

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 446 118

TM 031 879

TITLE Participation Guidelines for Alaska Students in State Assessments.

INSTITUTION Alaska State Dept. of Education and Early Development, Juneau.

PUB DATE 2000-00-00

NOTE 13p.

PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS *Academic Accommodations (Disabilities); Decision Making; *Disabilities; Elementary Secondary Education; *Limited English Speaking; *Participation; *State Programs; Student Evaluation; Testing Problems; *Testing Programs

IDENTIFIERS *Alaska

ABSTRACT

This publication provides guidance for making decisions about the participation in regular assessments of individual students in Alaska with disabilities and with limited English proficiency. It also provides guidance for deciding if a student requires a testing accommodation or an alternate assessment. The regular assessments included criterion-referenced tests at grades 3, 6, and 8 (Benchmark Examinations) and a High School Graduation Qualifying Examination. Regular assessments also include the norm-referenced tests given at selected grade levels and test accommodations for some students. Alternate assessments are available for students with disabilities who are unable to participate in the regular assessments even with accommodations. The first section consider students with disabilities. The student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) is the cornerstone for educating a child with a disability, and the student's IEP team makes decisions about assessment participation and the types of testing accommodation that may be necessary. The types of accommodation that require documentation are defined. The second section explores testing for students of limited English proficiency. Alaska has a long history of linguistic diversity. The conditions under which testing may be delayed or exemptions may be granted, as for recent immigrants, are defined. (SLD)

PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES

For Alaska Students
in State Assessments

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND
DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS
BEEN GRANTED BY

D. Markovich

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

- This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

**Alaska
Department
of Education
& Early
Development**



EDUCATION
& EARLY DEVELOPMENT

Department of Education & Early Development
801 W. 10th Street, #200, Juneau, AK 99801-1894
Phone: (907) 465-2800
Web Site: www.eed.state.ak.us

LETTER FROM COMMISSIONER

Dear Alaskans,

The Quality Schools Initiative promises many benefits for our children's education. It also presents challenges. One challenge is the federal mandate to include all students in Alaska's new Comprehensive System of Student Assessments. In the past, we have allowed the exclusion of some students from assessments, particularly those not proficient in English or those with more severe disabilities. Obviously, including every student requires a higher level of commitment from us all.

This publication, Participation Guidelines for Alaska Students in State Assessments, was prepared in cooperation with several committees of distinguished Alaska educators to help Alaska fulfill its commitment to include all students in its state assessments. This publication provides guidance for making decisions about the participation in regular assessments of individual students with disabilities and with limited English proficiency. It also provides guidance for deciding if a student requires a testing accommodation or an alternate assessment.

This publication is being circulated knowing the difficulty of anticipating each circumstance that may arise when facing decisions about assessing students with disabilities and with limited English proficiency. For this reason, these guidelines should not be viewed as the final word on this complex issue in every case. As we learn more from experience, we will update this publication. I encourage you to share what you learn.

Together we can make it work. All children can reach high standards.

Sincerely,



Richard S. Cross
Commissioner of Education & Early Development

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview	5
Making Decisions about Students with Disabilities	7
Accommodation Guidelines for Students in Special Education and Students with a 504 Accommodation Plan.....	8
Test Accommodations versus Test Modifications	8
Selecting Test Accommodations for Students with Disabilities	8
Making Decisions about Students who are Limited English Proficient	11
What are the Characteristics of Students who are Limited English Proficient?	11
Language Proficiency Assessment Procedures for Students who are Limited English Proficient.....	12
References	15

OVERVIEW

The policy for assuring accountability of Alaska's public school system is provided by the Quality Schools Initiative. The Quality Schools Initiative (QSI) requires school districts to adopt challenging academic standards in reading, writing and mathematics, and to assess whether students are attaining the standards.

To ensure full accountability, districts must assess all students, including students with disabilities and those who are limited English proficient (LEP). To accomplish this, the Department of Education & Early Development has developed a two-tiered Comprehensive System of Student Assessments:

REGULAR ASSESSMENTS These include criterion-referenced tests at grades three, six and eight (called Benchmark Examinations) and a High School Graduation Qualifying Examination (HSGQE) for the high school level. Regular assessments also include norm-referenced tests given at selected grade levels and test accommodations for some students.

