2023 Survey of States

Trends, Accomplishments, and Challenges

NCEO
National Center on
Educational Outcomes

2023 Survey of States

Trends, Accomplishments, and Challenges

Lazarus, S. S., Fleming, K., Rogers, C. M., Ressa, V. A., Hinkle, A. R., & Quanbeck, M. (2024). *2023 survey of states: Trends, accomplishments, and challenges*. National Center on Educational Outcomes.

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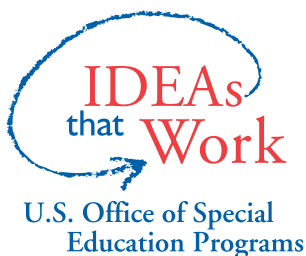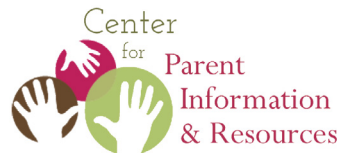
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This document is available in alternative formats upon request.

February, 2024

Executive Summary

THIS REPORT SUMMARIZES FINDINGS OF THE SIXTEENTH SURVEY OF STATES CONDUCTED by the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO). Forty-four of the 51 regular states responded to the survey. For the purposes of this survey, the District of Columbia was included with the regular states. In addition, four of 10 unique states (e.g., Guam, Palau, Puerto Rico) completed the survey.

Key findings include:
- Many responding regular states indicated that local education agencies (LEAs) found it challenging to arrange for specialized proctors to provide accommodations.
- More than 60% of the responding regular states indicated that there was a need for educator training on how to identify assistive technology (AT) for specific students, as well as a need for educator training on how to prepare students to use AT on assessments.
- Most responding regular states monitored and conducted oversight activities for all LEAs with participation rates over 1.0% on the alternate assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS).
- About half of the responding regular states with state-mandated interim assessments provided LEAs with lists of state-approved off-the-shelf tests, while a third implemented vendor-developed off-the-shelf tests statewide.
- The majority of responding regular states provided state-specific guidance on interim assessment accessibility features and accommodations.
- Responding regular states that had growth models to measure student growth were more likely to include students with disabilities who participated in the general assessment in growth measures than those who participated in the AA-AAAS.
- About 40% of responding regular states indicated that they disaggregated the general state assessment results for English learners with disabilities.
- About a quarter of responding regular states had a state-defined alternate diploma.
- Almost half of the responding regular states provided information to parents and families about accessibility features and accommodations in multiple languages.
- The responding unique states had some distinct challenges. For example, the unique states found it particularly challenging to arrange for special equipment (e.g., AT) and to ensure that it operated properly.

The survey findings indicated that states were continuing to address the need for inclusive assessments while facing new issues. States also identified key areas of need for technical assistance to facilitate the successful implementation of inclusive assessments.

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Overview of 2023 Survey of States

THIS REPORT HIGHLIGHTS THE FINDINGS OF THE SIXTEENTH SURVEY OF STATES conducted by the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO). It has been administered for more than three decades to collect information from states about the participation and performance of students with disabilities in the assessments that comprise the comprehensive assessment system. Topics addressed included: accessibility and accommodations, alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS), interim assessments, accountability, English learners with disabilities, technology, graduation requirements, State Systemic Improvement Plans (SSIPs) / State-identified Measurable Results (SiMRs), family engagement, and technical assistance needs.

The survey was sent to state directors of special education and state directors of assessment. The directors were asked to submit one response for the state. In compiling their responses, the directors collaborated with a variety of other state-level individuals who had the best current knowledge of the state's thinking, policies, and practices for including students with disabilities in statewide assessment systems. Survey responses were submitted using an online survey tool.

Forty-four of the 51 regular states responded to the survey. For the purposes of this survey, the District of Columbia was included with the regular states. In addition, four of 10 unique states (e.g., Guam, Palau, Puerto Rico) completed the survey.

Accessibility and Accommodations

STATES COMMUNICATED INFORMATION ABOUT ACCESSIBILITY FEATURES AND ACCOmodations to local education agencies (LEAs), schools, and teachers in several ways (see Figure 1). The most frequent approaches used by regular states included state-run training, making information available on the state website, providing written manuals or instructions to each LEA or school, and webinars. Four states provided "Other" responses, reporting the use of methods such as office hours, monthly LEA calls, brochures, frequently asked question (FAQ) documents, and newsletters.

Figure 1. Modes of Communicating Accessibility Features and Accommodations Information, Regular States
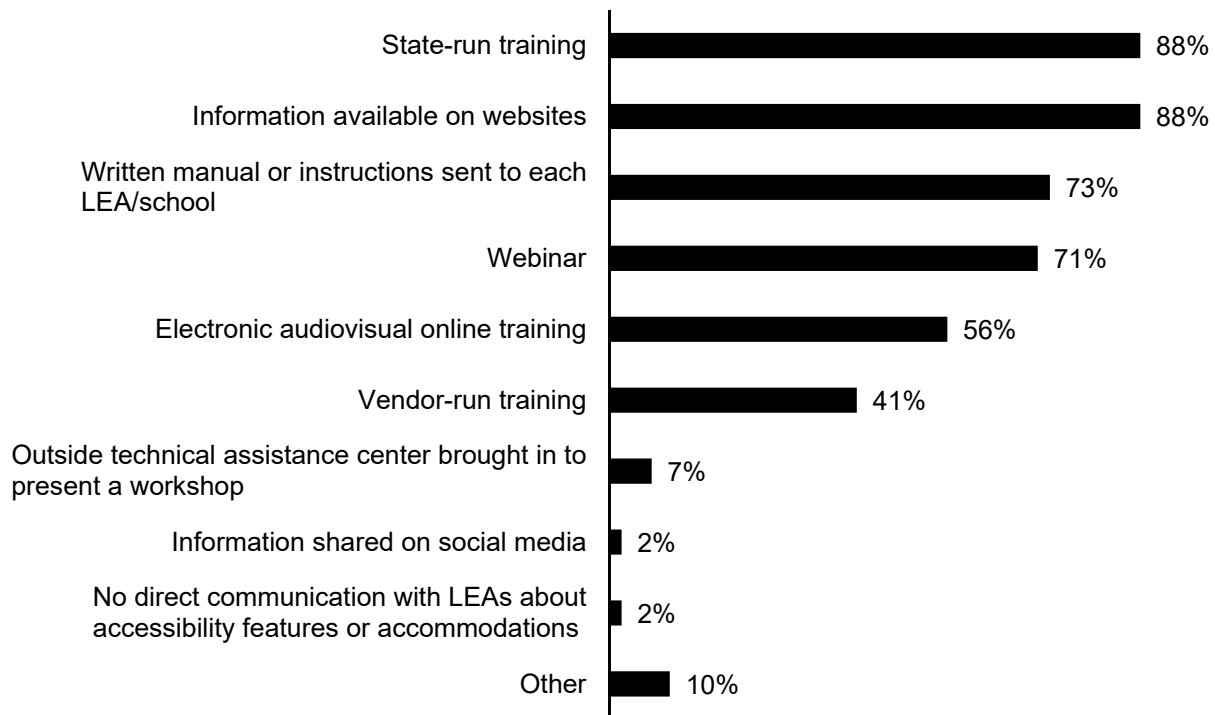
Note: Forty-one regular states answered this question. Respondents were able to select multiple responses.

Four unique states responded to this question. The most frequent approaches for the unique states were providing statewide training and making information available on the website.

Regular states indicated that LEAs encountered challenges in ensuring the appropriate provision of accessibility features and accommodations on test day (see Figure 2). About half of the states indicated that there were challenges

related to arranging for specialized test administrators/proctors (e.g., readers, scribes, and sign language interpreters), ensuring test administrators/proctors did not provide accommodations to students who should not receive them, ensuring that test administrators provided accommodations to students who should receive them, training educators in making decisions related to accessibility features and accommodations, and ensuring that students could take practice tests with needed accessibility features, accommodations, and assistive technology (AT). "Other" challenges included difficulty ensuring that students with unique communication needs could access all assessments and difficulty with the interaction between testing platforms and accommodations.

Figure 2. Challenges Encountered by LEAs in Ensuring Accessibility Features and Accommodations are Appropriately Provided, Regular States

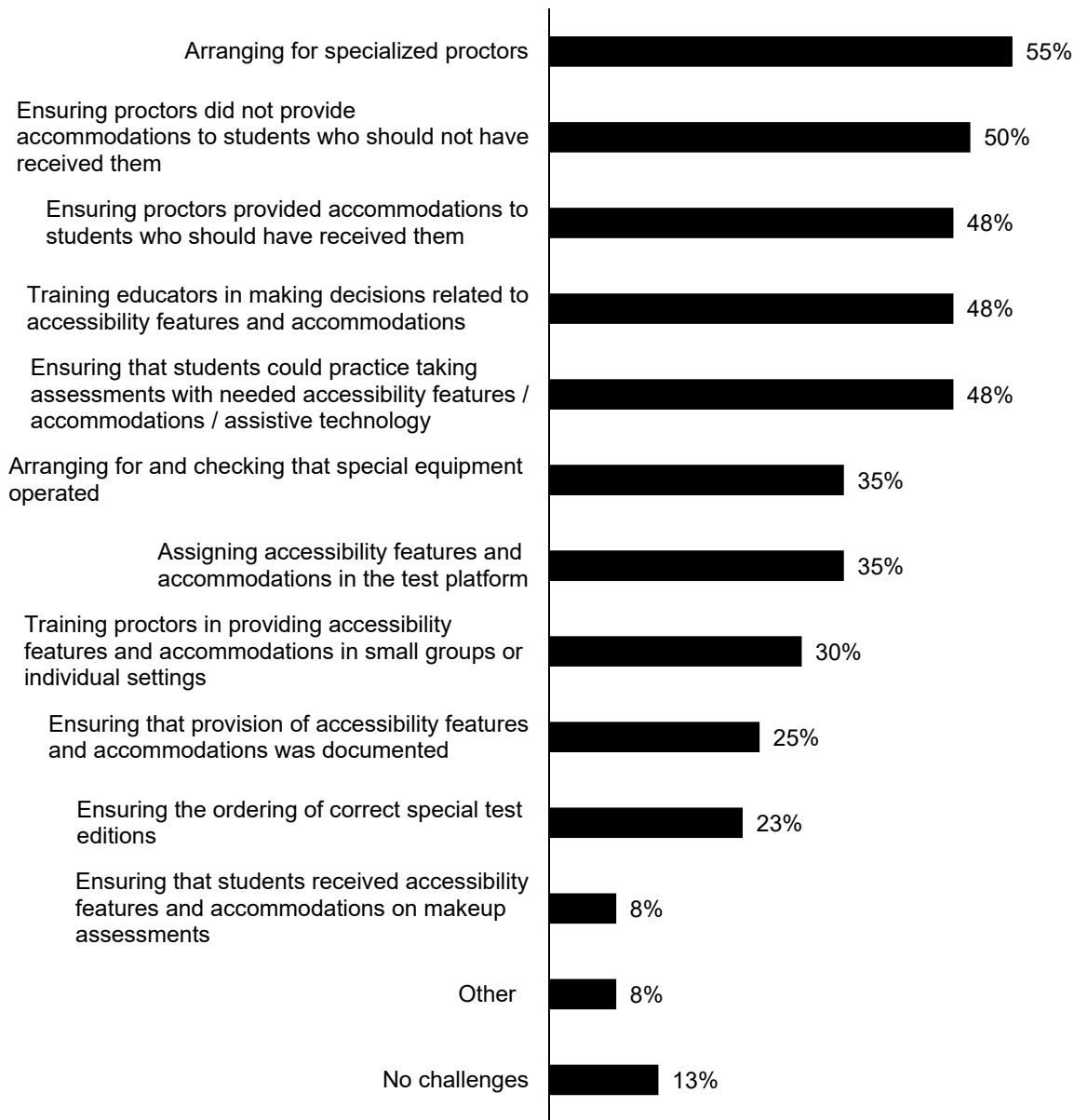| Challenge	Percentage
Arranging for specialized proctors	55%
Ensuring proctors did not provide accommodations to students who should not have received them	50%
Ensuring proctors provided accommodations to students who should have received them	48%
Training educators in making decisions related to accessibility features and accommodations	48%
Ensuring that students could practice taking assessments with needed accessibility features / accommodations / assistive technology	48%
Arranging for and checking that special equipment operated	35%
Assigning accessibility features and accommodations in the test platform	35%
Training proctors in providing accessibility features and accommodations in small groups or individual settings	30%
Ensuring that provision of accessibility features and accommodations was documented	25%
Ensuring the ordering of correct special test editions	23%
Ensuring that students received accessibility features and accommodations on makeup assessments	8%
Other	8%
No challenges	13%

Note. Forty regular states answered this question. Respondents were able to select multiple responses.

