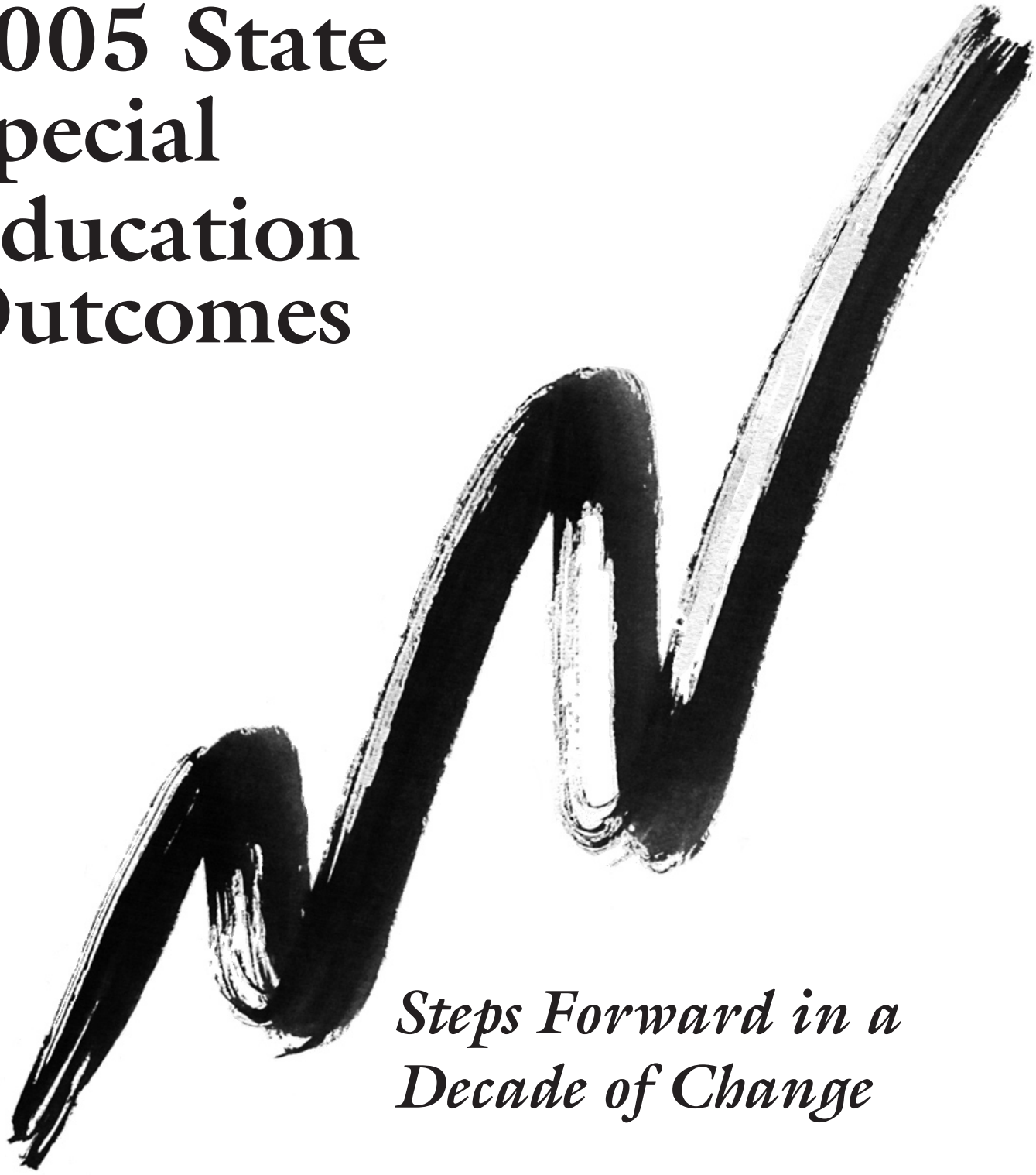
2005 State Special Education Outcomes



Steps Forward in a Decade of Change

Thompson, S. J., Johnstone, C. J., Thurlow, M. L., & Altman, J. R. (2005). *2005 State special education outcomes: Steps forward in a decade of change*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.

The Mission of the National Center on Educational Outcomes

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NCEO IS A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, THE National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE), and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). NCEO provides national leadership in assisting state and local education agencies in their development of policies and practices that encourage and support the participation of students with disabilities in accountability systems and data collection efforts.

NCEO focuses its efforts in the following areas:

- **Research** on the participation and performance of students with disabilities in state and national assessments and other educational reform efforts.
- **Dissemination and Technical Assistance** through publications, presentations, technical assistance, and other networking activities.
- **Collaboration and Leadership** to build on the expertise of others and to develop leaders who can conduct needed research and provide additional technical assistance.

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Acknowledgments

With the collective efforts of State Directors of Special Education, we are able to report on the activities of all 50 states and six of eleven federally funded entities (unique states). Because of the thoughtful and knowledgeable responses of the directors and their designees who completed this survey, we are able to share new initiatives, trends, accomplishments, and emerging issues during this important period of education reform. The purpose of this report is to make public the trends and issues facing states, as well as the innovations states are using to meet the demands of Federal legislation. We appreciate the time taken by respondents to gather information from people outside of special education, and we hope that this collaborative effort provided an opportunity to increase awareness within and across state programs and departments.

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These were the state directors of special education in May 2005 when NCEO verified the survey.

Executive Summary

This report summarizes the tenth survey of state directors of special education by the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) at the University of Minnesota. Results include all 50 states and six of the eleven federally funded entities (unique states). The purpose of this report is to provide a snapshot of the new initiatives, trends, accomplishments, and emerging issues during this important period of education reform as states document the academic achievement of students with disabilities during standards-based reform.

States continue to work on the participation of students with disabilities in state assessments. The calculation of participation rates is based on different denominators in different states. Most states use either the number of students with disabilities enrolled within a month of the test or the number of students with disabilities counted on test day, yet some still use the number of students tested or the enrollment on December 1. Use of accommodations is also documented in some way by every state.

The report contains good news: the number of students with disabilities achieving proficiency on state accountability tests is increasing. Most states now have at least three years of trend data and enough evaluation data to be able to attribute increased proficiency to several positive efforts by schools and districts. There have been many changes during the past two years as increasing numbers of students receive the instruction they need to meet grade level proficiency.

When states were asked which factors contributed to positive trends found in the survey, at least half of the states credited the following six factors:

- Clearly communicated participation policy
- Better alignment of IEPs with standards
- Improved professional development
- Development and provision of accommodation guidelines and training
- Increased access to standards-based instruction
- Improved data collection

Updates on alternate assessments show continued evolution in various aspects, from the approach itself, to the content, setting of standards, and the scoring criteria that are used. Areas of emerging practice include for a few states item analyses and disaggregating assessment results by English language learners. For about half the states, emerging practice includes field testing in alternate formats and disaggregating assessment results by disability category. Nearly all of the states are conducting further work in the area of universally designed assessments.

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Eleven Unique States

American Samoa
Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)
Department of Defense
District of Columbia
Guam
Mariana Islands
Marshall Islands
Micronesia
Palau
Puerto Rico
U.S. Virgin Islands

Overview of 2005 Survey

This report marks the tenth time over the past 14 years that the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) has collected information from state directors of special education about the participation and achievement of students with disabilities during standards-based reform. As this survey reached final preparation, the government reauthorized the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). As in 1997, IDEA 2004 requires states to report the number of students with disabilities who participate in state assessments. Likewise, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) requires the reporting of participation rates by subgroup, including students with disabilities.

We are able to report, for the first time, that the number of students with disabilities achieving proficiency on state tests for accountability is improving.

We are able to report, for the first time, that the number of students with disabilities achieving proficiency on state tests for accountability is improving. Most states now have at least three years of performance data and enough evaluation data to be able to attribute increased proficiency to several positive efforts by schools and districts. This report begins with descriptions of trends in participation and performance and then, as in past years, takes a careful look at accommodations use, alternate assessment, emerging practices and issues, and technical assistance needs. Readers will see many changes during the past two years as increasing numbers of students receive the instruction they need to meet grade level proficiency and as states and districts continue to strive to meet goals for adequate yearly progress (AYP) as required by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. One of the greatest improvements is the increased trend toward proficiency on state assessments by students with disabilities. At least half of the states attribute these positive trends to six factors:

- Clearly communicated participation policy
- Better alignment of IEPs with standards
- Improved professional development
- Development and provision of accommodations guidelines and training
- Increased access to standards-based instruction
- Improved data collection

There is no doubt that difficult issues remain, but progress over the past two years has been strong and positive, providing hope for the same in the future.

Participation and Performance

The 2004 Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act requires states to report the number of students with disabilities who participate in state assessments. Likewise, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) requires the reporting of participation rates by subgroup, including students with disabilities. In this survey, NCEO asked states how students were included in 2003-2004 state assessment accountability reports for NCLB.

Participation rates differentially reflect students who do not participate in any way, students who do not complete the assessment, students who use invalid accommodations, and students who tested at a grade lower than their level of enrollment.

States responded that they include students with disabilities in their participation reports in different ways, depending on whether they are: students who do not participate in state assessments in any way (e.g., absent on test day, parent refusal, hospitalized); students who attended (sat for) assessments, but did not complete enough items to score; students who used invalid accommodations (e.g., non-standard, modifications); or students who tested at a lower grade than their level of enrollment. Table 1 demonstrates the ways in which states count students in these categories.

The majority of states (n=35, 70%) do not count students who did not participate in the state assessment at all, and give them no score. Other states count non-participating students but give them no score (n=4, 8%), or count students as participants and score them at the lowest proficiency level or a score of zero (n=7, 14%).

Reporting practices differ among states for students who attended (sat for) an assessment but did not complete enough items to score. Twenty-one states count students as participants and score them at the lowest proficiency level or give them a score of zero (42%), and 17 states count these students as participants and give them no score (34%).

