47%	39	25%	64%
9	98	430	249	58%	64	26%	59%
10	98	382	127	33%	22	17%	60%

Deaf/hard of hearing. In 1996, 63% of the deaf/hard of hearing eighth graders participated in testing. By 1998 this rate rose to 85%, about 13% lower than the overall participation rate of students without IEPs. As ninth graders, 38% of deaf/hard of hearing students in the class of 2000 took the Math test and 39% took the Reading test. In tenth grade, the percent of students tested was only slightly less than ninth grade; 34% in Math and 35% in Reading. (See Table 7.)

Table 6. Participation and Performance of Students by Disability Category: Physical Impairment

DISABILITY CATEGORY: SPEECH IMPAIRMENT							
			Reading				
Gr.	Yr.	Count	# Tested	% Tested	# Passing	% Passing	Mean
8	96	693	598	86%	286	45%	–
8	97	725	503	69%	238	47%	68%
8	98	771	739	96%	374	51%	71%
9	97	284	249	88%	57	23%	60%
9	98	299	281	94%	105	37%	66%
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DISABILITY CATEGORY: SPEECH IMPAIRMENT							
			Math				
Gr.	Yr.	Count	# Tested	% Tested	# Passing	% Passing	Mean
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8	97	725	501	69%	293	58%	75%
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9	98	299	234	78%	64	27%	61%
10	98	223	129	58%	21	16%	59%

Table 7. Participation and Performance of Students by Disability Category: Deaf/Hard of Hearing

DISABILITY CATEGORY: SPEECH IMPAIRMENT							
			Reading				
Gr.	Yr.	Count	# Tested	% Tested	# Passing	% Passing	Mean
8	96	693	598	86%	286	45%	–
8	97	725	503	69%	238	47%	68%
8	98	771	739	96%	374	51%	71%
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9	98	299	281	94%	105	37%	66%
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DISABILITY CATEGORY: SPEECH IMPAIRMENT							
			Math				
Gr.	Yr.	Count	# Tested	% Tested	# Passing	% Passing	Mean
8	96	693	602	87%	372	62%	–
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9	97	284	207	73%	43	21%	62%
9	98	299	234	78%	64	27%	61%
10	98	223	129	58%	21	16%	59%

Emotional/behavioral disorder. About half of the students with emotional/behavioral disorders were tested as eighth graders in 1996. This number dropped slightly in 1997 and then went up to 83% in 1998, about 15% lower than the participation rate of students without IEPs. Many students with emotional/behavioral disorders, especially those receiving educational services at treatment centers or alternative schools, did not participate in testing in 1996. The child count for students with EBD in the class of 2000 dropped by about 200 between eighth and ninth grade, but then remained remarkably stable in tenth grade. Over a third of the ninth graders participated in testing. This number dropped only slightly in tenth grade. (See Table 8.)

Traumatic brain injury. As with most groups, participation among eighth graders with traumatic brain injuries increased from 1996 to 1998 (68% in 1996 to 76% in 1998). In 1996, there were 19 students in the class of 2000 with traumatic brain injuries. This number increased to 24 in ninth grade and 34 in tenth grade. About half of the ninth graders were tested, and about half of the tenth graders. (See Table 9.)

Visual impairment. The number of eighth graders receiving special education services for visual impairments decreased slightly from 1996 (N=38) to 1998 (N=30). Participation in testing

Table 8. Participation and Performance of Students by Disability Category: Emotional-Behavioral Disorders

DISABILITY CATEGORY: EMOTIONAL-BEHAVIORAL DISORDERS							
			Reading				
Gr.	Yr.	Count	# Tested	% Tested	# Passing	% Passing	Mean
8	96	2456	1326	54%	411	31%	–
8	97	1918	989	52%	267	27%	60%
8	98	1950	1616	83%	535	33%	62%
9	97	2254	895	40%	191	21%	59%
9	98	2128	1118	53%	382	34%	64%
10	98	2254	819	36%	300	37%	66%

DISABILITY CATEGORY: EMOTIONAL-BEHAVIORAL DISORDERS							
			Math				
Gr.	Yr.	Count	# Tested	% Tested	# Passing	% Passing	Mean
8	96	2456	1365	56%	571	42%	–
8	97	1918	1004	52%	355	35%	66%
8	98	1950	1615	83%	515	32%	61%
9	97	2254	801	36%	177	22%	61%
9	98	2128	1049	49%	285	27%	60%
10	98	2254	742	33%	171	23%	60%

Table 9. Participation and Performance of Students by Disability Category: Traumatic Brain Injury

DISABILITY CATEGORY: TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY							
			Reading				
Gr.	Yr.	Count	# Tested	% Tested	# Passing	% Passing	Mean
8	96	19	13	68%	<10	–	–
8	97	17	<10	<60%	<10	–	55%
8	98	25	19	76%	<10	–	57%
9	97	24	12	50%	<10	–	49%
9	98	18	<10	<50%	<10	–	61%
10	98	34	19	56%	<10	–	54%

Table 9. Participation and Performance of Students by Disability Category: Traumatic Brain Injury (continued)

DISABILITY CATEGORY: TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY							
			Math				
Gr.	Yr.	Count	# Tested	% Tested	# Passing	% Passing	Mean
8	96	19	13	68%	<10	–	–
8	97	17	<10	<60%	<10	–	57%
8	98	25	15	76%	<10	–	60%
9	97	24	10	50%	<10	–	54%
9	98	18	<10	<50%	<10	–	54%
10	98	34	15	44%	<10	–	54%

for this group of eighth graders increased from 63% to 73% between 1996 and 1998, and was about 25% lower than that of students not receiving special education services. In ninth grade only 12 visually impaired students were tested in Math (38%) and 6 students in Reading (19%). As tenth graders, the number of students tested in both Math and Reading was 7 (21%). (See Table 10.)