Four unique states responded to this question. The most common responses were ensuring that test administrators provided accommodations to students who should receive them, arranging for special equipment and checking that it operates (e.g., calculator, assistive technology), and assigning accessibility features and accommodations in the test platform.

States were asked about the methods they used to examine the validity of accessibility features and accommodations provided to students with disabilities on the general assessment (see Figure 3). Eighty percent of states collected data on the assignment of accessibility features and accommodations, and more than 60% of states collected data on the use of accessibility features and accommodations. "Other" methods states used included a biannual survey on accommodations and onsite monitoring of LEA documents.

Figure 3. Methods of Examining Validity of Accessibility Features and Accommodations on General Assessments, Regular States
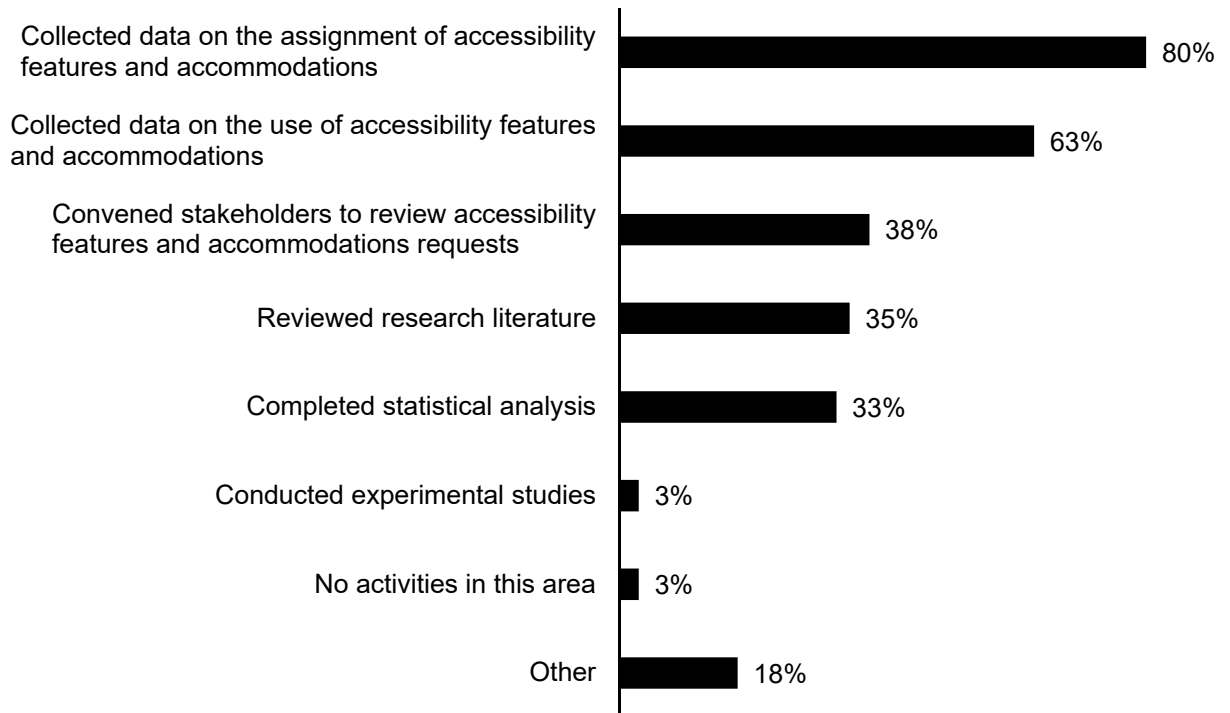

Note. Forty regular states answered this question. Respondents were able to select multiple responses.

Four unique states responded to this question. The most frequent responses were collecting data on the use of accessibility features and accommodations, collecting data on the assignment of accessibility features and accommodations, and convening stakeholders to review accessibility features and accommodations requests.

States were asked about the methods they used to examine the validity of accessibility features and accommodations provided to students with disabilities on the AA-AAAS. As shown in Figure 4, the most common methods were the collection of data on the assignment of accessibility features and accommodations, the collection of data on the use of accessibility features and accommodations requests, and research literature reviews. Five states reported "Other" methods for examining validity of accessibility features and accommodations for students with disabilities on the AA-AAAS, including onsite monitoring, accommodations monitoring, and vendor/consortium review of data.

Figure 4. Methods of Examining Validity of Accessibility Features and Accommodations on Alternate Assessments, Regular States

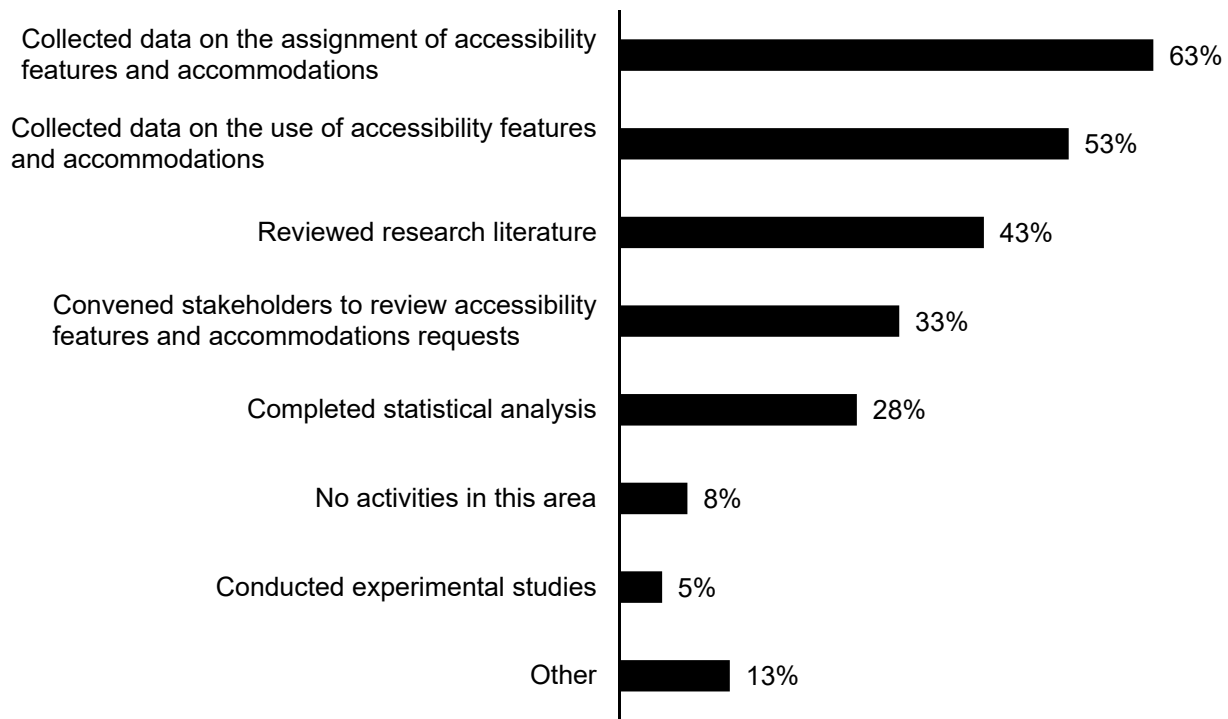| Method	Percentage
Collected data on the assignment of accessibility features and accommodations	63%
Collected data on the use of accessibility features and accommodations	53%
Reviewed research literature	43%
Convened stakeholders to review accessibility features and accommodations requests	33%
Completed statistical analysis	28%
No activities in this area	8%
Conducted experimental studies	5%
Other	13%

Note. Forty regular states answered this question. Respondents were able to select multiple responses.

Four unique states responded to this question. The most common response was collecting data on the assignment and use of accessibility features and accommodations.

States were asked about the methods they used to examine the validity of accessibility features and accommodations provided to students with disabilities on English language proficiency (ELP) assessments. Seventy percent of the states collected data on the assignment of accessibility features and accommodations, while about 40% of states collected data on the use of accessibility features and accommodations or convened stakeholders to review accessibility feature and accommodations requests (see Figure 5). "Other" methods included onsite monitoring, accommodations monitoring, working with a specialist, and working with the state's school for the blind. Additionally, multiple states (n=5) mentioned the involvement of ELP consortia in examining the validity of ELP assessments.

Figure 5. Methods of Examining Validity of Accessibility Features and Accommodations on ELP Assessments, Regular States

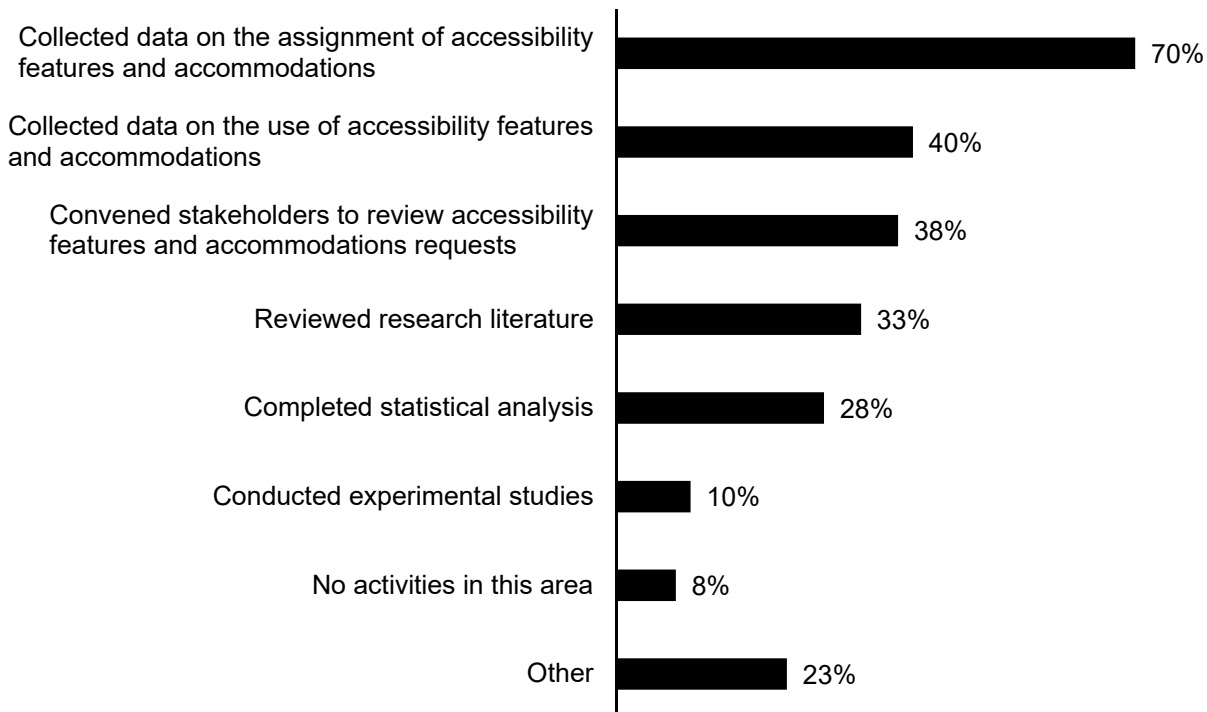| Method	Percentage
Collected data on the assignment of accessibility features and accommodations	70%
Collected data on the use of accessibility features and accommodations	40%
Convened stakeholders to review accessibility features and accommodations requests	38%
Reviewed research literature	33%
Completed statistical analysis	28%
Conducted experimental studies	10%
No activities in this area	8%
Other	23%

Note. Forty regular states answered this question. Respondents were able to select multiple responses.