Students who use accommodations defined as "invalid" (e.g., read aloud accommodation on a reading test, calculator accommodation on a portion of a mathematics test that does not allow calculators) are also counted in varied ways. States most often count these students as participants but give them no score (n=7, 14%), or a score of zero or the lowest proficiency level (n=17, 34%). Twelve state directors (24%) report that their state does not allow "invalid" accommodations; therefore, they do not consider reporting issues. Other states noted that students who use invalid accommodations are not counted as participants (n=8, 16%).

A practice in some states is to test students on content outside of their current grade level. Twenty-five states (50%) report that they currently allow out-of-level testing. Among states that do allow students to be tested at a grade level lower than their grade of enrollment, approximately half count students as participants and give a score of zero or the lowest proficiency level (n=11, 22%). Of the rest, most states count the earned score as valid (n=10, 20%). Unique states count students in proportions similar to those of regular states.

Table 1: Reporting Practices for Counting Students as Assessment Participants

		Not Counted as Participants, Received No Score	Counted as Participants, Received No Score	Counted as Participants, Received Score of Zero or Lowest Proficiency Level	Earned Score is Counted as Valid	Other
Students who did not participate in state assessments in any way (e.g., absent on test day, parent refusal)	Regular States	**35**	**4**	**7**	**0**	**3**
	Unique States	**3**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**3**
Students who attended (sat for) assessment, but did not complete enough items to score	Regular States	**6**	**17**	**21**	**5**	**1**
	Unique States	**0**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**3**
Students who used invalid accommodations (e.g., non-standard, modifications)	Regular States	**8**	**7**	**17**	**6**	**12**
	Unique States	**0**	**1**	**2**	**0**	**3**
Students who tested at a lower grade than their level of enrollment	Regular States	**2**	**2**	**11**	**10**	**24**
	Unique States	**0**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**2**

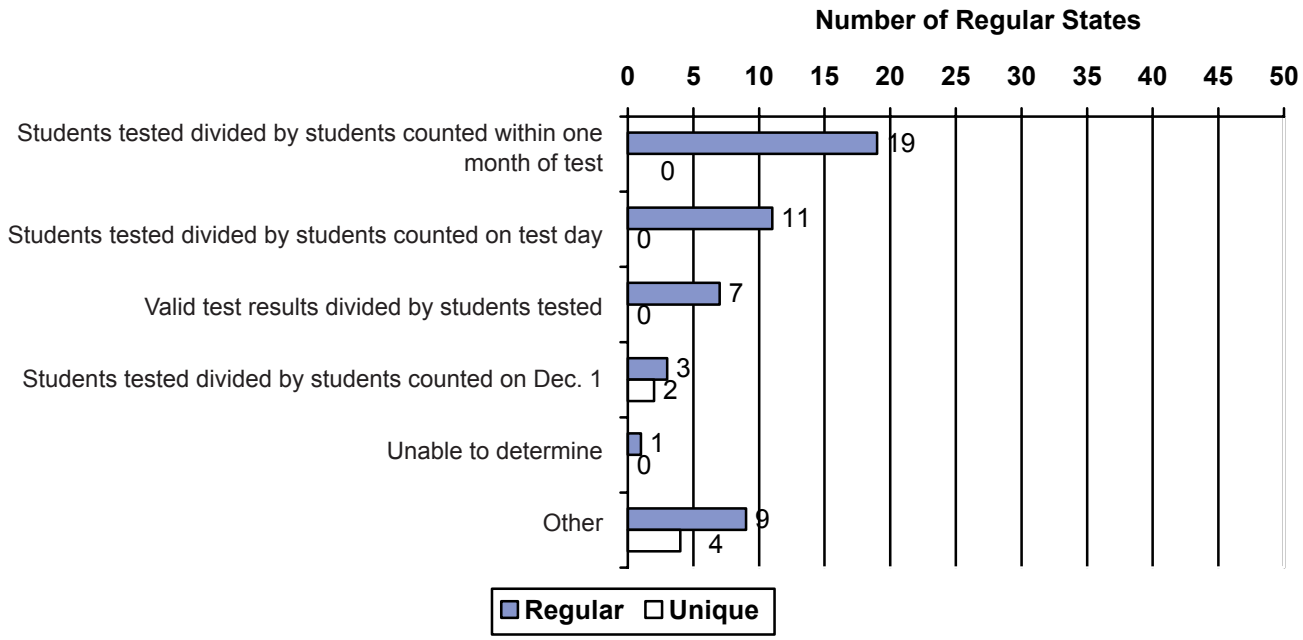
Rate Calculation

Nineteen states calculate participation rate as the number of students with disabilities divided by the total number of students enrolled within a month of the test administration.

In 2005, NCEO asked state directors how they determine the participation rates for students with disabilities in state assessments. The answers reflecting state methods for counting participation are shown in Figure 1. A number of states (n=19, 38%) take the number of students with disabilities tested **divided by** the total number of students enrolled within a month of the test. However, responses to this question varied widely, representing the diversity of approaches that states use to report participation of students with disabilities in large-scale assessments. Some states arrive at a participation rate by dividing the number of students tested by the number of students counted on test day (n=11, 22%), while others divide valid test results by the number of students tested (n=7, 14%), and others divide the number of students tested by the number of students enrolled on December 1 (n=3, 6%). Unique states also use a variety of formulae for calculating participation rates.

Nine states do not use any of the formulae for calculating participation rates that were provided as prompts in the NCEO survey. In these states, directors chose "other" as a survey response, and reported a number of ways participation rates are determined. Within this category, states vary in how to count the number of students tested (the numerator), and the total number of students (the denomina-

Figure 1. Regular and Unique State Participation Rate Formulae for Students with Disabilities



Nearly all states are able to document performance trends across at least three years, and not one of the directors in the regular states reported a decrease in percent of students with disabilities achieving proficiency.

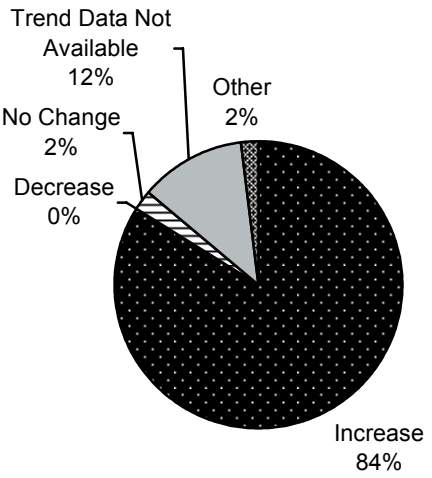
tor). For example, one state reports the number of students with disabilities with *valid* test results **divided by** the number of students reported by the December 1 special education child counts. Another state takes the number of test takers with disabilities tested **divided by** the number of students with disabilities enrolled as of the 4th Friday in September of that school year. Finally, one state director confidently reports that the participation rate is always 100 percent because all students are tested.

Performance Trends

In 2003, NCEO asked state directors about the consequences of inclusive assessment and accountability. This year we took the most common responses from that question and an open-ended question on trends in achievement and asked new questions. Did states have data showing trends over the past three years in the achievement of students with disabilities on state tests? If they did have trend data, to what did they attribute the trends? Nearly all states are now able to document trends across at least three years in the state assessment performance of students with disabilities (n=44, 88%). In 2005, not one director in a regular state reported a decrease in the percent of students with disabilities achieving proficiency, though one state reported an increase in proficiency in some areas and a decrease in others. Figure 2 shows the results. Half of the unique states surveyed could not document trend data at the current time. Two unique states reported an increase in the number of students achieving proficiency.

Several state directors submitted comments on current trends in assessment. One director stated, "Fluctuations exist across all five tests and across the grade levels

Figure 2. Trends in Achievement for Students with Disabilities (Percentage of Regular States)



Positive trends in performance are attributed to participation policy, alignment of IEPs to standards, professional development, accommodations guidelines and training, access to standards-based instruction, and improved data collection.

tested." According to another state director, "The trend is more toward improved performance scores overall; the numbers of students achieving proficiency, although increasing a little, remains low."

As noted in previous NCEO Surveys of State Directors of Special Education (Thompson & Thurlow, 2001, 2003), inclusive assessment and accountability are critical areas of information for states. As shown in Figure 3, at least half of the states attributed positive trends in performance to each of these six factors:

- Clearly communicated participation policy (n=36, 72%)
- Better alignment of IEPs with standards (n=32, 64%)
- Improved professional development (n=28, 56%)
- Development and provision of accommodations guidelines and training (n=27, 54%)
- Increased access to standards-based instruction (n=26, 52%)
- Improved data collection (n=26, 52%)