Table 10. Participation and Performance of Students by Disability Category: Visual Impairment

DISABILITY CATEGORY: VISUAL IMPAIRMENT							
			Reading				
Gr.	Yr.	Count	# Tested	% Tested	# Passing	% Passing	Mean
8	96	38	20	53%	11	55%	–
8	97	28	19	68%	11	58%	68%
8	98	30	21	70%	<10	–	62%
9	97	32	<10	<30%	<10	–	70%
9	98	27	<10	<30%	<10	–	69%
10	98	33	<10	<30%	<10	–	60%

DISABILITY CATEGORY: VISUAL IMPAIRMENT							
			Math				
Gr.	Yr.	Count	# Tested	% Tested	# Passing	% Passing	Mean
8	96	38	24	63%	13	54%	–
8	97	28	18	64%	<10	–	67%
8	98	30	22	73%	<10	–	57%
9	97	32	12	38%	<10	–	66%
9	98	27	12	44%	<10	–	60%
10	98	33	<10	<30%	<10	–	64%

Mild to moderate mental impairment. The participation of eighth graders receiving special education services for mild to moderate mental impairments increased from 52% to 71% between 1996 and 1998, with a drop to 35% in 1997. This rate was about 27% lower than that of students not receiving special education services. About half of the students with mild to moderate mental impairments in the class of 2000 participated in testing as eighth graders. About 37% of these students were tested in ninth grade. The percentage of students with mental impairments taking the tests as tenth graders was almost as high as the same group in ninth grade. Several of these students were being tested for the third time; however, students who were not included as eighth and ninth graders may have participated for the first time in tenth grade. (See Table 11.)

Table 11. Participation and Performance of Students by Disability Category: Mild to Moderate Mental Impairment

DISABILITY CATEGORY: MILD MODERATE MENTAL IMPAIRMENT							
			Reading				
Gr.	Yr.	Count	# Tested	% Tested	# Passing	% Passing	Mean
8	96	688	347	50%	<10	-	-
8	97	646	213	33%	<10	-	36%
8	98	657	468	71%	<10	-	35%
9	97	663	243	37%	<10	-	39%
9	98	648	306	47%	<10	-	40%
10	98	637	307	48%	13	4%	45%

DISABILITY CATEGORY: MILD MODERATE MENTAL IMPAIRMENT							
			Math				
Gr.	Yr.	Count	# Tested	% Tested	# Passing	% Passing	Mean
8	96	688	357	52%	11	3%	-
8	97	646	223	35%	<10	-	39%
8	98	657	467	71%	<10	-	30%
9	97	663	248	37%	<10	-	44%
9	98	648	313	48%	<10	-	35%
10	98	637	298	47%	<10	-	37%

Autism. The number of eighth graders with autism remained stable from 1996 to 1998. Participation in testing for eighth graders nearly doubled in these years. Between eighth and ninth grade, the number of students with autism dropped from 96 to 43. Of the ninth graders, only 19% were tested in Math and 26% in Reading. In tenth grade the total number of students dropped only slightly, but about a third of the students were tested. This indicates some change in the identification of students with autism. (See Table 12.)

Table 12. Participation and Performance of Students by Disability Category: Autism

DISABILITY CATEGORY: AUTISM							
			Reading				
Gr.	Yr.	Count	# Tested	% Tested	# Passing	% Passing	Mean
8	96	34	10	29%	<10	–	–
8	97	61	17	28%	<10	–	54%
8	98	81	46	56%	20	43%	62%
9	97	43	11	26%	<10	–	61%
9	98	66	18	27%	<10	–	57%
10	98	40	12	30%	<10	–	55%

DISABILITY CATEGORY: AUTISM							
			Math				
Gr.	Yr.	Count	# Tested	% Tested	# Passing	% Passing	Mean
8	96	34	<10	<29%	<10	–	–
8	97	61	15	25%	<10	–	59%
8	98	81	45	56%	16	36%	60%
9	97	43	<10	<23%	<10	–	60%
9	98	66	18	27%	<10	–	50%
10	98	40	13	33%	<10	–	51%

Moderate to severe mental impairment. Very few eighth graders from this group participated in testing. However, participation did increase from only 3% in 1996 to 12% in 1998. In 1997, only one percent of the students in this category participated in testing. It is likely that most of these students will be exempt from the Basic Standards Tests and will be included in Minnesota's Alternate Assessment in the future. It appears that the same small group of students from the class of 2000 with moderate to severe mental impairments participated in testing in ninth and tenth grades, ranging from 2% to 4% of the total group. (See Table 13.)

Table 13. Participation and Performance of Students by Disability Category: Moderate to Severe Mental Impairment

DISABILITY CATEGORY: MODERATE SEVERE MENTAL IMPAIRMENT							
			Reading				
Gr.	Yr.	Count	# Tested	% Tested	# Passing	% Passing	Mean
8	96	208	<10	<5%	<10	–	–
8	97	213	<10	<5%	<10	–	23%
8	98	177	22	12%	<10	–	30%
9	97	216	<10	<5%	<10	–	42%
9	98	211	13	6%	<10	–	29%
10	98	207	<10	<5%	<10	–	45%

Table 13. Participation and Performance of Students by Disability Category: Moderate to Severe Mental Impairment (continued)

DISABILITY CATEGORY: MODERATE SEVERE MENTAL IMPAIRMENT							
			Math				
Gr.	Yr.	Count	# Tested	% Tested	# Passing	% Passing	Mean
8	96	208	<10	<5%	<10	–	–
8	97	213	<10	<5%	<10	–	31%
8	98	177	21	12%	<10	–	25%
9	97	216	<10	<5%	<10	–	42%
9	98	211	11	5%	<10	–	28%
10	98	207	<10	<5%	<10	–	23%

Performance

The performance of students with IEPs on the Basic Standards Tests remained between 41% and 47% lower than that of students without IEPs for all three testing years. In 1996, about 24% of the eighth graders receiving special education services passed the Reading test and 38% passed the Math test. This compares to about 70% percent of students without IEPs passing Reading and 83% passing Math. The passing rate is at least 13% higher in Math than Reading for both groups. The passing rates for both groups dropped in 1997 when the percent of correct responses needed to pass the test was raised from 70% to 75%. For eighth graders receiving special education services, the percent of students passing dropped 2% in Reading (from 24% passing in 1996 to 22% passing in 1997) and 7% in Math (from 38% passing in 1996 to 31% passing in 1997). This is similar to the decrease in the passing rates of eighth graders without IEPs (dropped 5% in Reading and 7% in Math between 1996 and 1997). In 1998 the passing rate for eighth graders receiving special education services increased from 22% to 27% in Reading but dropped 2% (from 31% to 29%) in Math. The difference in passing rates between Reading and Math could be due to several factors, including:

- Many students with disabilities have greater difficulty with Reading than Math.
- The Math test can be read to students as an accommodation, but students must read the Reading test themselves.
- Test performance on the Reading test is lower than Math for all students, which infers that it may be a "harder" test.