Four unique states responded to this question. The most frequent responses were collecting data on the assignment and use of accessibility features and accommodations, convening stakeholders to review accessibility features and accommodations requests, and completing statistical analysis of accessibility features and accommodations.

States were asked about the methods they used to examine the validity of accessibility features and accommodations provided to students with disabilities on alternate ELP (Alt-ELP) assessments (see Figure 6). The most frequent methods used were the collection of data on the assignment of accessibility features and accommodations and the collection of data on the use of accessibility features and accommodations. Fourteen states responded with "Other" methods, with two main themes: (1) Participation in a consortium that examines the validity (n=3), and (2) First-time administration or field testing of an Alt-ELP assessment (n=4). Additional methods included onsite monitoring, accommodations monitoring, and examination by state education agency (SEA) experts.

Figure 6. Methods of Examining Validity of Accessibility Features and Accommodations on Alt-ELP Assessments, Regular States

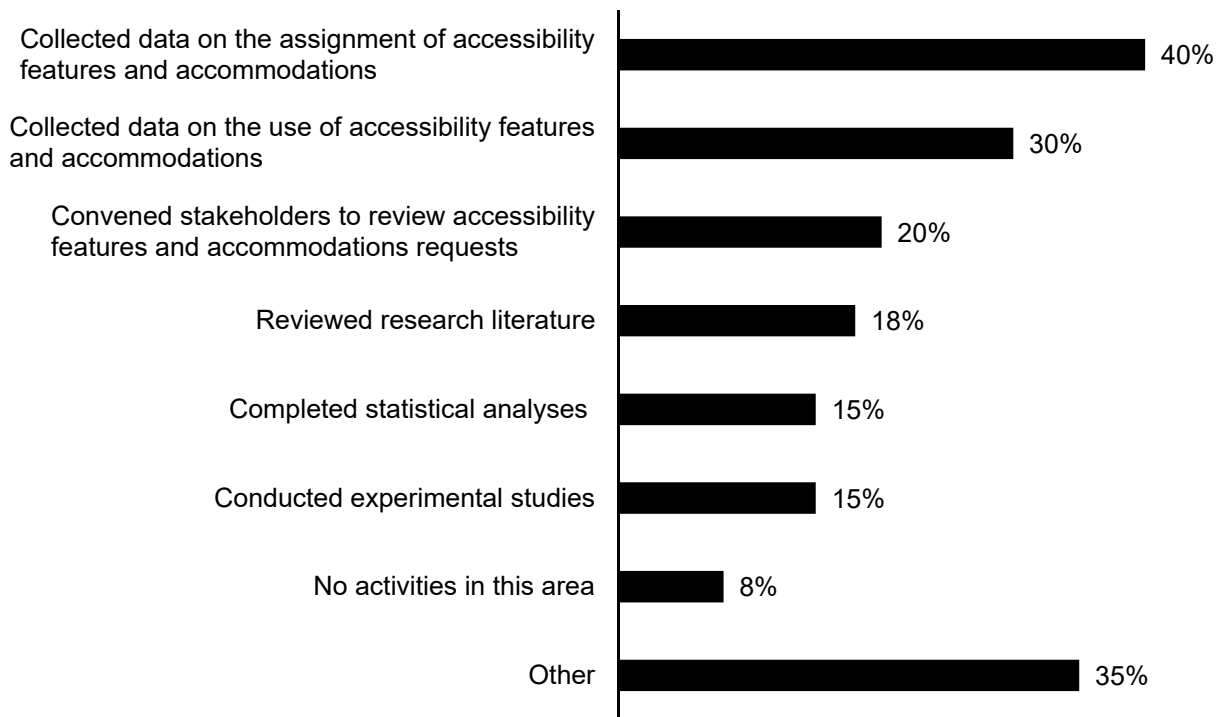| Method	Percentage
Collected data on the assignment of accessibility features and accommodations	40%
Collected data on the use of accessibility features and accommodations	30%
Convened stakeholders to review accessibility features and accommodations requests	20%
Reviewed research literature	18%
Completed statistical analyses	15%
Conducted experimental studies	15%
No activities in this area	8%
Other	35%

Note. Forty regular states answered this question. Respondents were able to select multiple responses.

Four unique states responded to this question. The most frequent response was that there were no activities completed.

States were asked how they monitored decision-making on accessibility features and accommodations by Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams. Desk audits were the most common way that states monitored decision making. Some states monitored IEP team accessibility features and accommodations decisions by conducting interviews with students, educators, and administrators, or conducting online IEP record reviews (see Figure 7). A few states indicated that they did not monitor accessibility features and accommodations decision-making processes.

Figure 7. Methods of Monitoring Decision-making on Accessibility Features and Accommodations by IEP Teams, Regular States
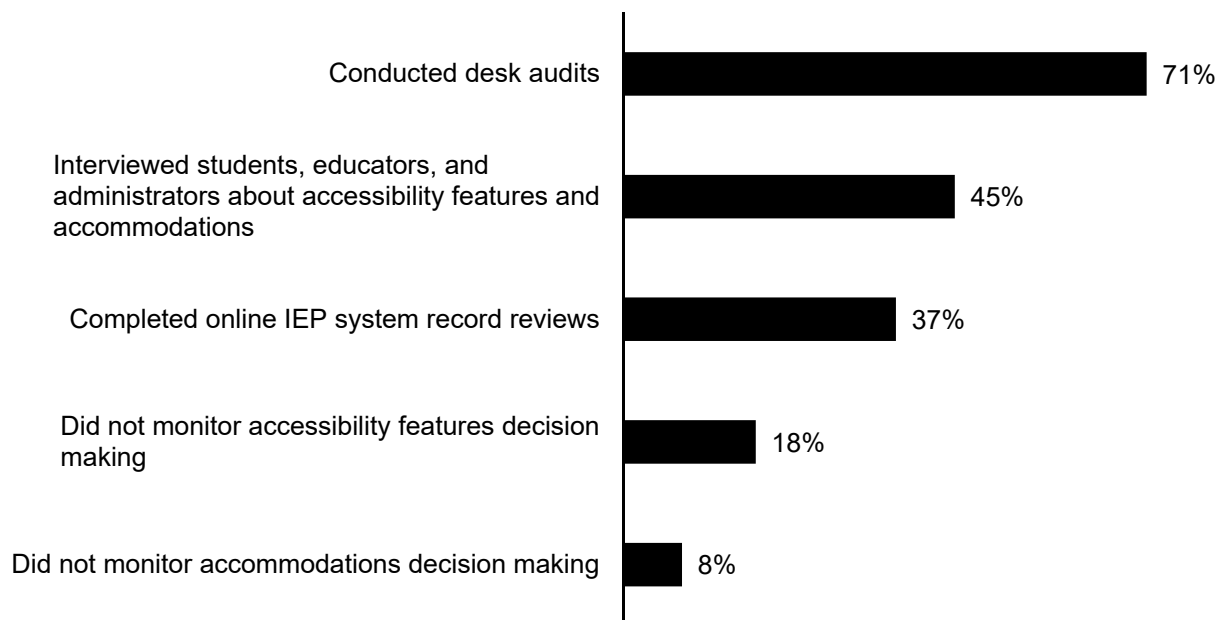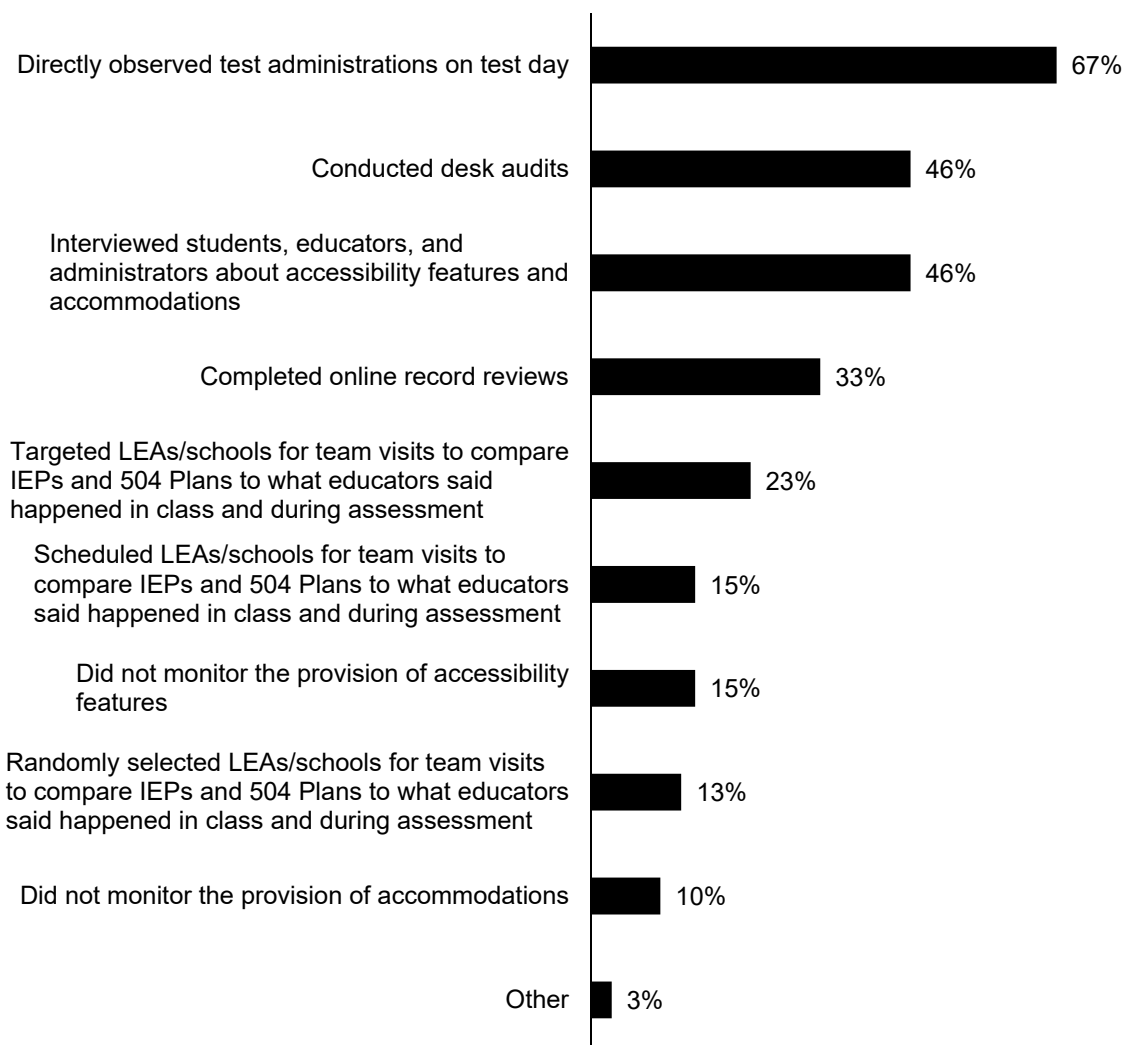

Note. Thirty-eight regular states answered this question. Respondents were able to select multiple responses.