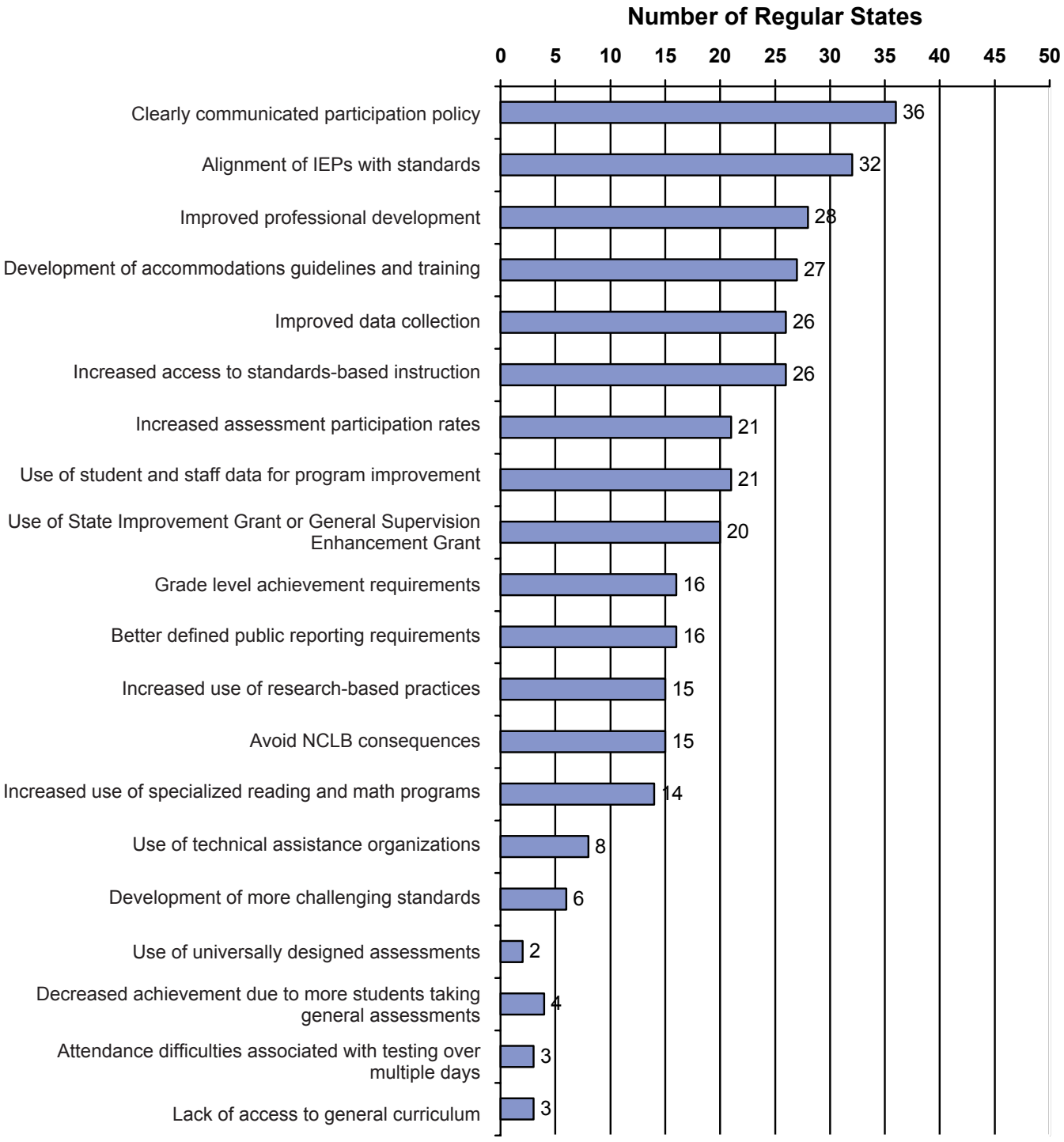
In addition to the attributes listed in Figure 3, state directors made these comments:

> "We are in the early stage of development. With implementation of a new [statewide] test, we will need to re-examine this question as we observe emerging patterns under new test program. Most of [the] current change is probably due to increasing public awareness of expectation and consequences."

> "Concurrent to general trends in improved student achievement, most of our students with disabilities are served in general education environments. Achievement has generally improved for all students."

Fifteen state directors indicated that avoidance of NCLB consequences was partially responsible for current trends (30%). Far fewer state directors selected negative attributes than positive. Four state directors expressed concern that students with disabilities may not be able to reach proficiency on a state's general assessments (8%).

Figure 3. Perceived Causes of Achievement Trends



Accommodations

ALL STATES NOW DOCUMENT ACCOMMODATIONS USE ON TEST DAY, ALTHOUGH WITH different levels of specificity. This is a major change in the past few years. In the report, *2001 State Special Education Outcomes*, 21 states reported that they did *not* document the use of accommodations on state assessments at the state level. This number decreased to three states in 2003.

All states report documenting accommodations use on test day.

Table 2 shows the ways that states document accommodation use in 2005. Approximately half of the regular states (n=26, 52%) and fewer of the unique states (n=2, 18%) mark specific accommodations on the test or response form, whereas only 16% of the regular states and no unique states mark only "standard" or "nonstandard." This is a contrast to 2003 results, where 15 states (30%) indicated they documented accommodations in the dichotomous (standard/nonstandard) form.

Table 2. State Documentation of Assessment Accommodations Use

State	Test/Response Form Has Space to Mark Specific Accommodations	Test/Response Form Has Space to Mark Non-Specific Accommodations	Test/Response Form Has Space to Mark Standard or Non-Standard Accommodations	Local Documentation of Use Only	Other
Alabama		■			
Alaska	■				
Arizona			■		
Arkansas	■				
California		■			
Colorado	■				
Connecticut	■				
Delaware					■
Florida	■				
Georgia			■		
Hawaii	■				
Idaho			■		
Illinois		■			
Indiana		■			
Iowa		■			
Kansas			■		
Kentucky	■				
Louisiana	■				
Maine		■			
Maryland		■			
Massachusetts			■		
Michigan				■	
Minnesota		■			
Mississippi	■				
Missouri	■				
Montana			■		
Nebraska		■			
Nevada			■		
New Hampshire	■				
New Jersey		■			
New Mexico	■				
New York	■				
North Carolina	■				
North Dakota					■
Ohio	■				
Oklahoma		■			
Oregon	■				

Table 2. State Documentation of Assessment Accommodations Use (continued)

State	Test/Response Form Has Space to Mark Specific Accommodations	Test/Response Form Has Space to Mark Non-Specific Accommodations	Test/Response Form Has Space to Mark Standard or Non-Standard Accommodations	Local Documentation of Use Only	Other
Pennsylvania	■				
Rhode Island	■				
South Carolina	■				
South Dakota			■		
Tennessee	■				
Texas	■				
Utah		■			
Vermont	■				
Virginia	■				
Washington	■				
West Virginia				■	
Wisconsin	■				
Wyoming	■				
Total Regular States	**26**	**12**	**8**	**2**	**2**
American Samoa*					
Bureau of Indian Affairs					■
Department of Defense	■				
District of Columbia*					
Guam*					
Mariana Islands				■	
Marshall Islands**					
Micronesia**					
Palau*					
Puerto Rico*					
U.S. Virgin Islands	■				
Total Unique States	**2**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**1**

* Did not complete survey.
** Is not required to collect or report data.

Alternate Assessments

NCEO BEGAN TRACKING ALTERNATE ASSESSMENTS IN 1997, AND STATES WERE required to start implementing them in 2000. IDEA 2004 describes alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards as assessments for students unable to participate in regular state or district-wide assessments because they are students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

Forty-five regular states offer an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards.

Most states (n=45, 90%) offer an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards. Ten states (20%) indicate they also offer an alternate assessment based on grade-level achievement standards.

Almost half of the states (22, 44%) in the U.S. have changed their assessment participation policies/guidelines since the December 9, 2003 regulation on alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards. One state reported that the alternate assessment is a "work in progress, as it appears our extended indicators may still not meet the federal requirements."

Alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards are intended for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. We asked states how they would define this population of students and found that each state had its own distinct definition. For example, New Hampshire looks for the following three criteria:

1. The student has an IEP.
2. Evidence that the student's demonstrated cognitive ability and adaptive behavioral skills: prevent him/her from demonstrating achievement of the proficiency standards described in the NH Curriculum Frameworks, even with appropriate accommodations, and require individualized instruction in multiple settings (school, work, home and community environments) to acquire, generalize, and transfer skills necessary for functional application.
3. There is historical data (current and longitudinal across multiple settings) that confirms the individual student criteria listed above.

Kentucky uses policy from state regulation in determining what qualifies a student as one with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Wyoming defines a student with the most significant cognitive disabilities as one with "significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period that adversely affects a child's educational performance." The Department of Defense defines these students as "students with an identified moderate to profound intellectual disability as measured on a standardized IQ assessment."

These are some of the varied definitions of students with the "most significant cognitive disabilities" that states use to guide participation in alternate assessments. Appendix A provides the definitions used by all the regular and unique states able to provide this information. Several states were not able to provide definitions.

Alternate Assessment Approach

The alternate assessment approaches states use are shown in Table 3. Similar to results from our 2003 survey, half of the regular states indicated that they use a portfolio or body of evidence approach in their alternate assessments for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities (n=25, 50%). The number of states using a portfolio or body of evidence approach has stayed about the same since 2001 after decreasing from 28 states in 1999. States listed under "other" allow local selection of an alternate assessment approach or require a performance assessment. Many more states are in the process of developing or revising their alternate assessment during 2005 than in the past (n=8, 16%). Only four unique states' responses were available, and they were spread among alternate assessment approaches.

Table 3. Alternate Assessment Approaches 2000-2005

Year	Portfolio or Body of Evidence	Rating Scale or Checklist	IEP Analysis	Other	In Development/ Revision
Regular States					
1999	28 (56%)	4 (8%)	5 (10%)	6 (12%)	7 (14%)
2001	24 (48%)	9 (18%)	3 (6%)	12 (24%)	2 (4%)
2003	23 (46%)	15 (30%)	4 (8%)	5 (10%)	3 (6%)
2005*	25 (50%)**	7 (14%)***	2 (4%)	7 (14%)	8 (16%)
Unique States					
2003	4 (44%)	0 (0%)	1 (11%)	1 (11%)	3 (33%)
2005	1 (11%)	1 (11%)	1 (11%)	0 (0%)	1 (11%)

*One state has not developed any statewide alternate assessment approaches.
**Of these 25 states, 13 use a standardized set of performance/events/tasks/skills.
***Of these 7 states, 3 require the submission of student work.