There were almost 3,000 more eighth graders receiving special education services and participating in testing in 1998 than in 1997. It is likely the increased number included students with a broader range of ability, so even though the passing rate does not show much increase, many more students with disabilities passed in 1998 than in 1996. Figure 4 shows the percent of eighth graders who passed the Basic Standards Tests between 1996 and 1998. For more detail, see Table 14.

Figure 4. Percent of 8th Graders Passing the Basic Standards Tests Between 1996 and 1998

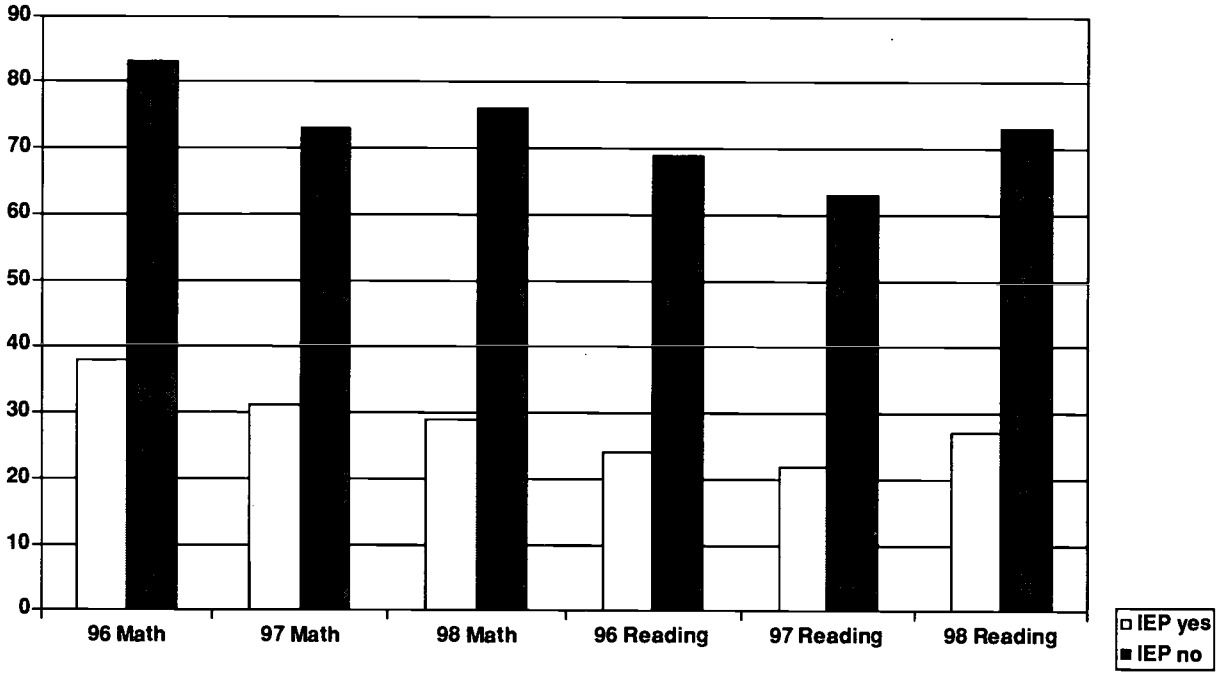


Table 14. Eighth Grade Passing Rates, 1996–98

	No. Tested Grade 8 Math	No. Passing Grade 8 Math	% Passing Grade 8 Math	No. Tested Grade 8 Reading	No. Passing Grade 8 Reading	% Passing Grade 8 Reading
96 IEP	6,256	2,352	38%	6,132	1,476	24%
96 Non IEP	47,350	39,110	83%	45,648	31,645	69%
97 IEP	4,725	1,463	31%	4,620	1,016	22%
97 Non IEP	47,204	34,629	73%	45,766	28,744	63%
98 IEP	7,522	2,193	29%	7,529	2,054	27%
98 Non IEP	56,874	43,296	76%	56,872	41,757	73%

Performance of the Class of 2000

In the class of 2000, over 6,000 students with IEPs were tested as eighth graders. As stated earlier, 24% of these students passed reading and 38% passed Math. In ninth grade, there remained 3,863 students to be tested in Reading and 3,427 to be tested in Math. A lower passing rate might be expected in ninth grade than in eighth grade because none of the students tested in ninth grade passed the tests in eighth grade. As expected, the percent of students passing was lower: 24% passing the Reading test in eighth grade versus 16% passing in ninth grade, and 38% passing the Math test in eighth grade versus 20% passing in ninth grade. With such a low passing rate for ninth graders, the number of tenth graders with IEPs who were tested was only about 500 less than the number of ninth graders. Tenth graders passed the Reading test at a rate of about 31%, while only 18% of the tenth graders with IEPs passed the Math test. There remain about 2,300 students with IEPs to be tested in eleventh grade, some for at least the fourth time (some students were tested in the summer of 1998). The discrepancies in performance between students with and without IEPs in the class of 2000 are illustrated in Figure 5, with additional detail in Table 15.