Three unique states responded to this question. The most common approach to monitoring was to interview students, educators, and administrators about accessibility features and accommodations.

States shared how they monitored the provision of accessibility features and accommodations (see Figure 8). Two-thirds of the states conducted direct observations of test administration on test days, and slightly less than half of the states conducted desk audits or student, educator, and administrator interviews about accessibility features and accommodations. One state indicated an "Other" method, noting that they monitored the provision of accommodations during IEP verifications, which were conducted during monitoring reviews of selected districts.

Figure 8. Methods of Monitoring Provision of Accessibility Features and Accommodations, Regular States

| Method	Percentage
Directly observed test administrations on test day	67%
Conducted desk audits	46%
Interviewed students, educators, and administrators about accessibility features and accommodations	46%
Completed online record reviews	33%
Targeted LEAs/schools for team visits to compare IEPs and 504 Plans to what educators said happened in class and during assessment	23%
Scheduled LEAs/schools for team visits to compare IEPs and 504 Plans to what educators said happened in class and during assessment	15%
Did not monitor the provision of accessibility features	15%
Randomly selected LEAs/schools for team visits to compare IEPs and 504 Plans to what educators said happened in class and during assessment	13%
Did not monitor the provision of accommodations	10%
Other	3%

Note. Thirty-nine regular states answered this question. Respondents were able to select multiple responses.

Three unique states responded to this question. The most frequent responses were interviewing students, educators, and administrators about accessibility features and accommodations and sending teams to LEAs/schools on scheduled and targeted visits to compare IEPs and 504 plans (using data on accessibility features and accommodations) with what educators said happened during class and assessment.

Three-quarters of responding states indicated that they had processes in place for the assignment of designated accessibility features and accommodations prior to assessment administration (e.g., individual student assessment accessibility profile [ISAAP], personal needs profile [PNP]) (see Figure 9).

Figure 9. Process for Assigning Designated Accessibility Features and Accommodations Prior to Assessment Administration, Regular States
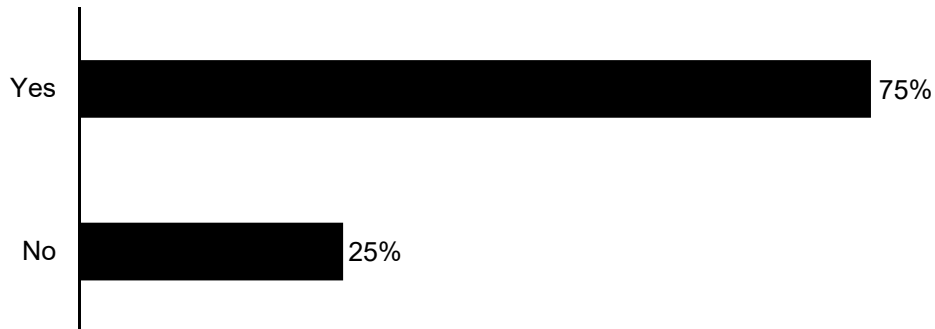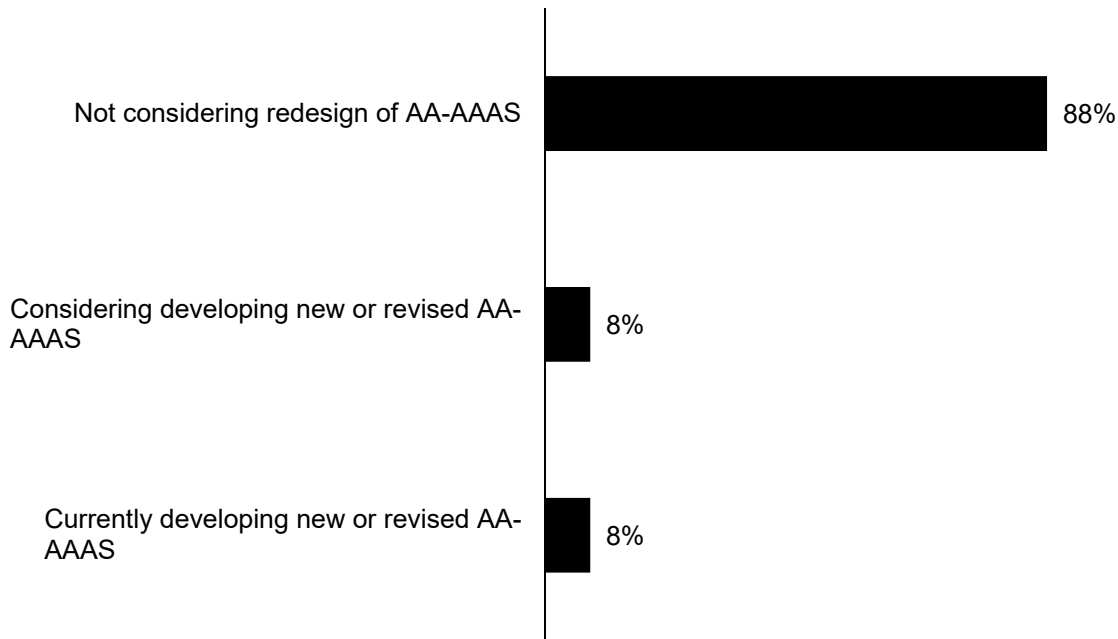

Note. Forty regular states answered this question.

Three unique states responded to this question. The most frequent response was that there was a process in place for assigning designated accessibility features and accommodations prior to assessment administration.

Alternate Assessments based on Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (AA-AAAS)

AA-AAAS ARE INTENDED FOR STUDENTS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT COGNITIVE disabilities who are unable to participate in regular assessments even with accommodations. Most states reported that they were not currently considering a redesign of their AA-AAAS (see Figure 10).

Figure 10. Current Status of AA-AAAS, Regular States

Not considering redesign of AA-AAAS — 88%

Considering developing new or revised AA-AAAS — 8%

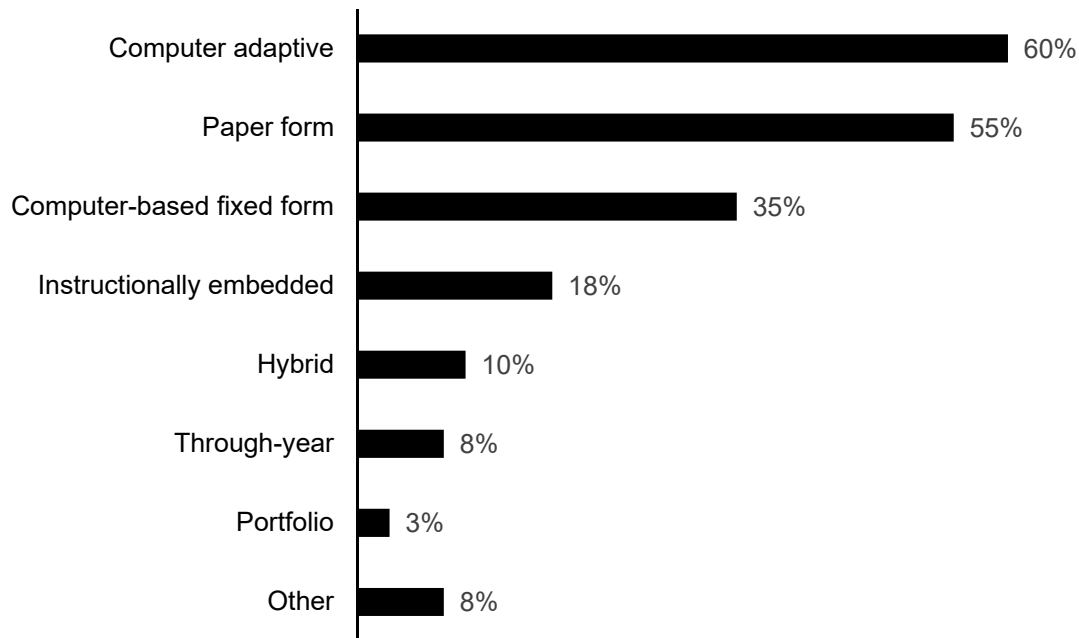Currently developing new or revised AA-AAAS — 8%

Note. Forty regular states answered this question. Respondents were able to select multiple responses.

Three unique states responded to this question with responses ranging from not considering redesign of AA-AAAS to currently developing a new or revised AA-AAAS.

States reported on the format of their AA-AAAS. The most commonly used formats were computer adaptive and paper tests (see Figure 11). Computer-based fixed forms were another commonly used format. Two states indicated under "Other" that their AA-AAAS were end-of -year assessments, and one state indicated that the state's science AA-AAAS was performance task-based.

Figure 11. Format of AA-AAAS, Regular States

Format	Percentage
Computer adaptive	60%
Paper form	55%
Computer-based fixed form	35%
Instructionally embedded	18%
Hybrid	10%
Through-year	8%
Portfolio	3%
Other	8%

Note. Forty regular states answered this question. Respondents were able to select multiple responses.

Three unique states responded to this question. The most common type of AA-AAAS in the responding unique states was a portfolio.

States reported on the use of an early stopping rule for their AA-AAAS, which refers to discontinuing a test when a student is unable to respond to the first several items on the test. As shown in Figure 12, 22 states reported that they had an early stopping rule.

**Figure 12. Early Stopping Rule for AA-AAAS, Regular States**

Note. Thirty-nine regular states answered this question.

Four unique states responded to this question. Most indicated that there was not an early stopping rule for the AA-AAAS.

The 2015 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which is commonly referred to as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), caps participation in the AA-AAAS at 1.0% of the total tested student population for each subject area. States were asked about their participation rates for the AA-AAAS for the 2021–2022 school year (see Figure 13). Responses indicated that less than half the regular states were at or below the 1.0% cap. States that did not meet the 1.0% cap were fairly evenly split between those that had an action plan to address being over the 1.0% AA-AAAS participation cap and those that received a 1.0% waiver from the federal government. One requirement for states to receive a waiver is that at least 95% of the *all students* and the *students with disabilities* groups participate in the state assessment. Forty percent of states reported that they did not have 95% participation. Only a few states that were over 1.0% had decreased their participation rates in 2021–2022 compared to the 2018–2019 school year.