ALTERNATE ASSESSMENTS These are available for students with disabilities, who, even with accommodations, are unable to participate in the regular assessments.

The following sections describe procedures to assist schools in making decisions about how to include students with disabilities and students who are LEP in state assessments. These guidelines promote the inclusion of all students in regular assessments. They are consistent with Alaska statutes and regulations and such federal laws as the *Improving America's Schools Act* and *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*.

MAKING DECISIONS

About Students with Disabilities

The **Individualized Educational Program (IEP)** is the cornerstone for educating a child with a disability. The IEP is a written statement of a child's educational program that identifies services needed for the child to grow and learn during the school year. The IEP defines goals for the school year; the services needed to help the child meet those goals; and a method of evaluating progress. As its name suggests, the Individualized Educational Program is written to reflect the child's *individual and unique* needs. The student's IEP team makes one of three decisions regarding assessment participation. These are:

- Participation in regular assessments *without* accommodations.
- Participation in regular assessments *with* accommodations.
- Participation in special education alternate assessments.

It is expected that a small (less than 2%) number of all students will participate in alternate assessments. These will be students whose disabilities are so significant that they are not involved in a standard course of study leading to a high school diploma. When a student's IEP calls for alternate assessments, the reasons must be documented on the IEP. All IEP meeting participants must understand that alternate assessments *do not* lead to a high school diploma.

In deciding that a student should participate in alternate assessments, an IEP team must ensure that:

- The student's cognitive ability and adaptive skill levels prevent completing the standard academic curricula, even with modifications and accommodations.
- The student requires extensive direct instruction in multiple settings to apply and transfer skills.
- The student is involved in a functional, basic-skills education program.
- The student's inability to complete the standard academic curricula is not the result of extended absences; visual, auditory, or physical disabilities; emotional-behavioral disabilities; specific learning disabilities; or social, cultural, or economic differences.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires accommodations for some students with disabilities. Its purpose is to help students whose disabilities may limit their access to instruction. A 504 Accommodation Plan is not an Individualized Education Program. However, a student moving from a special education to

a regular education placement could be placed under a 504 Accommodation Plan. As with students in special education, the 504 team makes one of the above decisions regarding how students will participate in assessments.

Accommodation Guidelines for Students in Special Education and Students with a 504 Accommodation Plan

In order to provide fair and valid assessments, students will be allowed appropriate accommodations when being tested. Test accommodations are defined as follows:

A testing accommodation is a change made to ensure that information obtained from a test is an accurate reflection of what the test is intended to measure rather than a measure of the student's disability. Accommodations are changes to the setting, scheduling, timing, presentation or response format of a test made to reduce confounding influences of a disability. Accommodations are designed for specific individuals to meet specific needs that these individuals have. While meeting these needs, accommodations must not compromise the validity of the test. (adapted from Models for Understanding Task Comparability).

Test Accommodations versus Test Modifications

Some changes to the setting, scheduling, timing, presentation or response format of a test alter what is measured by the test. For example, when the questions on a reading test are read to an examinee, the test results do not represent reading ability. Similarly, when a calculator is used on a test of basic mathematics competencies, it is a skill other than computation that is being measured. Other changes can alter the level of performance expected on a test, for example administering a 3rd grade test to a 6th grade student. Changes to a testing situation that alter what the test measures or the level of performance that must be met are called test modifications. Test modifications are not permitted on examinations required by the Department of Education & Early Development.

Selecting Test Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Because of the close link between assessment and instruction, accommodations for assessment must be part of the student's instruction. The IEP or 504 Accommodation Plan of students with disabilities must describe the accommodations. This allows those who best understand the student's needs to choose assessment accommodations. In general, any accommodations provided to a student must have been used in that student's regular or special education classes for at least three (3) months prior to testing. Staff members must document on the IEP or 504 Accommodation Plan their use and provide a clear rationale for determining assessment accommodations.