Figure 5. Percent of Students Passing With and Without IEPs in the Class of 2000

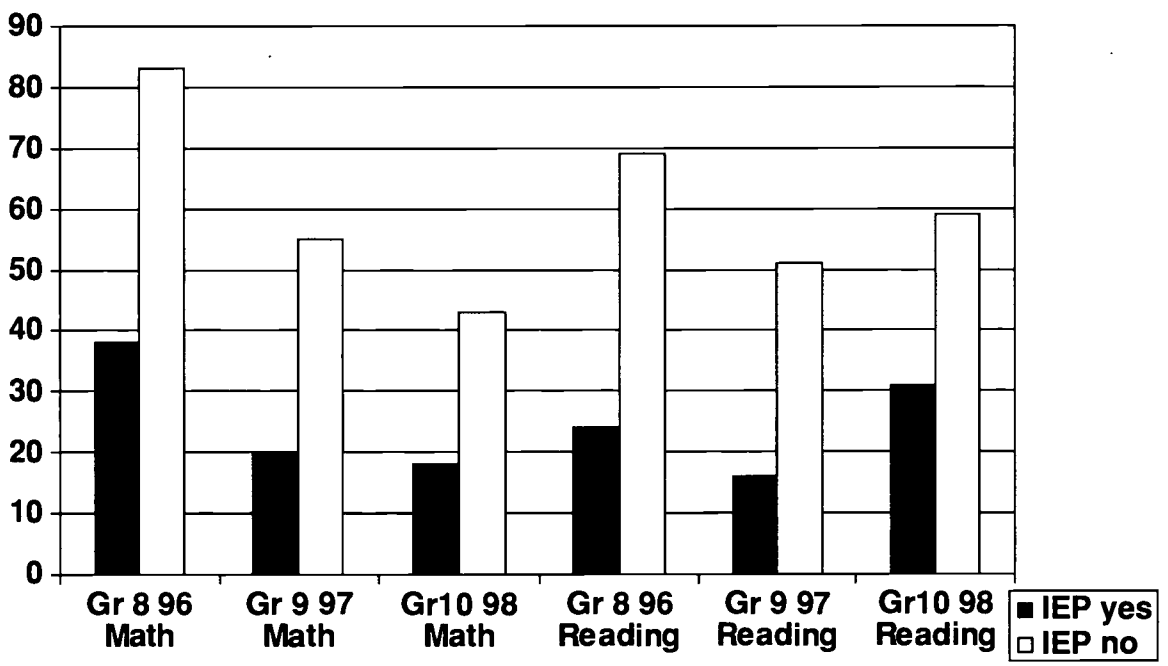


Table 15. Test Performance for the Class of 2000

	No. Tested Math	No. Passed Math	% Passed Math	No. Tested Reading	No. Passed Reading	% Passed Reading
Grade 8 IEP	6,256	2,352	38%	6,132	1,476	24%
-1996 Non IEP	47,350	39,110	83%	45,648	31,645	69%
Grade 9 IEP	3,427	669	20%	3,863	634	16%
-1997 Non IEP	13,711	7,526	55%	17,449	8,854	51%
Grade 10 IEP	2,794	502	18%	3,330	1,016	31%
-1998 Non IEP	6,059	2,582	43%	8,483	5,001	59%

Performance by Disability Category

The performance of eighth graders in 1998 varied somewhat by disability category. The group with the highest percent of students scoring at least 75% included students with speech impairments, with a passing rate of 51% in Reading and 54% in Math. Most of the groups experienced passing rates between 30% and 40%. Students with learning disabilities (the largest group) passed at a rate of 22% in Reading and 26% in Math. Only one percent of students with mild to moderate mental impairments passed and no students with moderate to severe mental impairments passed. The percent of eighth graders passing the Basic Standards Tests by disability category is illustrated in Figure 6, with average scores presented in Figure 7. Detailed performance tables for each disability category are included in Tables 3-13. A description of performance by category of disability follows. Mean scores for students by disability category were calculated in 1997 and 1998 and are included in the discussion below.

Learning disability. The mean for eighth graders with learning disabilities increased by two percent in Reading between 1997 and 1998, and decreased by four percent in Math. The passing rate increased six percent in Reading (from 16% in 1997 to 22% in 1998) and stayed the same in Math.

For the class of 2000, the passing rate in reading was 18% and 15% in eighth and ninth grade, but a much higher 32% in tenth grade. In Math, the passing rate was 34% in eighth grade, 20% in ninth grade, and 19% in tenth grade. In 1999, over 1,000 eleventh graders with learning disabilities will be tested, some for at least the fourth time. (See Table 3.)

Speech impairment. The performance of eighth graders receiving special education services for speech impairments improved steadily in Reading, from 45% passing in 1996 to 51% passing in 1998. The mean of the scores in Reading increased by three percentage points. Students with

Figure 6. Percent of 8th Graders Passing Reading and Math by Disability, 1998
(Note: Categories with less than 10 students passing are not included on this chart.)