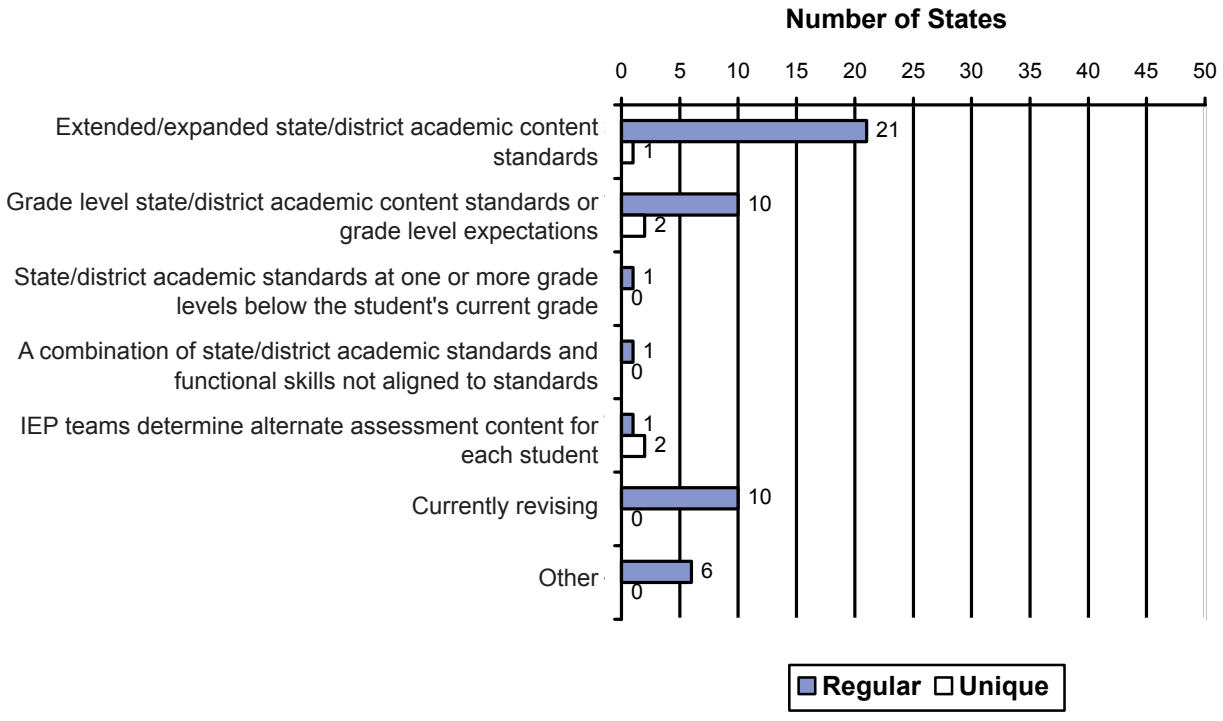
It may be that the traditional way of describing alternate assessment approaches is no longer the best because there is considerable overlap across approaches that states take. For example, of the 25 states using portfolio (body of evidence) assessments in 2005, 13 states use a standardized set of performance events, tasks, or skills. Three of the seven states using a rating scale of performance on a standardized set of events, tasks, or skills require the submission of a body of evidence.

Alternate Assessment Content

States were asked to indicate the type of content that was the focus of the alternate assessment (see Figure 4). Possible response options were greater than they had been in 2003. In 2005, 10 states (20%) are using grade-level content while 21 states (40%) use expanded/extended content standards. Nearly one-fourth of states (n=10, 20%) are in the process of developing or revising their alternate assessment. In addition, six state directors marked the "other" choice in 2005 (12%), and provided state-specific information. For example, one state director said, "Functional skills/curriculum are aligned to state/district academic standards." Another said, "Alternate grade expectations are aligned to state standards, and linked to research-based set of learning outcomes for students with significant cognitive disabilities."

Of the six unique states that responded to this year's survey, five responded to this question. Two unique states are currently using grade-level content standards.

Figure 4. Types of Alternate Assessment Content



Alternate Assessment Achievement Level Descriptors

State assessments generally have achievement level descriptors such as below basic, basic, proficient, and advanced. Some states select different achievement level descriptors for their alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards. Table 4 shows examples of these different descriptors.

Table 4. Examples of Alternate Assessment Achievement Level

	Alternate Assessment Achievement Level Descriptors
AR	Independent, Functional Independent, Supported Independent, Emergent, Non-Evident
CO	Novice, Developing, Emerging, Explorative, Exploring, Inconclusive
GA	Initial, Emerging, Progressing, Functional
IL	Attempting, Emerging, Progressing, Attaining
NM	Insufficient Data, Beginning Step, Nearing Proficiency, Proficient, Advanced

Alternate Assessment Scoring Criteria

Scoring criteria based on the use of assigned points on a rating scale doubled for 2003 to 2005, yet most states still use a rubric for their scoring criteria.

Most states (n=37, 74%) currently place their scoring criteria for the alternate assessment within some type of rubric. However, between 2003 and 2005 the number of states assigning points on a rating scale doubled (currently, n=16, 32%), and seven more states began scoring number of items correct on alternate assessments (n=12, 24%) (see Table 5). According to state comments, scoring criteria can be a direct measure of student achievement (student criteria); may reflect necessary system conditions essential for student success (system criteria); or can be a combination of student achievement seen within the context of system-provided supports (combination).

Table 5. Scoring Criteria for Alternate Assessment Responses 2003-2005

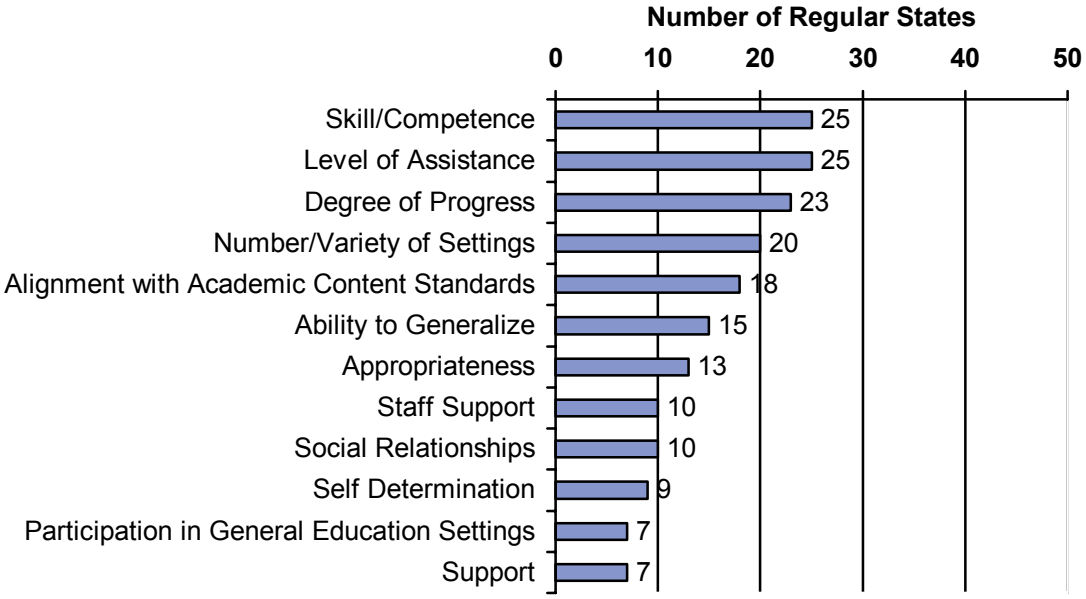
Year	Rubric	Points Assigned on a Rating Scale	Number of Items Correct	Reading Rate or Accuracy
Regular States				
2003	40 (80%)	8 (16%)	5 (10%)	2 (4%)
2005	37 (74%)	16 (32%)	12 (24%)	4 (8%)

As demonstrated in Figure 5, there is great variation in the specific scoring criteria in states that use rubrics. Skill/competence and level of assistance are the most frequently used scoring criteria. This variation is also evident among unique states. Despite the differences in approaches, rubrics are still the most common approach for scoring a student's skill/competence on a task or level of assistance needed to complete a task.

Alternate Assessment Standard-setting

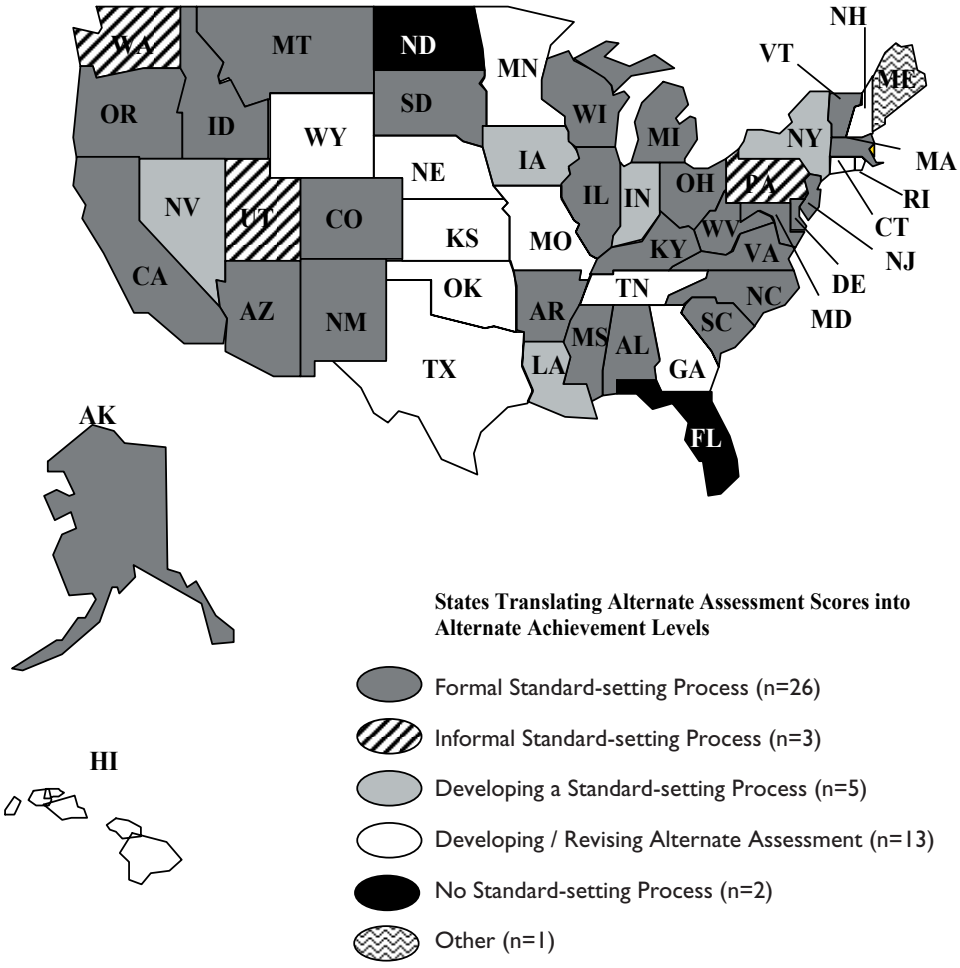
A standard-setting process defines what scores mean. Usually this involves identifying "cut scores" that separate different levels of achievement. Standard-setting methods for alternate assessments differ across states. As shown in Figure 6, more than half of the regular states (n=26, 52%) indicate that they use a formal standard-setting process for their alternate assessments.