Figure 13. Alternate Assessment Participation Rate Status, Regular States
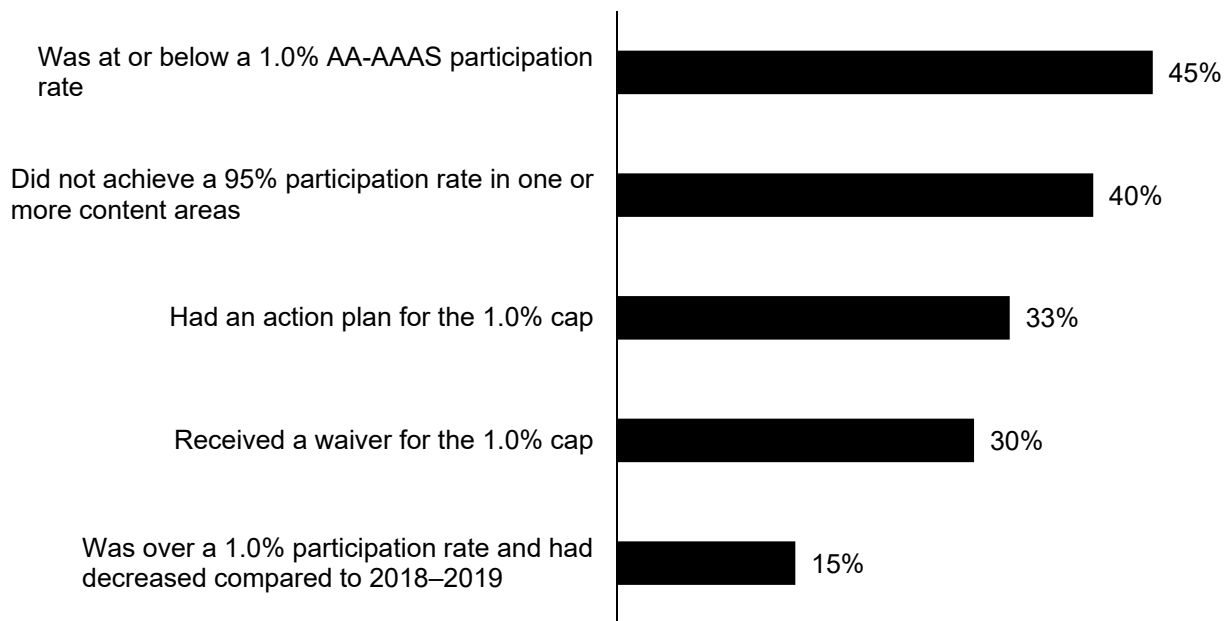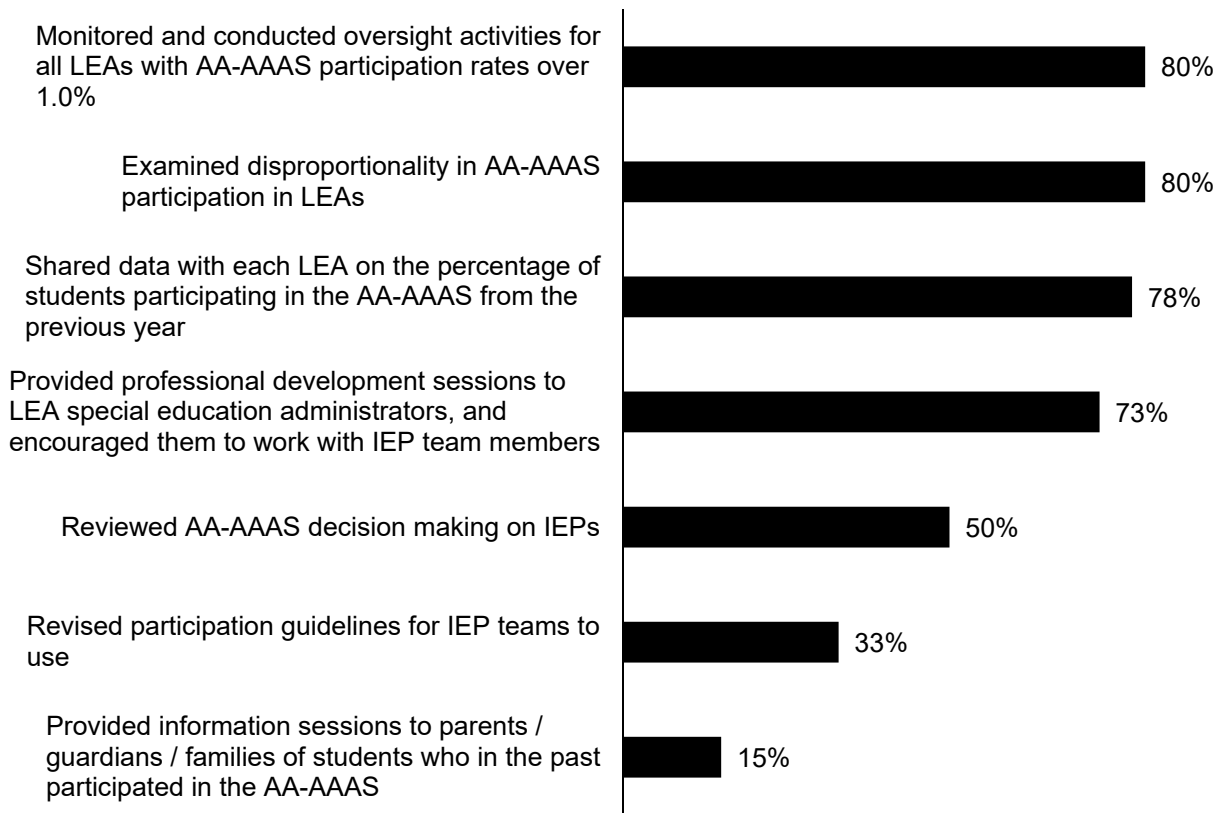

Note. Forty regular states answered this question. Respondents were able to select multiple responses.

Three unique states responded to this question. Some had different requirements regarding participation than regular states did, but most responses indicated that they were at or below 1.0% for AA-AAAS participation.

States indicated what strategies they used to ensure that IEP teams only assigned students who met the state's AA-AAAS participation guidelines to participate in the AA-AAAS (see Figure 14). Most regular states monitored and conducted oversight activities for all LEAs with participation rates over 1.0% and examined disproportionality in AA-AAAS participation at the LEA level. They also shared data from the previous year with LEAs on the proportion of students participating in the AA-AAAS and provided professional development in special education to LEA personnel.

Figure 14. Strategies for Monitoring AA-AAAS Participation by IEP Teams, Regular States

Strategy	Percentage
Monitored and conducted oversight activities for all LEAs with AA-AAAS participation rates over 1.0%	80%
Examined disproportionality in AA-AAAS participation in LEAs	80%
Shared data with each LEA on the percentage of students participating in the AA-AAAS from the previous year	78%
Provided professional development sessions to LEA special education administrators, and encouraged them to work with IEP team members	73%
Reviewed AA-AAAS decision making on IEPs	50%
Revised participation guidelines for IEP teams to use	33%
Provided information sessions to parents / guardians / families of students who in the past participated in the AA-AAAS	15%

Note. Forty regular states answered this question. Respondents were able to select multiple responses.

Three unique states responded to this question. The most frequent response was the review of AA-AAAS decision making on IEPs.

Interim Assessments

INTERIM ASSESSMENTS REFER TO ASSESSMENTS THAT ARE ADMINISTERED SEVERAL times during a school year to measure student progress. Most often, these are commercially produced. Other terms that are sometimes used to describe these assessments are local assessments and benchmark assessments. Data from interim assessments were used for a variety of purposes, including measuring growth or progress, instructional decision making, and predicting summative assessment performance. There was also interest in using these assessments to measure learning loss. Most states reported interim assessments were not mandated in their states (see Figure 15).

Figure 15. State-mandated Interim Assessments, Regular States

Yes ▮ 15%

No ▮ 85%

Note. Forty regular states answered this question.

Three unique states responded to this question. The most frequent response was that there was a state-mandated interim assessment.

About half of the regular states with state-mandated interim assessments provided LEAs with lists of state-approved off-the-shelf tests, while a third implemented vendor-developed off-the-shelf tests statewide (see Figure 16).

**Figure 16. Source of State-mandated Interim Assessments, Regular States**
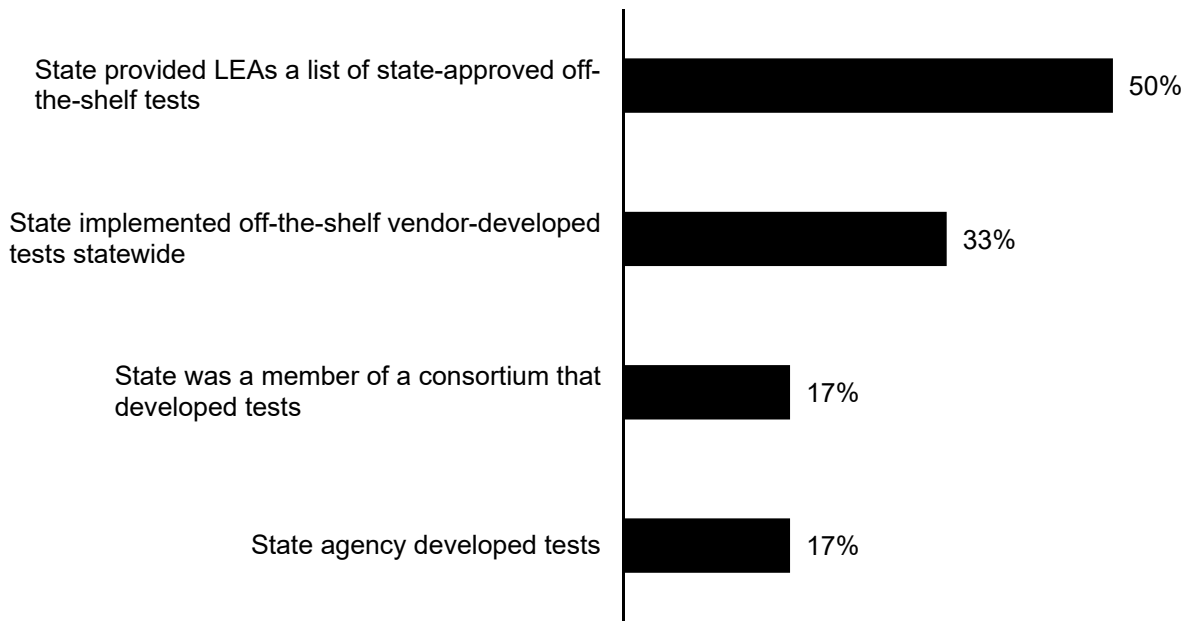
Source	Percentage
State provided LEAs a list of state-approved off-the-shelf tests	50%
State implemented off-the-shelf vendor-developed tests statewide	33%
State was a member of a consortium that developed tests	17%
State agency developed tests	17%

Note. Six regular states answered this question. Respondents were able to select multiple responses.

Two unique states responded to this question. The most common response was that they used off-the-shelf tests developed by vendors.

States indicated how guidance was provided on accessibility features and accommodations for interim assessments. The majority of states provided state-specific guidance (see Figure 17).

Figure 17. Source of Guidance on Accessibility Features and Accommodations for Interim Assessments, Regular States
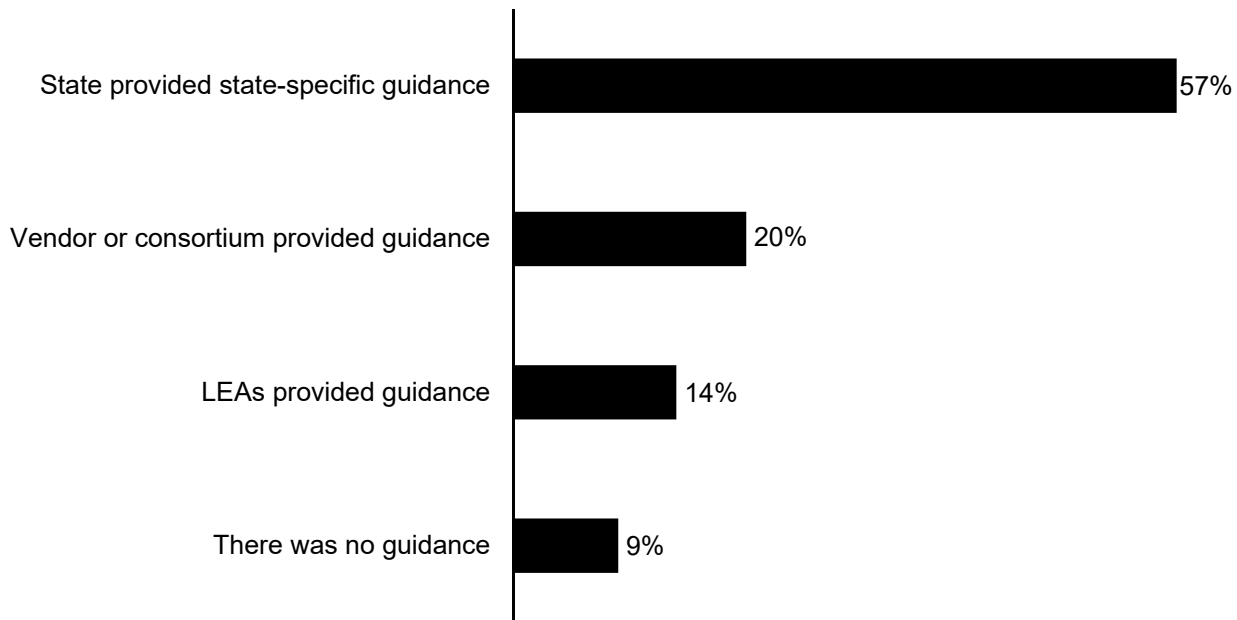
*Note.* Thirty-five regular states answered this question.