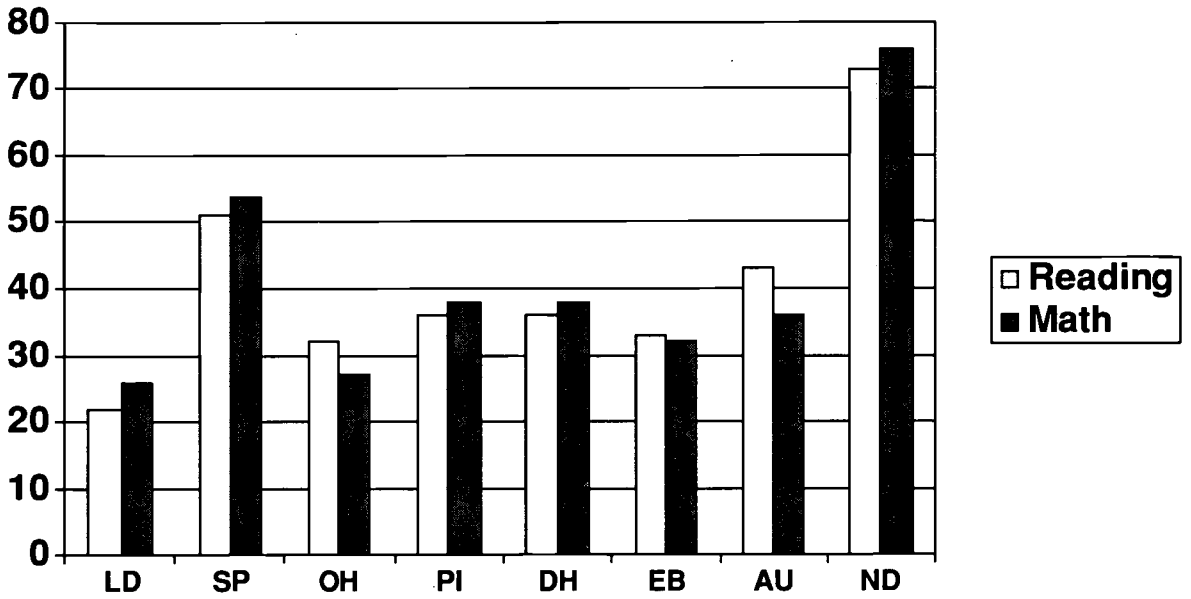
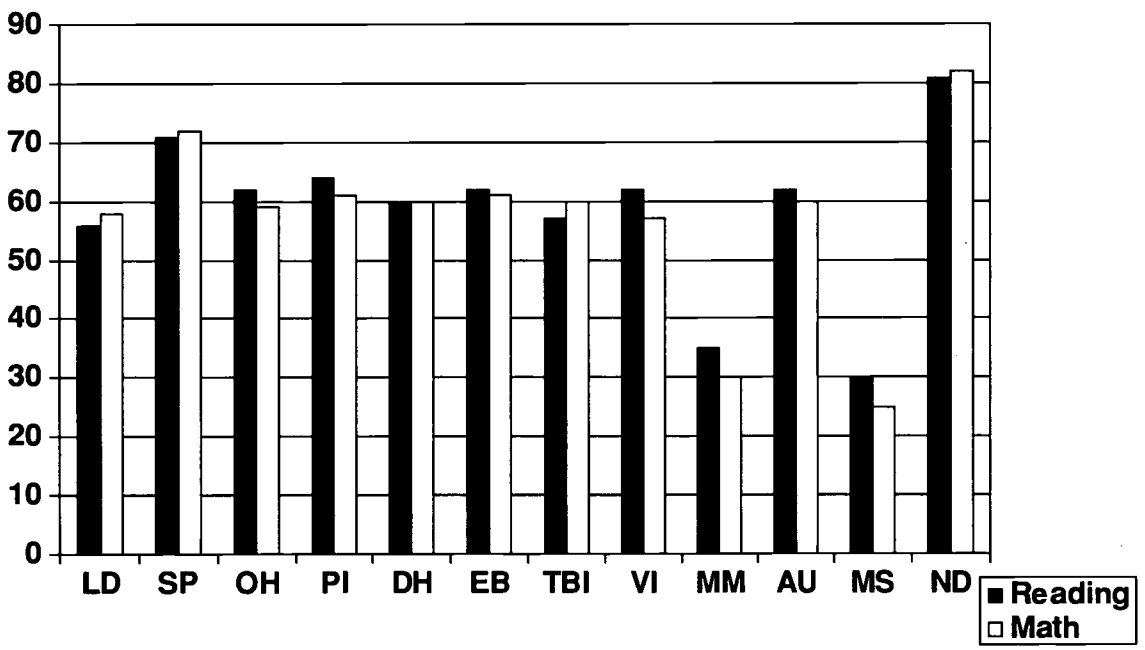


Figure 7. Average Scores by Disability for Reading and Math, 1998



Key: LD = Learning Disability; SP = Speech Impairment; OH = Other Health Impairment; PI = Physical Impairment; DH = Deaf/Hard of Hearing; EB = Emotional/Behavioral Disorder; TBI = Traumatic Brain Injury; VI = Visual Impairment; MM = Mild to Moderate Mental Impairment; AU = Autistic; MS = Moderate to Severe Mental Impairment; ND = No Disability requiring special education services

speech impairments averaged about 10 percentage points lower in both Reading and Math in 1998 than the average score of eighth graders not receiving special education services. Passing rates in math decreased steadily, from 62% passing in 1996 to 54% passing in 1998. The mean score also decreased from 75% to 72%. Scores for this group averaged one percentage point higher in Math than in Reading in 1998.

The passing rates in Reading of students in the class of 2000 receiving special education services for speech impairments was 45% in eighth grade, 23% in ninth grade, and a much higher 33% of those tested in tenth grade. The mean score between ninth and tenth grade increased from 60% to 65%. Passing rates in Math were 62% in eighth grade, 21% in ninth grade, and 16% of those tested in tenth grade. The mean score in Math dropped from 62% in ninth grade to 59% in tenth grade. This leaves about 50 students with speech impairments to retake at least one of the tests as eleventh graders. (See Table 4.)

Other health impairments. The percent of students with other health impairments who passed the Reading test as eighth graders in 1996 was 32%, about 13% lower than the percent passing the Math test. The percent passing dropped in 1997 on both tests (25% passing the Reading test and 32% passing the Math test). Again, because the mean scores for this group on both tests are over 60%, the change in passing level from 70% to 75% may have reduced the number of students passing. In 1998, the percent of students with other health impairments rose back to 32% on the reading test, but dropped to 27% on the Math test.

The passing rate for ninth graders in the class of 2000 was 19% on the Reading test and 25% on the Math test. In tenth grade 42% of the students tested in Reading passed, and 17% of the students tested in Math passed. These changes are reflected in the increase in mean scores from 59% on the reading test in ninth grade to 66% in grade 10, and in the decrease in mean scores on the Math test from 64% in ninth grade to 60% in tenth grade. (See Table 5.)

Physical impairment. In the category of physical impairment, the mean of the scores for eighth graders is high enough to be affected by the change in the cut score for passing from 70% to 75% between 1996 and 1997. The percent of eighth graders passing dropped 18% between 1996 and 1997 and remained in the 30% range in 1998. The mean percentage score for eighth graders was in the mid 60s for both 1997 and 1998, only ten percentage points from passing.

Of the ninth graders with physical impairments tested in Reading, only 13% passed. Similarly, 23% of the ninth graders tested in Math passed. Passing rates for this group in tenth grade remained about the same as in ninth grade although the mean of the scores increased from 54% to 60% on the Reading Test. The mean of the scores on the Math test decreased slightly, from 58% to 57% between ninth and tenth grade. (See Table 6.)

Deaf/hard of hearing. About 36% of the eighth graders in this group passed the Reading test in 1996, compared to 42% passing the Math test. As with other groups, the passing rate for eighth graders on both tests dropped in 1997, partially due to the increased score needed to pass. The percent passing went back up to 36% on the Reading test for the eighth graders in 1998, but decreased to 38% on the Math test.

A small number of deaf/hard-of-hearing students passed both tests in ninth grade (21% passed the reading test and 24% passed the Math test). A small number of tenth graders also passed (19% passed the Reading test and 28% passed the Math test). Mean scores increased slightly between ninth and tenth grade on the Reading test (56% to 59%) and decreased slightly on the Math test (62% to 57%). (See Table 7.)