Figure 5. Outcomes Measured by Rubrics on Alternate Assessments



More than half of the states now use formal standard-setting processes for their alternate assessments.

Figure 6. States with Formal Standard-setting Processes for Alternate Assessment



States also indicated the types of standard-setting processes they use. Table 6 describes the most commonly used standard-setting processes for alternate assessments and lists the number of states that use them. Most states use a body of work approach (n=11, 22%), reasoned judgment (n=10, 20%), or bookmarking/ item mapping (n=9, 18%). A few states selected more than one technique for standard setting. One unique state responded that it performs standard-setting, but did not select a technique.

Table 6. Standard-setting Techniques that States Apply to Alternate Assessments*

Technique	Description**	2003	2005
Body of Work	Reviewers examine all of the data for a student and use this information to place the student in one of the overall performance levels. Standard setters are given a set of papers that demonstrate the complete range of possible scores from low to high.	2	AL, DE, KY, MA, NC, NM, NV, OH, SD, VA, VT 11
Reasoned Judgment	A score scale (e.g., 32 points) is divided into a desired number of categories (e.g., 4) in some way (equally, larger in the middle, etc.); the categories are determined by a group of experts, policymakers, or others.	15	AZ, DE, HI, IL, IN, MA, MS, SD, WI, WV 10
Bookmarking or Item Mapping	Standard-setters mark the spot in a specially constructed test booklet (arranged in order of item difficulty) where a desired percentage of minimally proficient (or advanced) students would pass the item; or, standard-setters mark where the difference in performance of the proficient and advanced student on an exercise is a desired minimum percentage of students.	6	AZ, CA, CO, ID, KY, MD, MT, OR, SC 9
Contrasting Groups	Teachers separate students into groups based on their observations of the students in the classroom; the scores of the students are then calculated to determine where scores will be categorized in the future.	3	AK, MA, MD NV, SD 5
Judgmental Policy Capturing	Reviewers determine which of the various components of an overall assessment are more important than others so that components or types of evidence are weighted.	1	KY, MA, NV SD, VT 5
	Total	27	40

*Includes only states that have a formal standard setting process.
**Descriptions from: Roeber, E. (2002). *Setting standards on alternate assessments* (Synthesis Report 42). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes (http://education.umn.edu/NCEO/OnlinePubs/Synthesis42.html).

Alternate Assessment Development/Revision

For each of the areas of alternate assessments several states reported that they are developing or revising that area. Table 7 shows the number of states with areas in revision or development.

Table 7. States Revising or Developing Specific Areas of an Alternate Assessment

Area	Number of Regular States
Approach	8
Content	10
Standard-setting	13
Scoring Criteria	17

Emerging Practices

THE 2005 SURVEY ASKED STATES ABOUT SEVERAL EMERGING PRACTICES, SPECIFICALLY TO indicate whether they were addressing each issue. Issues that were reported in the 2003 survey were item analysis, universally designed assessments, and computer-based state assessments. In the 2005 survey, respondents also answered questions about field testing, disaggregating assessment results, and RFPs and item review process (for universally designed assessments).

Emerging assessment analysis practices for students with disabilities include field testing in alternate formats, item analysis for students with disabilities, disaggregated results by disability and language group, and universally designed assessments.

Field Testing

In a new survey item added this year, more than one-third of state directors indicated they are field testing potential items for use in their large-scale assessments in both standard formats and accommodated formats such as braille, large print, audio tape, and computer (n=20, 40%) (see Table 8). Although there are no data from previous years, these baseline data indicate that more than one-third of states recognize the potential issues that may arise with accommodated formats and are taking appropriate steps to examine issues early in the testing cycle (i.e., in field testing). Two unique states currently field test items in alternative formats (see Table 8).

Item Analysis

Eleven states and one unique state examine item level data (see Table 8). Item level analyses, such as differential item functioning (DIF) analyses, demonstrate whether test items function differently for students with disabilities compared to their non-disabled peers. Knowledge about item analysis appears to be growing. In 2003, nearly one-fourth of state directors responded that they did not know whether their state analyzed results by item for students with disabilities.

Disaggregating Assessment Results

Twenty-one states (42%) disaggregate assessment results by primary disability (see Table 8). Several other states commented that this is not possible in all disability areas due to small group sizes, such as visual impairment or hearing impairment.

States are also beginning to disaggregate data for English language learners. Twelve regular states (24%) and four unique states currently disaggregate assessment data by language groups. Among these states, eight states and one unique state disaggregate data by both language group and disability.

Universally Designed Assessments: General Issues and RFPs

The term "universally designed assessments" refers to assessments designed from the beginning to be accessible and valid for the widest possible range of students,

Table 8. States Addressing Emerging Practices

State	Field Testing	Item Analysis	Disaggregation by Primary Disability	Disaggregation for English Language Learners	Universal Design
Alabama	■		■		■
Alaska		■	■	■	■
Arizona					■
Arkansas			■		■
California		■	■	■	■
Colorado		■	■		■
Connecticut					■
Delaware			■		■
Florida	■		■		■
Georgia	■		■	■	■
Hawaii	■	■		■	■
Idaho	■				■
Illinois		■		■	■
Indiana		■	■	■	■
Iowa	■				
Kansas			■		■
Kentucky				■	■
Louisiana	■		■	■	■
Maine	■	■	■	■	■
Maryland	■				■
Massachusetts			■	■	■
Michigan					■
Minnesota	■		■		
Mississippi					■
Missouri					■
Montana					■
Nebraska					■
Nevada					■
New Hampshire					■
New Jersey	■		■		
New Mexico					■
New York					■
North Carolina	■		■		■
North Dakota					■
Ohio			■		■
Oklahoma					■
Oregon	■	■	■	■	■
Pennsylvania	■				■

Table 8. States Addressing Emerging Practices (continued)

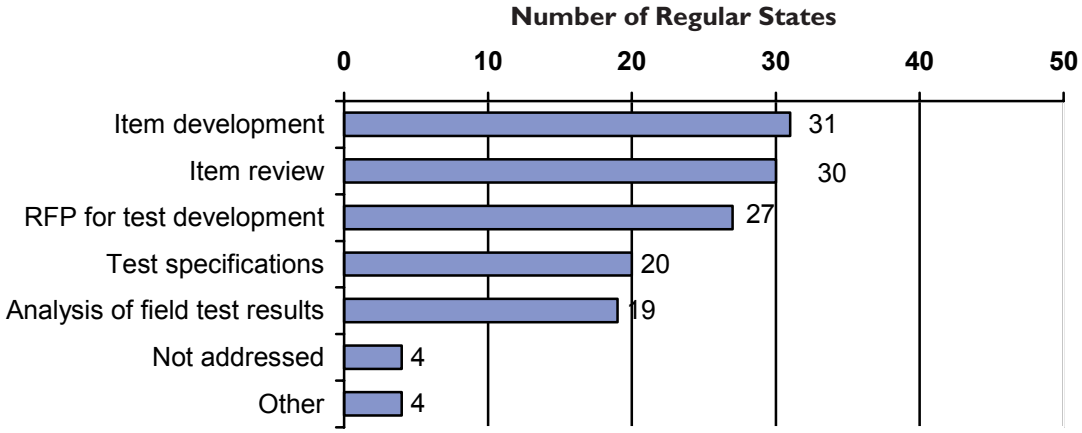
State	Field Testing	Item Analysis	Disaggregation by Primary Disability	Disaggregation for English Language Learners	Universal Design
Rhode Island	■				■
South Carolina					■
South Dakota					
Tennessee	■	■			■
Texas	■				■
Utah					■
Vermont	■		■		■
Virginia	■		■		■
Washington					
West Virginia		■	■		■
Wisconsin	■	■			■
Wyoming				■	■
Total Regular States	**20**	**11**	**21**	**12**	**45**
American Samoa*					
Bureau of Indian Affairs				■	
Department of Defense	■		■	■	■
District of Columbia*					
Guam*					
Mariana Islands	■	■	■		■
Marshall Islands					
Micronesia				■	
Palau*					
Puerto Rico*					
U.S. Virgin Islands				■	
Total Unique States	**2**	**1**	**2**	**4**	**2**

* Did not complete survey.

including students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency (Thompson, Johnstone & Thurlow, 2002). Forty-five states (90%) and two unique states address universal design while only four states do not address universal design at any time (8%) (see Table 8).

The areas in which states are addressing universal design are shown in Figure 7. More than half of the states are addressing universal design at the item development level (n=31, 62%), item review level (n=30, 60%), and by including requirements for universal design in a request for proposals (RFP) for test development (n=27, 54%).

Figure 7. Areas of Universal Design Addressed by State Assessments



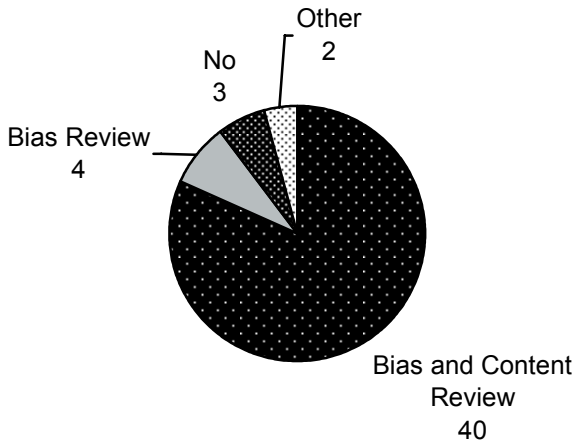
Most states now have at least one disability representative on their bias or content review teams.