Three unique states responded to this question. The most frequent response was that no guidance was provided on accessibility features and accommodations for interim assessments.

Accountability

Assessments are sometimes used for accountability purposes. Accountability provisions in ESSA call for a system of accountability to hold schools and LEAs responsible for the performance of students. Many of the unique states are not held to ESSA requirements.

States provided information on how three unique groups of students were included in state accountability reports in the 2021–2022 years. The three groups were: (1) assessment non-participants, who did not participate in state assessments in any way (e.g., absent on test day, parent refusal); (2) assessment non-completers, who were present for state assessments but did not complete enough items to score; and (3) assessment support users, whose use of non-standard accommodations or modifications resulted in invalid assessment scores (see Figure 18). Two factors for how these student groups were included in accountability were reported: (1) whether they were considered participants, and (2) whether and how their assessment scores were reported. Four states indicated "Other" ways that students were included in state accountability reports. Two of these states indicated that students who used accommodations in ways that resulted in invalid scores were retested; one state outlined the percentage of items that must be completed in order to receive a valid score; and one state indicated that non-participants were counted differently depending on why they did not participate.

Figure 18. 2021–2022 SEA Reporting of Student Participation, Regular States
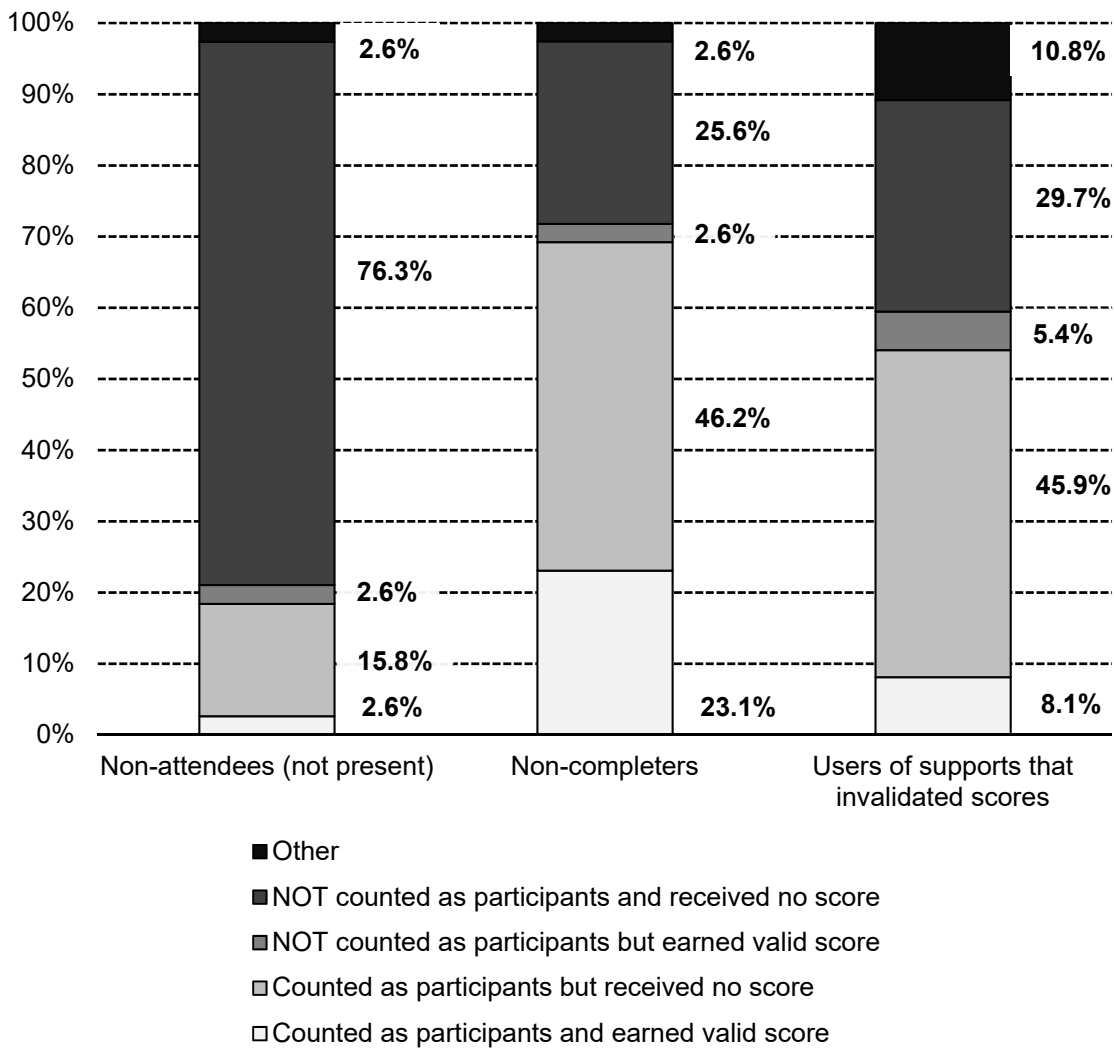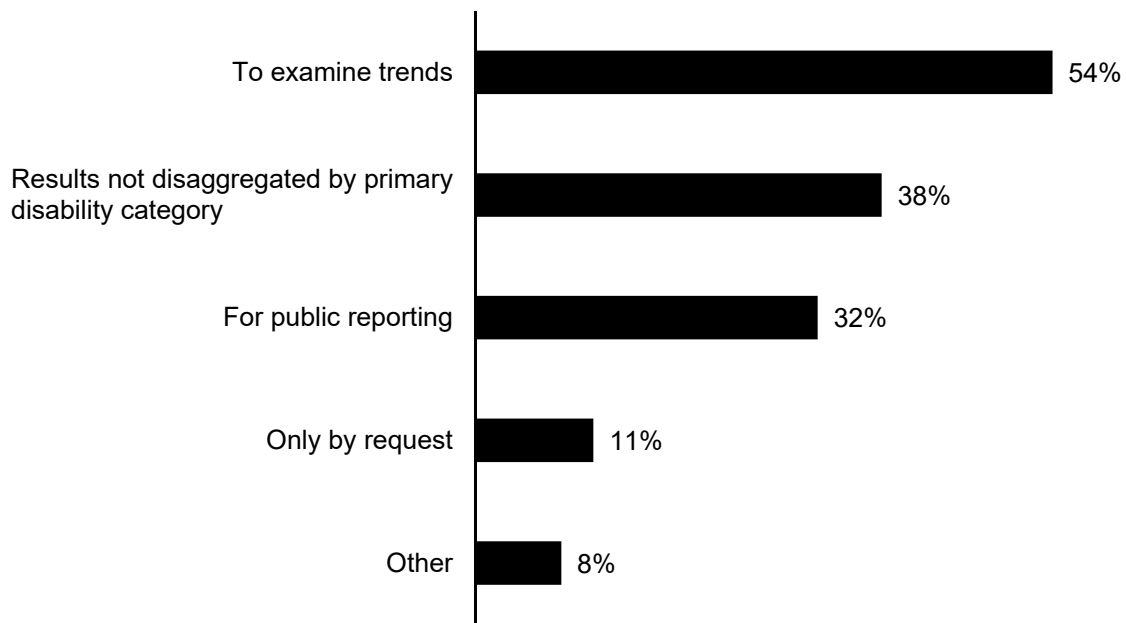

Note. Thirty-six regular states responded on non-attendees, 37 regular states responded on non-completers, and 35 regular states responded on users of supports that invalidated scores.

One unique state responded to this question. The unique state indicated that all three groups of students were counted as participants. Non-attendees did not receive test scores.

States reported on the purposes of disaggregating general assessment results by primary disability category. Regular states indicated that the most common purposes were to examine trends and for public reporting purposes, although about a third of the regular states indicated that they did not disaggregate results by primary disability category (see Figure 19). "Other" reasons included providing data to LEAs for internal use, using data for focused monitoring, and using data for results driven accountability.

Figure 19. Reasons for Disaggregating General Assessment Results by Disability Category, Regular States
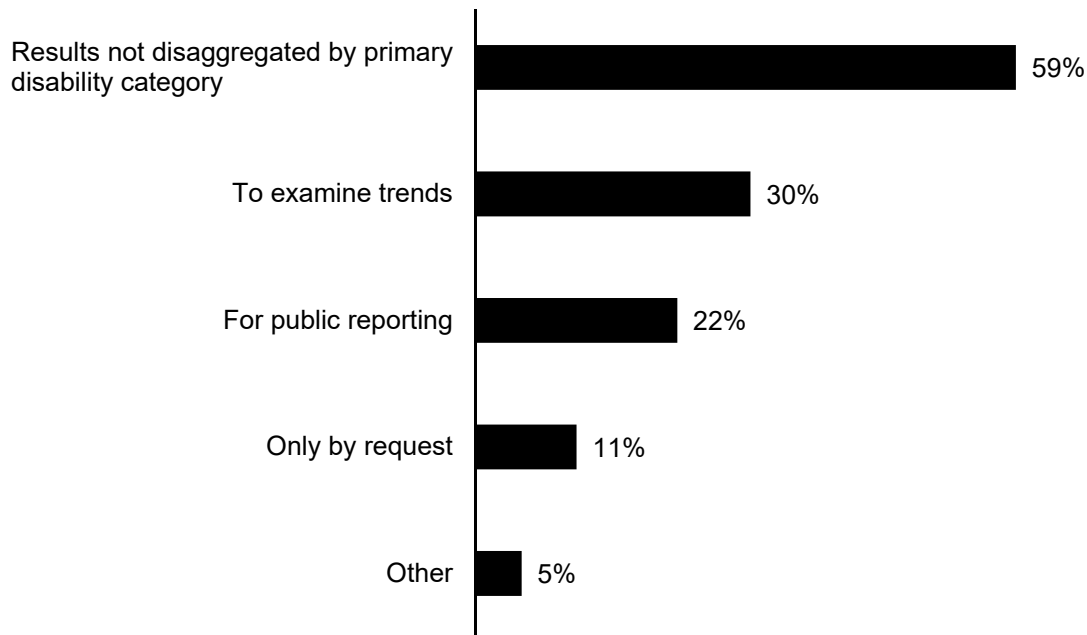

Note. Thirty-seven regular states answered this question. Respondents were able to select multiple responses.

One unique state responded to this question. The unique state reported that results were not disaggregated by primary disability category.

States reported on the purposes of disaggregating their AA-AAAS results by primary disability category. As shown in Figure 20, more than 60% of the regular states indicated that they disaggregated AA-AAAS results by primary disability category to examine trends, while almost 40% of states disaggregated for public reporting purposes. Several regular states indicated that they did not disaggregate results by primary disability category. "Other" reasons included providing data to LEAs for internal use, using data for focused monitoring, using data for results driven accountability, and identifying LEAs that needed intensive direct technical assistance.