Emotional and behavioral disorders. The pattern of performance for this group parallels that of many other groups receiving special education services. The eighth graders in 1996 passed at a rate of 31% on the Reading test and 42% on the Math test. These rates dropped in 1997 and then rose to 33% of the eighth graders of 1998 passing the Reading test, while the percent passing Math continued to drop to 32%.

An additional 21% of the students in the class of 2000 passed the Reading Test as ninth graders, with another 37% passing in tenth grade. In Math, 22% of the ninth graders tested passed, and 23% of the tenth graders, leaving less than 500 students with emotional/behavioral disorders from the class of 2000 to be tested in eleventh grade. Mean scores for this group vary from 59% to 66% across years. (See Table 8.)

Traumatic brain injury. Since this group is so small, the number of students passing the Basic Standards tests in eighth grade can only be reported as "less than ten." This small number was also reported for ninth and tenth graders. The mean scores for eighth graders ranged from 55% to 60% for Reading or Math. The means for ninth and tenth graders stayed at about 54%. (See Table 9.)

Visual impairment. Fifty five percent of the eighth graders with visual impairments tested in 1996 passed the Reading test. Similarly, in Math 54% of the eighth graders tested in 1996 passed. The mean of the scores for students with visual impairments who took the tests in ninth grade was 70 on the Reading test and 66 on the Math test. These means dropped slightly for the students who repeated testing in tenth grade. The mean scores for most categories of disability were higher in Math than Reading, but for this group it was the other way around. This may be because there are some items on the Math test (usually those with diagrams) that cannot be illustrated in Braille or explained verbally to students with significant visual impairments. Test developers are working on alleviating this problem on future tests. (See Table 10.)

Mild to moderate mental impairments. The average scores for students with mild to moderate mental impairments ranged from the mid-twenties to about 40, about half the percentage points needed to pass the Basic Standards Tests. Only about one percent of these students received passing scores as eighth graders each year.

In ninth grade, one percent of the students in this group passed the Reading test and three percent passed the Math test. On the third testing, as tenth graders, four percent passed the Reading test and two percent passed the Math test. The continued high participation rate in tenth grade suggests that many of the students with mild to moderate mental impairments are working to improve their scores each year, with the ultimate goal of passing either at the state level, or with the highest individual score possible. (See Table 11.)

Autism. The number of students with autism passing the Basic Standards Tests in eighth grade was too small to report in 1996 and 1997. In 1998, 43% of the test-takers passed the Reading test and 36% passed the Math test. As ninth and tenth graders, the number of students passing was also too small to report. Mean scores for students in this group ranged from 50% to about 60%. (See Table 12.)

Moderate to severe mental impairment. None of the eighth graders with moderate to severe mental impairments passed the Basic Standards Tests in Reading or Math. The mean test score for the small number of participants ranged from 23% to 31%, about 50 percentage points below the cut score for passing. The mean score for the small group of students with moderate to severe mental impairments increases slightly in Reading, from 42% to 45% between ninth and tenth grade. In Math, the mean fell from 42% to 23%. This could be due to the fact that there were more than twice as many test takers in tenth grade than there were in ninth grade, increasing the range in performance. Given these scores, it is likely that the majority of students in this disability category will either continue to participate in Basic Standards testing and graduate at an individual level, or participate in an alternate assessment in the future. (See Table 13.)

Discussion

With previously mentioned cautions in mind, the data show significant increases in participation of both students with and without disabilities in Minnesota's Basic Standards Tests. In particular, participation of students receiving special education services increased from 71% to 89% from 1996 to 1998 for the Math test, and from 69% to 89% from 1996 to 1998 for the Reading test. Several recommendations should be considered in light of the information contained in this report. These recommendations aim to maintain the high participation of students receiving

special education services in the Basic Standards Tests and to improve student performance.

- **Participation decisions** need to be made by IEP teams and based on the individual goals and needs of students.
- **Accommodations** need to be clearly defined and offered throughout each student's instructional career.
- **Instructional priorities** need to be set that allow students opportunities to learn the content contained in the tests in many different ways.
- **Alternate assessments** and their potential uses need to be clarified and widely disseminated.

Participation Decisions

Decisions about the level of participation of students receiving special education services on the Basic Standards Tests must be made carefully with each student and the student's family, taking into account the purpose of the test and each student's goals and needs. It is important for IEP teams to make these decisions using guidelines and a decision making process. Researchers from the Minnesota Assessment Project are developing a decision making tool that will be available on-line in 1999, under the special education section of the Department of Children, Families and Learning (children.state.mn.us).

Accommodations

There is still some confusion across Minnesota about the difference between accommodations and modifications, what is allowed and not allowed, and how to record accommodation use. Information that clarifies the use of accommodations must continue to be part of all training and dissemination efforts. Even more importantly, students need to learn to use accommodations and advocate for those most helpful throughout their school career, not just during tests. In order to learn about what types of accommodations are being used by students on the Basic Standards Tests, the Department of Children, Families and Learning designed an accommodations form for the 1999 Basic Standards Tests that will be submitted for analysis with a student's answer sheet.

An increasing number of states allow testing and instructional accommodations for any student who needs them, regardless of eligibility for special education services or 504 accommodation plans. Some Minnesotans would like to see this type of policy.

Instructional Priorities

In order to continue to improve skills in reading, math, and writing, students need many opportunities for instruction in these areas. Concern has been raised about whether this focus might narrow the educational experiences of some students. For example, one teacher described how students in her district who need help in reading are taken out of English class, put into a remedial reading class, and are never exposed to the literature covered in the regular English curriculum (Spicuzza et al., 1996). In another example, a statewide project that has encouraged the participation of students with disabilities in Math and Science found that some students with disabilities were pulled out of science classes for remediation in reading and math, leaving few opportunities to learn important science concepts (Project GOLD, personal communication, August, 1998). An alternative approach that should be considered is one in which reading and math instruction is integrated with other coursework. Special education services then would be provided to teach specific learning strategies and skills that students could practice in all classes.

Alternate Assessments

Beginning in July of 2000, Minnesota will join all other states in the implementation of an "alternate assessment," defined as a different or substitute assessment for students who might be exempt from the Basic Standards Tests. Minnesota's alternate assessment is currently being developed by a task force facilitated by the Office of Special Education at the Department of Children, Families and Learning.