Any list of accommodations will eventually be rendered incomplete because advances in the technology of adaptive and assistive devices will eventually lead to new accommodations. For this reason, the accommodations listed in Table 1 should not be viewed as exhaustive. In some circumstances an IEP team may have to

consider the appropriateness of an accommodation not included in Table 1. In such circumstances, the IEP team should evaluate the appropriateness of a potential accommodation by considering the following questions:

1. Is the change being considered a modification or an accommodation? In other words, will the change alter the validity of the test?
2. Will the change give the student an unfair advantage in the test?
3. Is the change needed to lessen the impact of a disability, or will it artificially raise the test score of the student?
4. Will the change compromise test security or violate test administration rules?

Table 1. Accommodations That Require Documentation

<p>TIMING/SCHEDULING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administering the test over several days, specifying duration (not permitted for HSGQE). • Allowing frequent breaks during testing. <p>SETTING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administering the test individually in a separate location. • Administering the test to a small group in a separate location. • Providing special lighting. • Providing adaptive or special furniture. • Providing special acoustics. • Administering the test in locations with minimal distractions, in a small group, study carrel, or individually. • Using a communication device such as auditory amplification to give directions. • Using a special test administrator, including the examinee's teacher. <p>PRESENTATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using a Braille edition or large-type edition. <p>Test Directions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signing directions to student. • Allowing student to ask for clarifications. • Reading directions to student. <p>Use of Assistive Devices/Supports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using visual magnification devices. • Using templates to reduce visible print. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using auditory amplification device, hearing aid, or noise buffers. • Securing papers to work area with tape/magnets. • Using a device to screen out extraneous sounds. • Using masks or markers to maintain place. • Using dark, heavy or raised lines. • Using assistive devices. <p>RESPONSE</p> <p>Test Format</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using graph paper. • Using paper in an alternative format (Braille, etc.). • Allowing students to mark responses in test booklet if test employs a separate answer sheet. • Using a scribe. <p>Use of Assistive Devices/Supports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowing student to tape response for later verbatim transcription. • Using typewriter or computer <i>without</i> spell or grammar checker. • Dictating to a proctor/scribe. • Allowing alternative responses such as oral, sign, typed, pointing. • Using a Braille. • Using a large-diameter, special-grip pencil. • Using markers to maintain place.
---	--

MAKING DECISIONS

About Students who are Limited English Proficient

Alaska has a long history of linguistic diversity that continues today. Among the states, Alaska is one of the few whose principal secondary languages are Native. While some Alaskans in urban and seaport areas speak Spanish, Tagalog and other Pacific Island languages, many students in large areas of the state speak Yupiit and Inupiaq Eskimo. Elsewhere there is a renewed interest in learning and teaching Tlingit, Tsimpshian, Haida, Athabascan, Aleut and other Native languages.

While students who are LEP must be assessed, it is recognized that these students may not have learned the content nor be able to fully understand English-only assessments. For this reason, districts with students whose first language is not English and who have participated in language immersion or transitional bilingual programs beginning in kindergarten or grade one, may delay administering the grade three Benchmark Examination until grade four. Subsequently, all students who are LEP will take norm-referenced tests, Benchmark Examinations at grades six and eight, and the High School Graduation Qualifying Examination at the appropriate grade levels.

One other exception pertains to students who are LEP who are recent immigrants. If a student who is LEP attended school for two or more years in their country of origin and English was not the language of instruction, that student may be exempted from examination. The student may be exempted from the norm-referenced test and Benchmark Examinations at grades three, six and eight, but *not* from the HSGQE. This exemption may extend for no more than two years from the date the student enters school in Alaska. All other students who are LEP must participate in state assessments.

What are the Characteristics of Students who are Limited English Proficient?

The U.S. Department of Education broadly defines a linguistically diverse student (typically defined as limited English proficient) as an individual who:

1. Was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; or
2. Is a Native American or Alaska Native or who is a native resident of the outlying areas and comes from an environment where a language other

than English has had a significant impact on such individual's level of English language proficiency; or

3. Is migratory and whose native language is other than English and comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; and
4. Has sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language and whose difficulties may deny such individual the opportunity to learn successfully in classrooms where the language of instruction is English or to participate fully in our society.