Figure 20. Reasons for Disaggregating AA-AAAS Results by Disability Category, Regular States
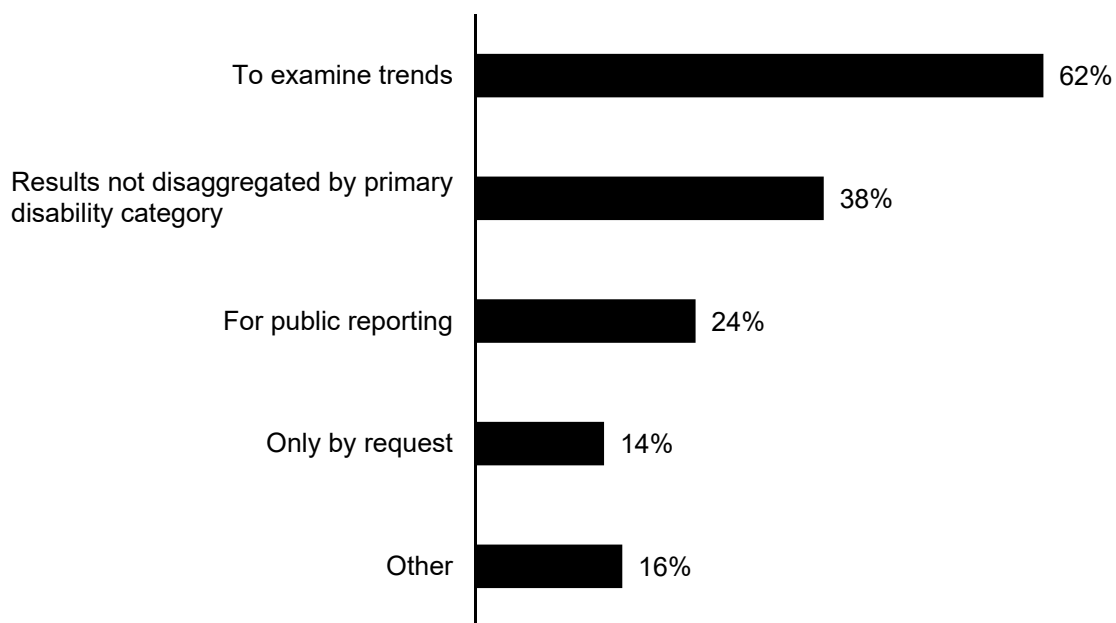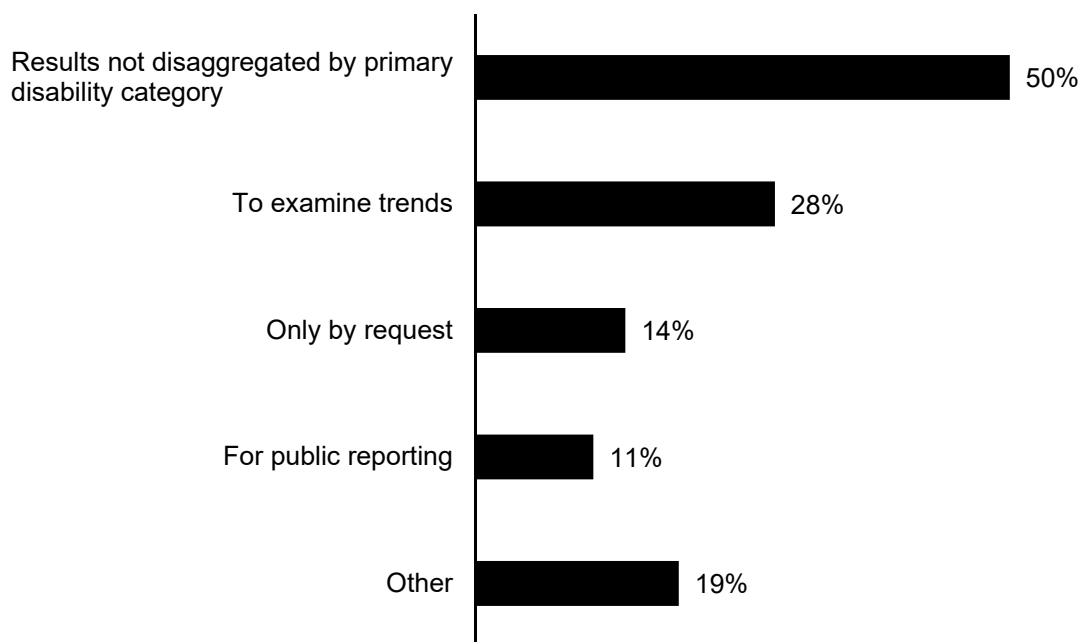

Note. Thirty-seven regular states answered this question. Respondents were able to select multiple responses.

One unique state responded to this question. The unique state reported that results were not disaggregated by primary disability category.

States reported on the purposes of disaggregating ELP assessment results by primary disability category. Regular states reported most frequently that results were not disaggregated by primary disability category (see Figure 21). For regular states that did disaggregate results by primary disability, the most common reasons were to examine trends and for public reporting. "Other" reasons included focused monitoring, disaggregating ELP results for accountability, and to display student growth.

Figure 21. Reasons for Disaggregating ELP Assessment Results by Disability Category, Regular States

Note. Thirty-seven regular states answered this question. Respondents were able to select multiple responses.

One unique state responded to this question. The unique state reported that results were not disaggregated by primary disability category.

States reported on the purposes of disaggregating Alt-ELP assessment results by primary disability category. As shown in Figure 22, half of the regular states reported that results were not disaggregated by primary disability category. For regular states that did disaggregate results by primary disability, the most common reason was to examine trends. Several states reported under "Other" that this was their first year administering the Alt-ELP assessment or that they were currently field testing the assessment, while one state indicated that they used disaggregated Alt-ELP data for accountability.

Figure 22. Reasons for Disaggregating Alt-ELP Assessment Results by Disability Category, Regular States
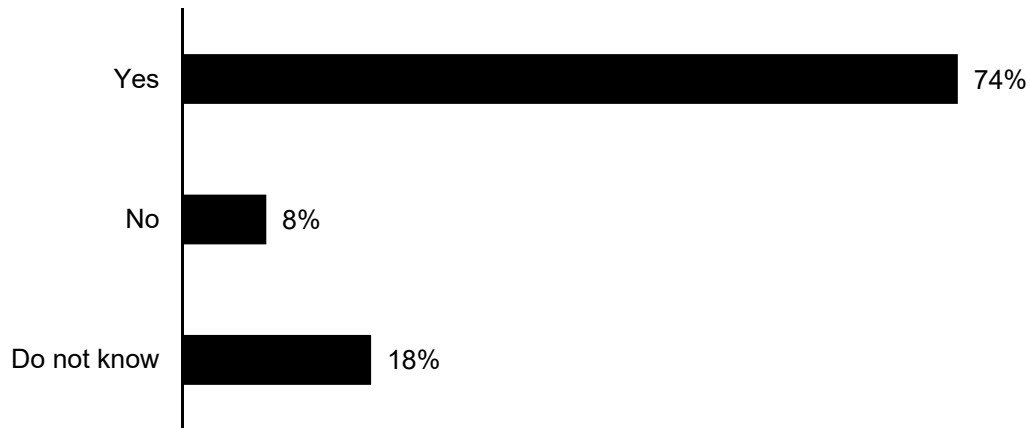

Note. Thirty-six regular states answered this question. Respondents were able to select multiple responses.

One unique state responded to this question. The unique state reported that results were not disaggregated by primary disability category.

About three-quarters of the regular states reported that they used or planned to use a student growth model to measure student growth for students who participated in the general assessment (see Figure 23).

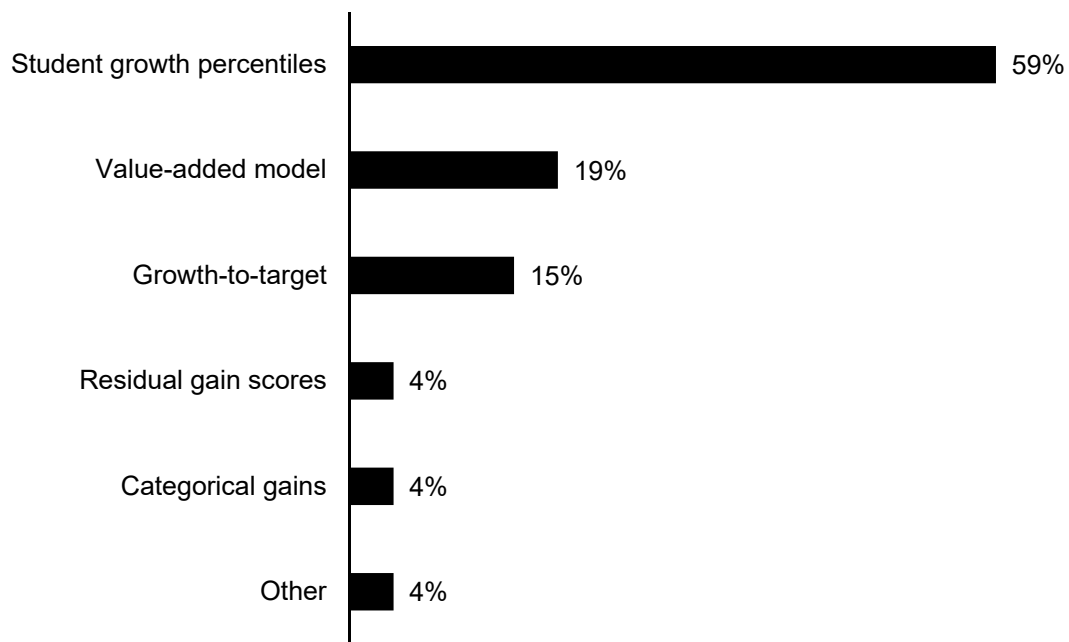**Figure 23. Used or Planned to Use Student Growth Model for General Assessments, Regular States**

Yes — 74%

No — 8%

Do not know — 18%

Note. Thirty-eight regular states answered this question.

One unique state responded to this question. The unique state used or planned to use a growth model for the general assessment.

The states that responded that they used or were planning to use a growth model to determine improvement in general assessment results also indicated which student growth model was used or was planned to be used. The most common growth model reported was student growth percentiles (see Figure 24). One state indicated under "Other" that they used both growth-to-proficiency and student growth percentile models.

Figure 24. Growth Model Used or Planned to Use for General Assessments, Regular States
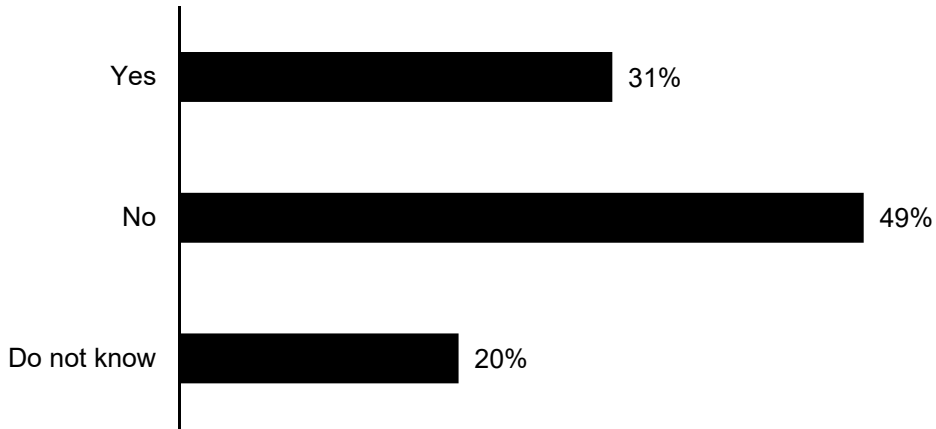

Note. Twenty-seven regular states answered this question.

One unique state responded to this question. The unique state used or planned to use student growth percentiles.

About half of the regular states reported that a growth model was not used or planned to be used for the AA-AAAS (see Figure 25).