Using the Information in this Report

It is important that the information contained in this report be shared widely, as a basis of discussion about student instruction. Beyond this report, which contains information that is important for system accountability, it is the responsibility of all educators in Minnesota to be accountable for the educational needs of individual students. Educators are encouraged to use the data contained in this report carefully and respectfully, not as a further source of separation between "general" and "special" education, but as a catalyst for the improvement of instruction for all students.

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Appendix A

IDEA Requirements: Participation in Assessment

IDEA Requirements: Participation in Assessment

Section 612 – State Eligibility (a) (17)

(A) in general

Children with disabilities are included in general State and district-wide assessment programs, with appropriate accommodations, where necessary. As appropriate, the State or local educational agency –

(i) develops guidelines for participation of children with disabilities in alternate assessments for those children who cannot participate in State and district-wide assessment programs; and

(ii) develops and, beginning not later than July 1, 2000, conducts those alternate assessments.

(B) Reports

The State 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:

(i) the number of children with disabilities participating in regular assessments,

(ii) the number of those children participating in alternate assessments

(iii) (I) the performance of those children on regular assessments (beginning not later than July 1, 1998) and on alternate assessment (not later than July 1, 2000), if doing so would be statistically sound and would not result in the disclosure of performance results identifiable to individual children.

(II) data relating to the performance of children described under subclause (I) shall be disaggregated –

(aa) for assessments conducted after July 1, 1998; and

(bb) for assessments conducted before July 1, 1998, if the State is required to disaggregate such data prior to July 1, 1998.

Section 614 – Individualized education program

The term 'individualized education program' or 'IEP' means a written statement for each child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with this section and that includes –

(v)(I) a statement of any individual modifications in the administration of State or districtwide assessments of student achievement that are needed in order for the child to participate in such assessment; and

(II) if the IEP Team determines that the child will not participate in a particular State or districtwide assessment of student achievement (or part of such an assessment), a statement of –

(aa) why that assessment is not appropriate for the child; and

(bb) how the child will be assessed.

Appendix B

Accommodations Allowed on Minnesota's Basic Standards Tests

Accommodations Allowed on Minnesota's Basic Standards Tests

Guidelines for accommodations:
An accommodation is defined as any change in testing conditions which does not alter the validity or reliability of the state standard. Accommodations may not compromise the security of the test and should be consistent with the goals of the student's IEP or 504 plan. Students who have accommodations will have their tests scored according to state scoring procedures.
Typically, accommodations allow a change in one or more of the following areas:

- presentation format
- test setting
- scheduling or timing
- response format

Since the testing requirements vary, not every accommodation is appropriate or permitted for every test. Specific accommodations are indicated for specific subject areas.
Accommodations, which require alternate test booklets, testing materials or special handling, are noted. Alternate materials must be requested on the Statewide Testing Registration/Order form.

When selecting accommodations for students, IEP or 504 teams should consider the needs of the student in daily instructional situations as well as any additional needs that might arise in a secure testing situation. **Students may require multiple accommodations such as interpreted directions and extended time.** The following is a suggested list of accommodations. If you wish to provide an accommodation not listed, please check with either the division of Special Education or the Office of Graduation Standards at the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning.

Alternate Presentation Formats

Accommodation	Test
Directions may be given in any format necessary to accommodate students (signing, auditory amplification, repeating, etc.) Test administrators must use the script in the testing manual to explain the task to students. They will not be allowed to go beyond the script in giving or clarifying directions. Directions are found in the test administration manual. These are non-secure documents and may be received prior to test administration.	**Mathematics** **Reading** **Written Composition**
Large-print is an enlarged copy of the test. Students who use the large-print edition will be allowed to mark their answers on the large-print test booklets. (Large print is in Times Roman and is available in 14, 18, 24 and 36-point font size.) Answers must be transferred to a scannable answer sheet by school testing personnel. Transfer of answers must be documented (including the names of the school personnel involved) on the Testing Report form. Be sure to check the accuracy of any transferred answers.	**Mathematics** **Reading** **Written Composition** *Special Order Materials
Braille versions of all tests are available to students who are blind or partially sighted, and are trained in this system. Student responses may be recorded in one of the following ways: • recorded by a proctor, • marked in the booklet by the student, • recorded with a typewriter or word processor, • dictated to a scribe, or • recorded by the student using a Braillewriter or a slate and stylus. A copy of Braille tests will be provided in regular print to test administrators or proctors working with students at the time of testing. Answers must be transferred to a scannable answer sheet by school testing personnel. Transfer of answers must be documented (including the names of the school personnel involved) on the Testing Report form. Be sure to check the accuracy of any transferred answers.	**Mathematics** **Reading** **Written Composition** *Special Order Materials
Magnification or low vision aids may be used by visually impaired students to read tests.	**Mathematics** **Reading** **Written Composition**

Templates to reduce visual print field may be used by students to read tests.	**Mathematics** **Reading** **Written Composition**
Audiocassettes may be provided for students who have difficulty with printed words or numbers and/or who acquire knowledge primarily through the auditory channel. (Materials must be ordered separately). Note: Cassettes should be ordered for each student and administered using headphones or in individual stations.	**Mathematics** *Special Order Materials
A script of the audio cassette may be provided for testing personnel to read or interpret the mathematics test for any student who has difficulty with printed words or numbers and for whom the audio cassette is not appropriate.	**Mathematics** *Special Order Materials
Interpretation of the math test may be provided for deaf or hard of hearing students. The audiocassette or the audiocassette script must be used for interpreting as it has been carefully prepared to maintain the validity of the test. Only literal interpretation of the script is acceptable as an accommodation.	**Mathematics** *Special Order Materials
Large print answer booklets may be provided for students who, due to the size of their handwriting, require more space for Written Composition.	**Written Composition** *Special Order Materials
Short segment test booklets may be ordered for students who are unable to take the entire test in one sitting. These tests may be administered only on the official date during the designated instructional test day. (These are only available for the Basic Standards Test.)	**Mathematics** **Reading** *Special Order Materials