Universally Designed Assessments: Item Review Process

As part of the test development process, assessments often undergo a "bias" or "sensitivity" review. During sensitivity reviews, representatives from communities who may experience bias (cultural or linguistic minorities, people from diverse socioeconomic levels) examine test items for potential sources of bias. Increasingly, persons with disabilities themselves, or representatives of disability communities are present at bias reviews. Nearly all states now have at least one disability representative on either their bias or content review teams (n=40, 80%) (see Figure 8).

Most often, several people represent several disability categories such as learning disability, visual impairment, and deaf/hard of hearing (n=29, 58%), or one person represents all disability categories (n=8, 16%) (See Figure 9). This representative may be a community person with a disability or a special education teacher. In one state, one person represents just one disability category. One state commented that it tries to include educators of special needs children on each of its assessment committees but does not delineate or differentiate as the survey question indicated.

Figure 8. Disability Representation on Item Review and Content Review Committees (Number of Regular States)*

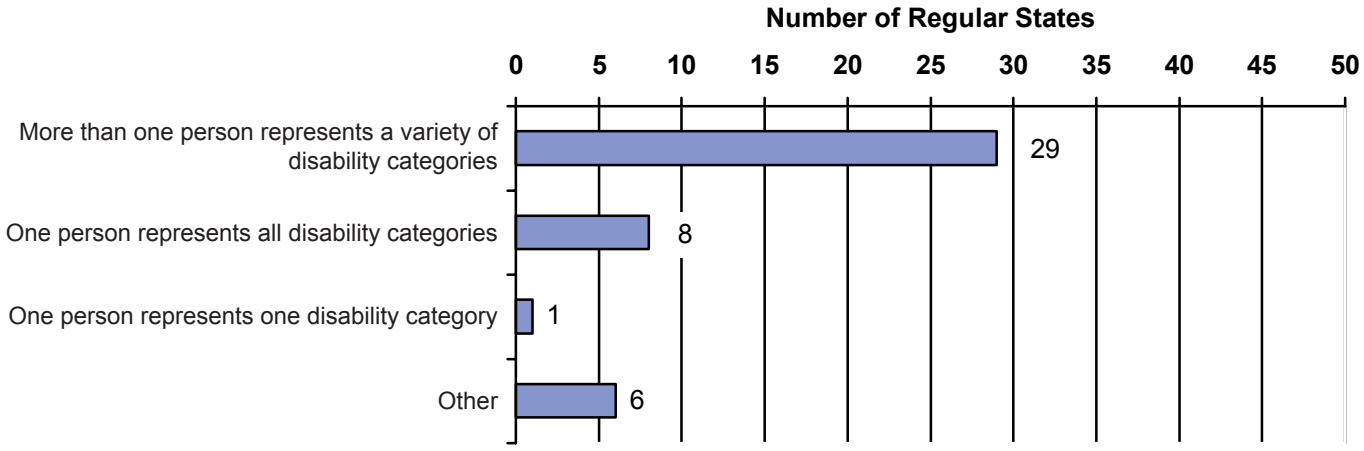


*One state did not respond to this question.

Computer-based Large-scale State Assessments

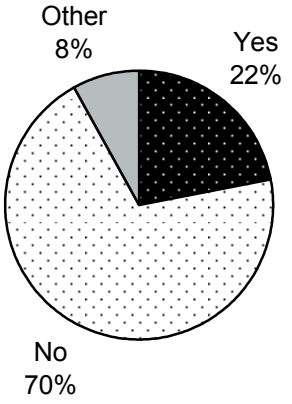
Eleven regular states (22%) are currently in the process of developing computer-based large-scale assessments (see Figure 10). This is down from 20 states in 2003. Special education directors cited recent budgetary concerns and a lack of computer technology in schools as preventing the development of computer-based assessments from gathering steam in the past decade. One unique state is currently developing computer-based large-scale assessments.

Figure 9. Representation on Bias Committees



*One state did not respond to this question.

Figure 10. States Developing Computer-based Large-scale Assessments (Percentage of Regular States)



Current and Emerging Issues

AREAS OF CURRENT AND EMERGING ISSUES MOST OFTEN REPORTED BY STATES INCLUDED: (1) accommodations, (2) achievement gap, (3) alternate assessment, (4) graduation tests, (5) reporting and/or monitoring, and (6) test/design content. The survey identified these for states, based on responses in 2003, and allowed states to identify additional issues. In 2003, at least 33 percent of regular states reported that high stakes graduation assessments and out-of level testing were current issues. Table 9 provides information on individual state responses. The area of concern mentioned by the largest number of states in 2005 was alternate assessment (n=33, 66%). The next most common areas of concern were accommodations and the achievement gap between students with disabilities and non-disabled students. Appendix B shows examples of current and emerging issues for states in each of these areas.

Table 9. Issues Addressed by States

	Accommo-dations	Achievement Gap	Alternate Assessment	Graduation Tests	Report-ing and/or Monitoring	Test/Design Content
Alabama*						
Alaska	■	■	■	■		■
Arkansas	■	■	■	■	■	■
Arizona	■	■	■			■
California	■	■	■	■	■	■
Colorado			■		■	
Connecticut	■		■		■	■
Delaware	■	■	■		■	■
Florida*						
Georgia			■			
Hawaii	■	■	■		■	■
Idaho	■	■	■			
Illinois	■		■	■		
Iowa	■		■			
Indiana*						
Kansas	■	■	■		■	■
Kentucky*						
Louisiana*						
Maine*						
Maryland		■	■	■		
Massachusetts	■	■	■	■	■	
Michigan	■		■			■
Minnesota	■	■	■	■	■	■
Mississippi		■				
Missouri	■	■	■	■	■	
Montana*						
Nebraska	■		■		■	
Nevada		■	■		■	
New Hampshire	■	■			■	■
New Jersey		■				
New Mexico	■	■	■	■	■	■
New York		■	■		■	■
North Carolina			■	■		
North Dakota	■	■	■		■	■
Ohio	■					■
Oklahoma	■		■	■		■
Oregon		■	■			■
Pennsylvania	■	■				
Rhode Island		■	■			

Table 9. Issues Addressed by States (continued)

	Accommo-dations	Achievement Gap	Alternate Assessment	Graduation Tests	Report-ing and/or Monitoring	Test/Design Content
South Carolina	■		■			
South Dakota	■		■			
Tennessee	■		■	■		
Texas*						
Utah			■	■		
Vermont*						
Virginia*						
Washington	■	■	■			
West Virginia	■	■	■			
Wisconsin*						
Wyoming		■				
Total Regular States	**27**	**25**	**33**	**13**	**16**	**17**
American Samoa*						
Bureau of Indian Affairs						
Department of Defense	■	■	■	■	■	■
District of Columbia*						
Guam*						
Mariana Islands	■		■			■
Marshall Islands*						
Micronesia	■		■			
Palau*						
Puerto Rico*						
Virgin Islands	■	■	■	■	■	■
Total Unique States	**4**	**2**	**4**	**2**	**2**	**3**

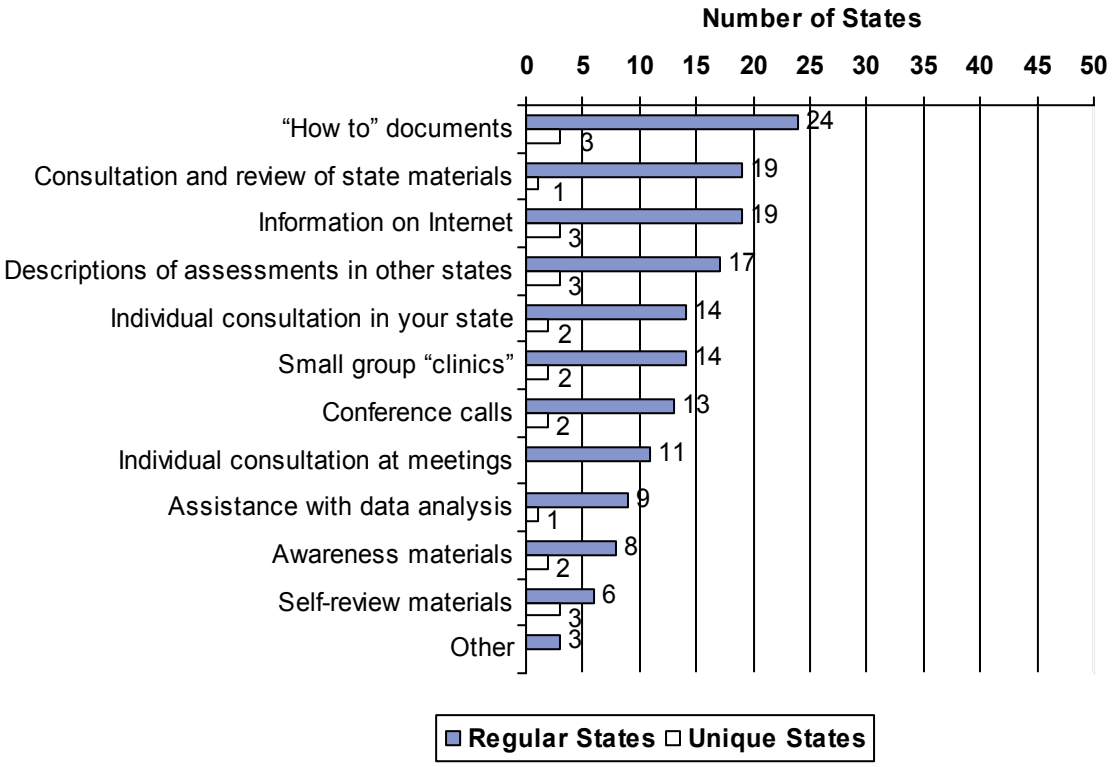
* No response.