This population is diverse, with unique characteristics that must be assessed to ensure that the needs of each student who is LEP are addressed. The level of English proficiency varies. A student who is LEP usually enters the nation's school system with limited skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English. Proficiency levels can include no competency, limited-English ability, and near proficiency. Some students who are LEP who have lived in the United States for several years may appear quite fluent in English on the playground, but experience major academic difficulties.

Some students who are LEP come from families who have recently entered the country, others come from families who have lived here five or more years, and some families have lived here for generations or are native to this country. Some students who are LEP may have had no formal educational experience, while others may have had extensive experience in a formal program.

Language Proficiency Assessment Procedures for Students who are Limited English Proficient

Because districts must have an alternative language program designed to meet the linguistic and educational needs of students who are LEP, every student who is LEP must be tested for English language proficiency when initially identified. Assessment shall be done in all four areas of language: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Oral assessment of English language proficiency may be sufficient for students who are LEP in kindergarten and first grade, depending on the district's expectations for those grade levels. Except for students who are LEP enrolled in language immersion or transitional bilingual programs that began in kindergarten or first grade, students who are LEP in grades second through twelve are expected to have grade-appropriate skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English. Assessments are available for testing proficiency in these four language-skill areas. Some examples of language proficiency assessments include:

- The Idea Proficiency Test (IPT);
- Language Assessment Scales (LAS); and

-
- The Woodcock-Muñoz Language Survey.

Staff members should identify as LEP any student scoring below the publisher's threshold of oral English proficiency. Any student who is LEP in second grade or above who is orally proficient in English but who scores below the test/assessment publisher's threshold for reading or writing proficiency (or the grade-level standard) should be identified as LEP.

REFERENCES

Colorado Handbook on Planning for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Student Success. Colorado Department of Education, 1994.

Improving America's Schools Act Conference Report to Accompany H.R. 6, 1994, Sec. 7501 (8) (A)(B).

Kopriva, Rebecca J. *Ensuring Accuracy in Testing for LEP Students: A Practical Guide for Assessment Development.* LEP Consortium Project, Council of Chief State School Officers, undated draft .

Olson, John and Goldstein, Arnold. *The Inclusion of Students with Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students in Large Scale Assessments: A Summary of Recent Progress,* Chapter 3. National Center for Educational Progress.

Shepard, Lorie, Taylor, Grace, and Betebenner, Damian. *Inclusion of Limited-English-Proficient Students in Rhode Island's Grade 4 Mathematics Performance Assessment.* CSE Technical Report 486. Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing, University of Colorado, September 1998.

Short, Deborah. *Issues Pertaining to Students with Limited English Proficiency.* Testimony to the National Assessment Governing Board, October 14, 1998, Washington, DC.

Through the Eyes of a Teacher: A Manual. Washington Office of Bilingual Education & Interface Network Inc., September 1993.

Tindal, Gerald and Fuchs, Lynn. *A Summary of Research on Test Changes: An Empirical Basis for Defining Accommodations.* Mid-South Regional Resource Center, University of Kentucky, July 1999.

Wyoming Department of Education, *Policies for the Participation of All Students in District and Statewide Assessment and Accountability Systems,* February 15, 1999.

AERA



U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)



REPRODUCTION RELEASE
(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Form with fields for Title, Author(s), Corporate Source, and Publication Date. Title: Participation Guidelines for Alaska Students in State Assessment.

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, Resources in Education (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS).

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

Level 1 permission form: PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY [Signature] TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Level 1

Checked box for Level 1

Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) and paper copy.

Level 2A permission form: PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY [Signature] TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Level 2A

Unchecked box for Level 2A

Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only

Level 2B permission form: PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY [Signature] TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Level 2B

Unchecked box for Level 2B

Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits. If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Sign here, please

Signature block with fields for Signature, Printed Name/Position/TITLE, Telephone, Fax, E-Mail Address, and Date. Signature: Darcy Markovich, Executive Secretary.