Alternate Scheduling and Setting Formats

Accommodation	Test
Extended time may be provided to any student. While each test has a suggested amount of time for test administration, there is no limit to the amount of time a student may be allowed with in the officially designated instructional test day. Every student should be given sufficient time to respond to every test item.	**Mathematics** **Reading** **Written Composition**
Individual or small group administration may be provided to students who may need to take a test alone in a room or with a small group of students. For example, students who will need additional time, use an audiocassette version of the mathematics, etc. should be allowed to test in a separate room.	**Mathematics** **Reading** **Written Composition**
Special settings may be provided for students. Tests may be administered in rooms with special lighting, acoustics, or furniture to accommodate needs.	**Mathematics** **Reading** **Written Composition**
Testing time during instructional day may be adjusted according to the needs of the student. Students may test at any time during the officially designated instructional test day.	**Mathematics** **Reading** **Written Composition**

Alternate Response Formats

Accommodation	Test
BrailleWriters may be used by students who are trained to use them. Since BrailleWriters include "spellcheckers" which cannot be removed from the machine, a monitor must verify that the student has not activated this portion of the BrailleWriter program. Answers must be transferred to a scannable answer sheet by school testing personnel. Transfer of answers must be documented (including the names of school personnel involved) on the Testing Report form. Be sure to check the accuracy of any transferred answers.	**Mathematics** **Reading** **Written Composition**

Word processors or similar assistive devices may be used if the IEP or 504 team determines it would be appropriate. Students may not have access to the following features of word processing programs: spell check, thesaurus, grammar check, or other reference or preparation materials. Student responses to the Test of Written Composition, which are produced by word processors, must be attached to the scannable writing booklet. Personal information must be filled in by testing personnel in the district. (Answer documents require special handling for return to NCS.) Answers for the reading and mathematics tests must be transferred to a scannable answer booklet by school personnel. Transfer of answers must be documented (including the names of school personnel involved) on the Testing Report form. Be sure to check the accuracy of any transferred answers.	**Mathematics** **Reading** **Written Composition**
Voice-activated computers may be used by students who are trained to use them. Students may not have access to the following features of word processing programs: spell check, thesaurus, grammar check, or other reference or preparation materials. For the test of Written Composition, dictated spelling and punctuation must be verified by the student author. Students must spell out every word and give punctuation for a scribe to write following the dictation of the composition. Scribes must be impartial and should be experienced in transcription. They must write EXACTLY what the student dictates. Students may be given scripted responses for editing purposes. Student responses to the test of Written Composition, which are produced by voice-activated computers, must be attached to the scannable writing booklet. Answers for the reading and mathematics tests must be transferred to a scannable answer sheet by school personnel. Personal information must be filled in by testing personnel in the district. Transfer of answers must be documented (including the names of school personnel involved) on the Testing Report form. Be sure to check the accuracy of any transferred answers.	**Mathematics** **Reading** **Written Composition**
Writing directly in the test booklet is permitted for any student. For example, students may wish to use a highlighter on the reading selections or write out calculations next to math problems. Note: Grade 5 test booklets are not scored. Answers must be transferred to the answer document. (See the section below.)	**Mathematics** **Reading** **Written Composition**
Mark answers in the test booklets. Students may record answers directly onto the test booklets. School testing personnel must transfer answers to the scannable answer sheet. For grade 5, the transfer of answers must be documented (including the names of school personnel involved) on the Testing Report form. Be sure to check the accuracy of any transferred answers. Grade 3 students have scannable test booklets.	**Mathematics** **Reading**
Tape recorders may be used to record answers if the student is unable to mark a scannable answer sheet. Answers must be transferred to a scannable answer booklet by school testing personnel. Transfer of answers must be documented (including the names of school personnel involved) on the Testing Report form. Be sure to check the accuracy of any transferred answers.	**Mathematics** **Reading**
Tape recording of the Reading Test may be done in individual testing settings. The student may read the reading test into a tape recorder. The tape may be replayed by the student as the test is taken.	**Reading**
Tape recording of pre-writing is permitted in individual testing settings. Students may record their ideas to assist in pre-writing organization. The students may replay their dictation as they organize their compositions.	**Written Composition**
Scribes may be provided for students whose visual motor responses inhibit their ability to write answers. Scribes must be impartial and should be experienced in transcription. They must write EXACTLY what the student dictates. Students must spell out every word and give punctuation for a scribe to write following the dictation of the composition. Students may be given scripted responses for editing purposes. Personal information must be transferred to a scannable answer sheet by school testing personnel. The transcription must be documented (including the names of school personnel involved) on the Testing Report form.	**Written Composition**
An Abacus may be used in place of a calculator on the calculator portion of the Mathematics test.	**Mathematics**

Appendix C

Minnesota Assessment Provisions for Students with IEPs and 504 Accommodation Plans

3501.0090 STUDENTS WITH INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLANS OR SECTION 504 ACCOMMODATION PLANS.

Subpart 1. **Considerations for students with IEPs or section 504 accommodation plans.**

A. The IEP or section 504 accommodation plan for a student with a disability shall identify one of the following decisions for each of the basic requirements:

1. the student is expected to achieve the statewide standard with or without testing accommodations;

2. the student is expected to achieve the statewide standard at an individually modified level of difficulty; or

3. the student is exempt from the statewide standard.

An exemption from the statewide standard shall be granted to a special needs student when the student cannot demonstrate the required degree of learning with appropriate accommodations or modifications if:

1. the student's IEP or section 504 accommodation plan does not and never has included the requirements on which the tests are based; or

2. the student is enrolled in special education classes for the subject matter included in the test, but the student's IEP or section 504 accommodation plan does not include a majority of concepts tested.

B. Adoption of modifications or exemptions for a student as stated in item A, shall occur concurrently with the adoption of transition goals and objectives as required in Minnesota Statutes, section 120.17, subdivision 3a, clause (1).

Subp. 2. **Testing students with IEPs or section 504 accommodation plans.**

A. All students shall be tested under standard conditions as specified by the developer of the test except those students whose IEPs specify other decisions consistent with subpart 1, item A.

B. Decisions regarding appropriate testing conditions including a decision to provide accommodations for a student with special needs shall be made by the local school district through the IEP process or the section 504 accommodation plan process and shall be reviewed annually.

C. Where subpart 1, item A, subitem (2), applies, the student's IEP or section 504 accommodation plan shall define an appropriate assessment of the statewide standard at a modified level of difficulty. Achievement of the individually modified standard shall be certified only through documented student performance of the defined assessment.

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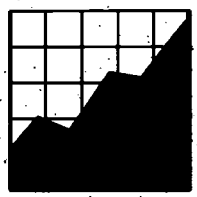

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