Preferred Forms of Technical Assistance

The form of technical assistance most desired by states is "how to" documents.

BECAUSE NCEO'S PRIMARY FUNCTION IS TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, WE conclude our surveys with an item that asks what types of technical assistance states desire. Figure 11 shows technical assistance preferences of states. The most desired type of technical assistance by states in 2005 is "how to" documents (n=24, 48%). Information via the Internet and review of state documents are the second most popular choices in 2005 (n=19, 38%). Descriptions of assessments in other states is the fourth-most selected choice in 2005 (n=17, 34%); this had been the second-highest choice in 2003.

Figure 11. Technical Assistance Desired by States



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Appendix A: Working Definitions of Students with the "Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities"[a]

Alabama	Students with cognitive functioning at least three standard deviations below the mean (I.Q. 55 and below) on an intellectual assessment and whose cognitive impairments may prevent them from attaining grade-level achievements, even with the most appropriate instruction.
Alaska	Generally 2 standard deviation's below norm on cognitive testing.
Arizona	• Evidence of a Significant Cognitive Disability: Empirical evidence (formal testing results, Multi-Disciplinary Team evaluation results, etc.) of a significant cognitive disability that prevents the acquisition of the AZ Academic Standards. • Intensity of Instruction: It is extremely difficult for the student to acquire, maintain, generalize, and apply academic skills across environments even with extensive/intensive, pervasive, frequent, and individualized instruction in multiple settings. • Curricular Outcomes: The goals and objectives in the student's IEP focus on progress within functional achievement indicators and the student's present level of educational performance significantly impedes participation and completion of the general education curriculum even with significant program modifications.

Arkansas	• The student's demonstrated cognitive functioning and adaptive behavior in the home, school, and community environments are significantly below age expectations, even with program modifications, adaptations and accommodations.
	• The student's course of study is primarily functional and life-skills oriented.
	• The student requires extensive direct instruction and/or extensive supports in multiple settings to acquire, maintain, and generalize academic and functional skills necessary for application in school, work, home, and community environments.
	• The student demonstrates severe and complex disabilities and poor adaptive skills levels (determined to be significantly below age expectations by that student's comprehensive assessment) that essentially prevent the student from meaningful participation in the standard academic core curriculum or achievement of the academic content standards established at grade level.
	• The student's disability causes dependence on others for many, if not all, daily living needs, and the student is expected to require extensive ongoing support in adulthood.
	• The student's inability to complete the standard academic curriculum at grade level is not primarily the result of the following:
	  • Excessive or extended absences, poor attendance, or lack of instruction;
	  • Sensory (visual or auditory) or physical disabilities; emotional-behavioral disabilities; or a specific learning disability;
	  • Social, cultural, linguistic or economic differences;
	  • Below average reading level;
	  • Low achievement in general;
	  • Expectations of poor performance;
	  • Disruptive behavior;
	  • The student's IQ;
	  • The anticipated impact of the student's performance on the school/district performance scores; and
	  • The student's disability category, educational placement, type of instruction, and/or amount of time receiving special education services.

California	The student's cognitive functional level is less than 1/2 of his/her chronological age.

[a] The actual question states responded to was: "What is your state's working definition of students with 'significant cognitive disabilities?'"

Colorado	Cognitive skills/abilities impact ability to perform at ability level.
Connecticut	Students with significant cognitive disabilities are those who 1) require extensive individualized instruction to acquire, maintain or generalize skills; 2) require direct instruction in multiple settings to successfully generalize skills to natural settings, including home, school and community and 3) the student's program has a functional focus even though the student is working in the general education curriculum.
Delaware	Students who are in functional life skill curriculum.
Florida	http://info.fldoe.org/dscgi/ds.py/Get/File-1719/DPS_04-055.pdf and http://info.fldoe.org/dscgi/ds.py/Get/File-1858/AA_Check.pdf
Georgia	IEP decision for students on functional curriculum and unable to participate in general education assessments with supports and accommodations.
Hawaii	Students program reflects an emphasis on survival/functional/readiness skills. The student demonstrates: Significant cognitive disabilities and adaptive skill levels that prevent participation in the standard academic curriculum, even With modifications and accommodations, requires extensive direct instruction in multiple settings to accomplish the Application and transfer of skills, and is involved in a functional, readiness and education skills program.
Idaho	We use 3 criteria: 1) student with a disability demonstrates cognitive ability and adaptive behavior that will prevent him or her from achieving the state's academic standards. The team must consider all sources of data about the student's present level of performance; 2) student has needs that require his or her educational program to be an adaptation of the general education curriculum. The effects of a disability may mean a student needs a course of study, activities, or lessons that are primarily functional and living-skill oriented and which cannot by measured by the general education statewide or district-wide assessment system-even with accommodations or adaptations; 3) student has needs that require instruction to be adapted and highly individualized in order for the student to acquire, maintain, or generalize the fundamental skills taught.
Illinois	Illinois has not defined this term.
Indiana	CRITERIA (All three criteria must be satisfied for a student to be eligible to be assessed on alternate achievement standards using the ISTAR.) • Evidence of a Significant Cognitive Disability: There is empirical evidence (e.g., formal testing results, M-team evaluation results, etc.) of a significant cognitive disability that prevents the acquisition of Indiana's Academic Standards necessary to attain a high school diploma. • Intensity of Instruction: The student is unable to acquire, maintain, generalize, and apply academic skills across environments even with extensive/intensive, pervasive, frequent, and individualized instruction in multiple settings. • Curricular Outcomes: The goals and objectives listed in this student's IEP focus on progress within functional achievement indicators, and the student's present level of educational performance significantly impedes participation and completion of the general education curriculum even with significant program modifications.
Iowa	Iowa defines participation guidelines for the alternate assessment in its Educator's Guide. This guide can be accessed at: Alternate Assessment Educator's Guide. Iowa Department of Education at www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/cfcs/altassess/index.html
Kansas	• The student has an active Individual Education Plan and the present levels of educational performance data indicates that with regard to progress in the general curriculum area under consideration, the student is significantly delayed. AND • The student's learning objectives and expected outcomes in the academic area under consideration requires substantial adjustment to the general curriculum of that area. The student's learning objectives and expected outcomes in the area focus on functional application, as illustrated in the benchmarks, indicators, and clarifying examples within the Extended Standards. AND • The student primarily requires direct and extensive instruction in the academic area under consideration to acquire, maintain, generalize, and transfer the skills done in the naturally occurring settings of the student's life (such as school, vocational/career, community, recreation/leisure and home). AND • The student is presented with unique and significant challenges in demonstrating his or her knowledge and skills on any assessment available in the academic area under consideration. • The decision to determine a student's eligibility to participate in the alternate assessment may NOT RESULT PRIMARILY from:

Kansas (continued)	• Excessive or extended absence • Any specific categorical label • Social, cultural, or economic difference • Amount of time he/she receives special education services • Achievement significantly lower than his or her same age peers
Kentucky	Taken from state regulation (703 KAR 5:070-pg. 5) "A small percentage of students with disabilities shall participate in the Alternate Portfolio Assessment Program. These students are generally those who have moderate to severe cognitive disabilities and represent 1-2% of the total student population."
Louisiana	A student participating in LEAP alternate assessment shall progress toward a certificate of achievement. B. To be eligible for participation in LEAP Alternate assessment, the student shall: 1. have a current multidisciplinary evaluation of the following exceptionalities: a. moderate mental disability; b. severe mental disability; c. profound mental disability; or 2. following exceptionalities AND have an assessed level of intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior three or more standard deviations below the mean: i. multiple disabilities; ii. traumatic brain injury; iii. autism.
Maine	See http://www.mecas.org/laa/othermaterials/LAS_pnp_pgs47-48.pdf
Maryland	No response
Massachusetts	Students taking our alternate assessment and working at a level of difficulty that represents work well below grade level.
Michigan	Still working on it.
Minnesota	Determined through IEP process of each child.
Mississippi	• The student demonstrates significant cognitive deficits and poor adaptive skill levels (as determined by that student's comprehensive assessment) that prevent participation in the standard academic curriculum or achievement of the academic content standards, even with accommodations and modifications. • The student requires extensive direct instruction in both academic and functional skills in multiple settings to accomplish the application and transfer of those skills. • The student's inability to complete the standard academic curriculum is not the result of excessive or extended absences or primarily the result of visual, auditory, or physical disabilities; emotional-behavioral disabilities; specific learning disabilities; or social, cultural, or economic differences. • To be classified as a student having a "significant cognitive disability," ALL of the above must be true.
Missouri	MAP-Alternate Determining Student Eligibility Worksheet The student meets all five of the eligibility criteria below: • The student has significant problems acquiring new skills, and acquisition of skills must be taught in very small steps. • The student does not keep pace with peers, even with the majority of students in special education with respect to the total number of skills acquired. • The student's educational program centers on the functional application of the Missouri Show-Me Standards. • The IEP team, as documented in the IEP, does not recommend participation in the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) subject areas or taking the MAP with accommodations. • The student's inability to participate in the MAP subject area assessments is not primarily the result of excessive absences; visual or auditory disabilities; or social, cultural, language or economic differences.
Montana	If the IEP Team have to answers "Yes" to all four of the following questions the student meets the criteria for a child with a Significant cognitive disability. • Does the student have an active IEP and receive services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)? • Do the student's demonstrated cognitive abilities and adaptive behavior require substantial adjustments to the general curriculum? • Do the student's learning objectives and expected outcomes focus on functional application of skills, as illustrated in the student's IEP's annual goals and short-term objectives? • Does the student require direct and extensive instruction to acquire, maintain, generalize and transfer new skills?

Nebraska	Students with the most significant disabilities are those whose course of study is based on a functional curriculum and life-skills oriented. Our state's definition is not limited to specific disabilities.
Nevada	Students in Nevada with the most significant cognitive disabilities include those who are currently assessed with SCAAN, as well as a number of other students whose cognitive disabilities result in very limited participation in grade-level curriculum, and whose classroom performance is not measured against grade-level standards.
New Hampshire	Currently has "The Decision Process" When to decide. Who is appropriate for the NHEIAP-Alternate Assessment? A student is eligible to participate in the NHEIAP-Alternate Assessment if her/his IEP team determines that the student meets all of the following participation criteria: • The student has an IEP, and • Evidence that the student's demonstrated cognitive ability and adaptive behavioral skills: prevent him/her from demonstrating achievement of the proficiency standards described in the NH Curriculum Frameworks, even with appropriate accommodations, and require individualized instruction in multiple settings (school, work, home and community environments) to acquire, generalize, and transfer skills necessary for functional application, and • There is historical data (current and longitudinal across multiple settings) that confirms the individual student criteria listed above.
New Jersey	We allow participation in our alternate assessment if the student has not been instructed in any of the skills tested and cannot do any of the types of items on the general assessment as determined by the IEP team.
New Mexico	The working definition of "significant cognitive disability" is supplied by the criteria for participation on a NM alternate assessment: Does the student's past and present performance in multiple settings (i.e., home, school, community) indicate that a significant cognitive disability is present? Does the student need intensive, pervasive, or extensive levels of support in school, home, and community settings? Do the student's current cognitive and adaptive skills and performance levels require direct instruction to accomplish the acquisition, maintenance, and generalization of skills in multiple settings (home, school, community)?
New York	The alternate performance level for the state learning standards and the state assessment for students with severe disabilities reflect the knowledge, skills, and understandings that such students are expected to know and be able to do as indicated in their individualized education programs. Students with severe disabilities means students who have limited cognitive abilities combined with behavioral and/or physical limitations, and who require highly specialized education, social, psychological and medical services in order to maximize their full potential for useful and meaningful participation in society and for self-fulfillment. Students with severe disabilities may experience severe speech, language, and/or perceptual-cognitive impairments, and evidence challenging behaviors that interfere with learning and socialization opportunities. These students may also have extremely fragile psychological conditions and may require personal care, physical/verbal supports and/or prompts and assistive technology devices.
North Carolina	No response.
North Dakota	We use criteria for participation in Alternate: Cognitive and adaptive behavior prevent completion of all or part of the general education curriculum and require frequent and individualized instruction in multiple settings in order to maintain or generalize across settings and curriculum is so individualized that the general assessment would not reflect what the student is being taught.
Ohio	The following criteria will assist IEP teams in determining whether or not a student should participate in alternate assessment. (This criteria appears in a document titled, "Guidelines for Participation in State-developed Alternate Assessment") • Alternate assessment is appropriate only for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Significant limitations in the area of cognitive functioning should be documented in the student's evaluation team report. • While these students do access the general curriculum, instruction is chiefly focused on the acquisition of essential life skills. • Many students with significant cognitive disabilities have complex medical, communication, developmental, and/or adaptive needs. Often, they require assistive technology devices for communication, travel, and/or self-care.

Ohio (continued)	• Generally, participation in the alternate assessment is not appropriate for students who are engaged in and making progress in the general curriculum. Although these students require individualized instruction, they have developed the skills that enable meaningful participation on statewide assessments. • Alternate assessment is appropriate for students who have the most significant cognitive limitations and therefore, require the highest level of individualized instruction.
Oklahoma	A student is defined as having a significant cognitive disability through the completion of the "Alternate Assessment Participation Checklist".
Oregon	Students with significant cognitive disabilities are those students whose instruction focuses primarily on life skills and self-help skills such as walking, communicating, choice-making, feeding, and hygiene.
Pennsylvania	There are six criteria and a process outlined that the IEP teams consider in making the determination that the statewide assessment is not appropriate and that the alternate assessment is appropriate for the student. Please refer to the PDE website at www.pde.state.pa.us and in the Accommodations Booklet the six criteria are outlined in detail.
Rhode Island	Children with severe or profound mental retardation and meet the 8 criteria that IEP teams must answer to determine eligibility for alt assessment.
South Carolina	We do not have a working definition. Students who meet the criteria for alternate assessment are typically students who are classified as students with profound and trainable mental disabilities in the state classification system.
South Dakota	To be identified as having a significant cognitive disability, the student must meet all of the following criteria: 1. The student has an active IEP with annual goals and short term objectives/benchmarks which focus on extended standards; 2. the student's cognitive abilities are 2.0 standard deviations or more below the mean (inclusive of the standard error of measurement); 3. the student primarily requires direct and extensive instruction to acquire, maintain, generalize and transfer skills done in naturally occurring settings of the student's life. (e.g. school, community, home, vocational/career, and recreation and leisure).
Tennessee	The student demonstrates cognitive ability and adaptive skills which prevent full involvement and completion of the state approved content standards even with program modifications. The student requires intensive, frequent individualized instruction in a variety of settings including school, community, home or the workplace to acquire, maintain, and generalize functional academics and life skills.
Texas	Not available at this time.
Utah	Utah has not defined "significant cognitive disabilities" --we have for eligibility criteria students must meet to participate in the alternate assessment. This is decided by the IEP team.
Vermont	The student's level of cognitive ability and adaptive skills prevent achievement of these skills and standards designated for grade level classmates who do not have disabilities. In addition, the students program addresses skills and standards that are not measured by the general assessment.
Virginia	We don't have anything official. We do have a decision guide for use by LEAs in determining which students will participate in the VAAP. Here's a link to that document: http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/suptsmemos/2002/inf049b.pdf
Washington	Not specifically defined.
West Virginia	Student exhibits significant impairment of cognitive abilities and adaptive skills to the extent that he or she requires extensive modifications and functional application of Content Standards and Objectives for West Virginia Schools (CSOs) and/or instruction in functional daily living skills and access skills (social, motor and communication) not directly addressed in the CSOs but embedded in instructional standards-based activities.
Wisconsin	Students who cannot demonstrate their knowledge on the standardized test even with accommodations.
Wyoming	Significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period that adversely affects a child's educational performance.
American Samoa	No response.
Bureau of Indian Affairs	We use various state definitions.
District of Columbia	No response.

Department of Defense	Students with an identified moderate to profound intellectual disability as measured on a standardized IQ assessment.
Guam	No response.
Mariana Islands	Students not considered eligible for standard assessments.
Marshall Islands	No response.
Micronesia	No response.
Palau	No response.
Puerto Rico	No response.
Virgin Islands	Definition is available in 2005 Virgin islands Accountability workbook, the final version of which is not available at time of this survey.

Appendix B: Examples of Current and Emerging Issues

Accommodations	• Continued professional development needed, especially for general education teachers. • Continuing work on universal design and appropriate accommodations. • Data collection on all accommodations used. • Degree of specificity required in state guidance. • Determination of allowable accommodations. • Effectiveness of computer based accommodations and impact on scores. • Impact of accommodations on test results. • Reading test accommodation for hearing impaired students. • Reading the reading assessment at certain grade levels. • Technical adequacy. • Technical assistance on appropriateness of specific accommodations for both instruction and assessment.
Achievement Gap	• Attention that students with disabilities are being paid has been beneficial, but also unintended negative consequences, such as blame for not making AYP. • Bridging the gap seems to be slowing down. • Closing the gap for subpopulations vs. general population. • Concerned about small percentage of students who do not qualify for the alternate assessment, but are working so far below grade level that success on the regular assessment is nearly impossible. • Growing gap between special education and non-disabled peers. • How do we decrease the gap or, are we already doing things well? Need to identify successful practices based on appropriate data. • Many gaps: students with disabilities/non-disabled, poverty vs. wealth, minority/non-minority, ELL. • Need strategies for closing the gap. • Research-validated intervention and instructional strategies at the secondary level. • This issue is problematic for school districts in regard to the consequences as a result of AYP sanctions.
Alternate Assessment	• May need to redesign. • Continuing to address validity/reliability issues. • Controversy over need for "alternate to alternate"—off level testing. • We are revising our alternate assessment to reflect grade-level content. • Piloting science and math items in alternate assessment. • Developing cut scores. • Standard setting. • Appropriate use of alternate assessment based on grade-level achievement standards. • Cumbersome, time consuming and costly to administer. • Currently refining out state process to ensure high technical quality. • Standardization, reliability and validity. • Developing a standard for all documents that will help "unpack" the standards at different depths, breadths, and levels of complexity. This will help with the development of items and test verification for a new alternate assessment. • Science alternate will be statewide 2005-2006.
Graduation Tests	• Looking at alternative…to recognize kids. • Graduation is not contingent upon separate graduation testing. • New graduation requirements. • Linkage to high school diploma and access to general curriculum and high quality teachers. • High stakes always an issue. • Sufficient notice to students and parents when changes to the current exit exam are suggested by legislation. • The governor is proposing exit exams, none at this time. • No alternate routes to the general education diploma are available at this time.

Reporting and/or Monitoring	• Monitoring the appropriate use of accommodations during assessment. • Concern of students with disabilities being the group that prevents schools from making AYP—"some" do not want to include students with disabilities in state system of accountability. • We will be monitoring accommodation use. • Well defined monitoring system for ensuring compliance with regulations; annual monitoring report submitted each fall. • Need for synchronization of state data bases. • IDEA special education reporting requirements will be included on building and district report cards. • Local variation on assessment practices. • Technology systems not keeping up with need. • Must refine reports in 2006. • We are developing an individual student record level data system. • Focused monitoring has positively changed the face of program oversight but is becoming a growing resource issue.
Test Design/ Content	• We are incorporating more elements of universal design, assistive technology. • Assessments being developed for history and science. • Representation in entire process of test development and large scale assessment—understanding universal design practices. • Design of alternate assessment based on grade-level achievement standards. • Funding, timelines, staff resources for developing new tests. • Universal design, alignment. • Universal design for learning. Grades 3–8 will provide additional options for alternate assessments and possible out-of-level assessments. • Universal design for middle school and high school achievement tests. • State will review and revise alternate assessment to bring them to grade level content as specified in NCLB. • Universal design issues.

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