Figure 25. Used or Planned to Use Student Growth Model for AA-AAAS, Regular States

Yes — 31%

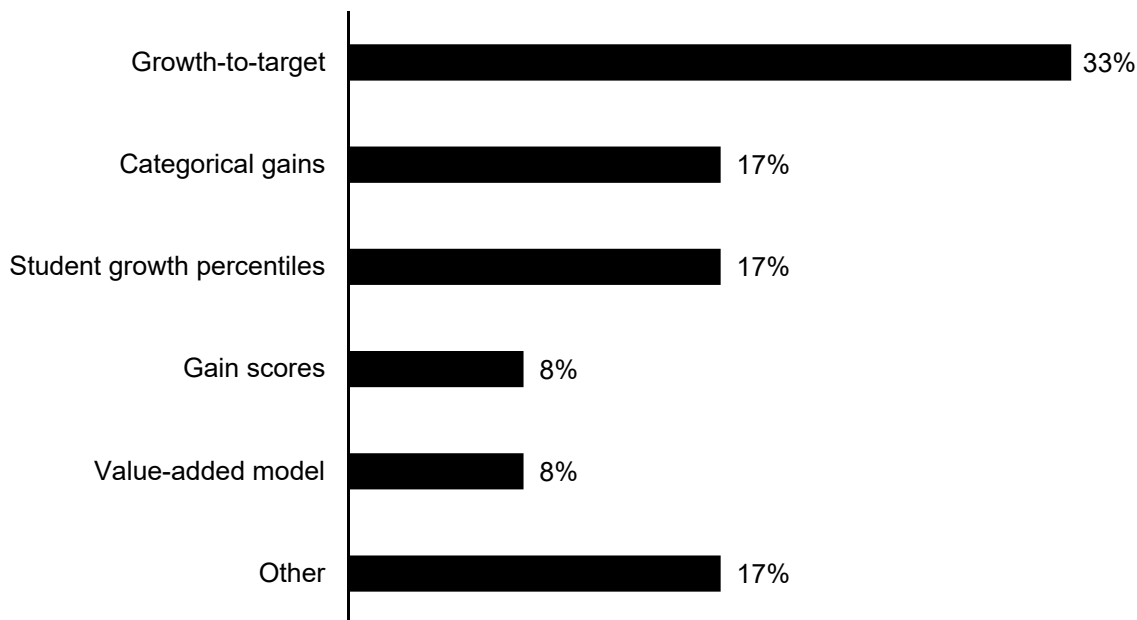No — 49%

Do not know — 20%

Note. Thirty-nine regular states answered this question.

One unique state responded to this question. The unique state used or planned to use a growth model for the AA-AAAS.

States that indicated that they used or planned to use a student growth model for the AA-AAAS indicated which growth model was used. Regular states reported that the most frequently used or planned models were growth-to-target, categorical gains, and student growth percentiles (see Figure 26). One state reported that their "Other" approach was to use percentile rank residuals, while another state indicated that their model was contingent upon the U.S. Department of Education's approval of their updated ESEA Consolidated State Plan.

Figure 26. Growth Model Used or Planned to Use for AA-AAAS, Regular States
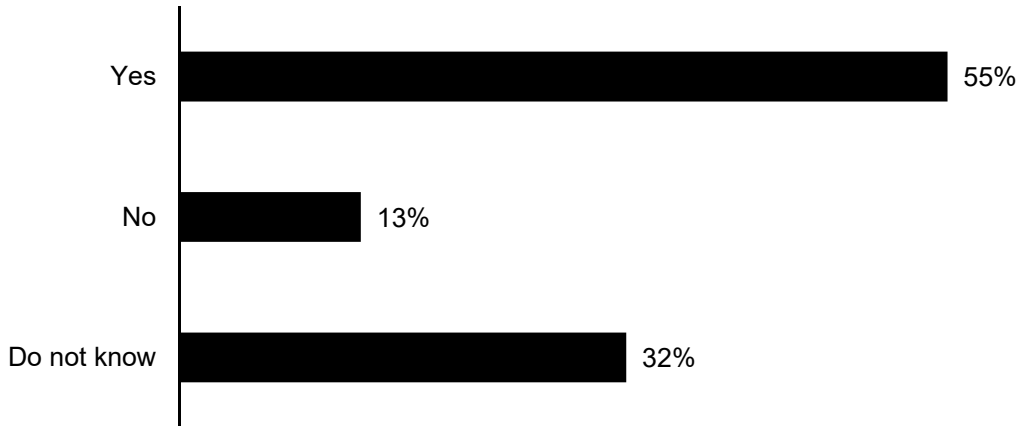

Note. Twelve regular states answered this question.

No unique states responded to this question.

More than half of the regular states reported that a growth model was used or planned to be used for the ELP assessment (see Figure 27).

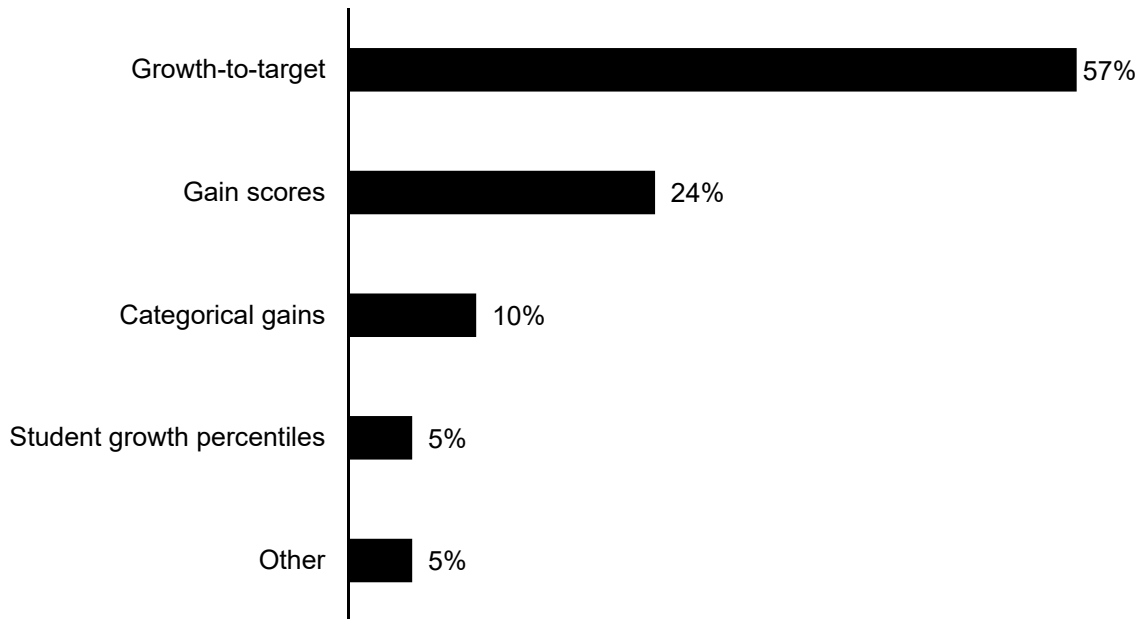**Figure 27. Used or Planned to Use Growth Model for ELP Assessments, Regular States**

Note: Thirty-eight regular states answered this question.

One unique state responded to this question. The unique state used or planned to use a growth model for the ELP assessment.

States that indicated that they used or planned to use a student growth model for ELP assessments indicated which growth model was used. Regular states reported that the most frequently used or planned model was growth-to-target (see Figure 28). One state reported under "Other" that they used a state-specific progress indicator based on ELP growth across performance bands.

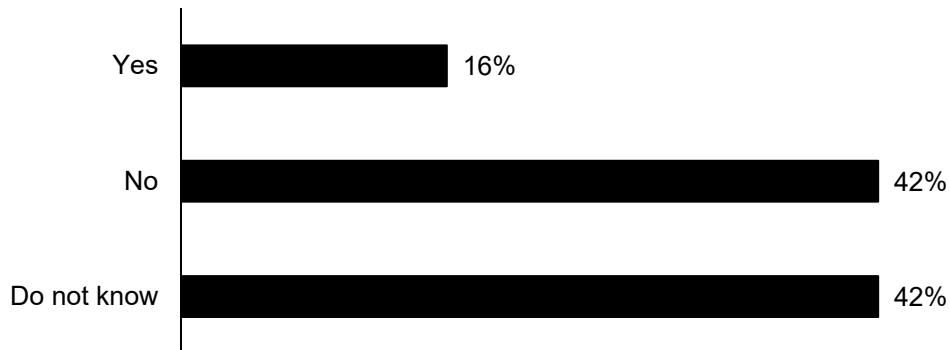**Figure 28. Growth Model Used or Planned to Use for ELP Assessments, Regular States**

Note. Twenty-one regular states answered this question.

One unique state responded to this question. The unique state used or planned to use a student growth percentile for the ELP assessment.

States reported whether a growth model was used or planned to be used for the Alt-ELP assessment. Many regular states indicated that a growth model was not used or planned, while many others did not know (see Figure 29).

Figure 29. Used or Planned to Use Growth Model for Alt-ELP Assessments, Regular States
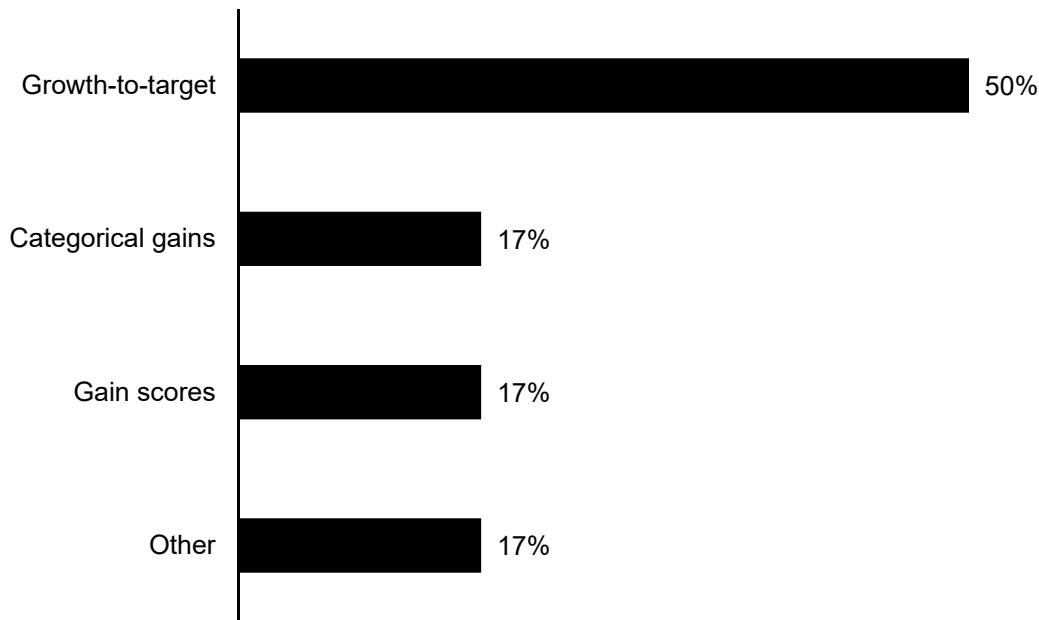

Note. Thirty-eight regular states answered this question.

One unique state responded to this question. The unique state used or planned to use a growth model for the Alt-ELP assessment.

States that indicated that they used or planned to use a growth model to judge improvement in Alt-ELP assessment results indicated which growth model was used or was planned to be used. Half of the responding regular states reported that the most frequently used model was growth-to-target. Some states reported the use of categorical gains and gain scores (see Figure 30). One state reported that they were currently researching growth models for the Alt-ELP assessment.

Figure 30. Growth Model Used or Planned to Use for Alt-ELP Assessments, Regular States
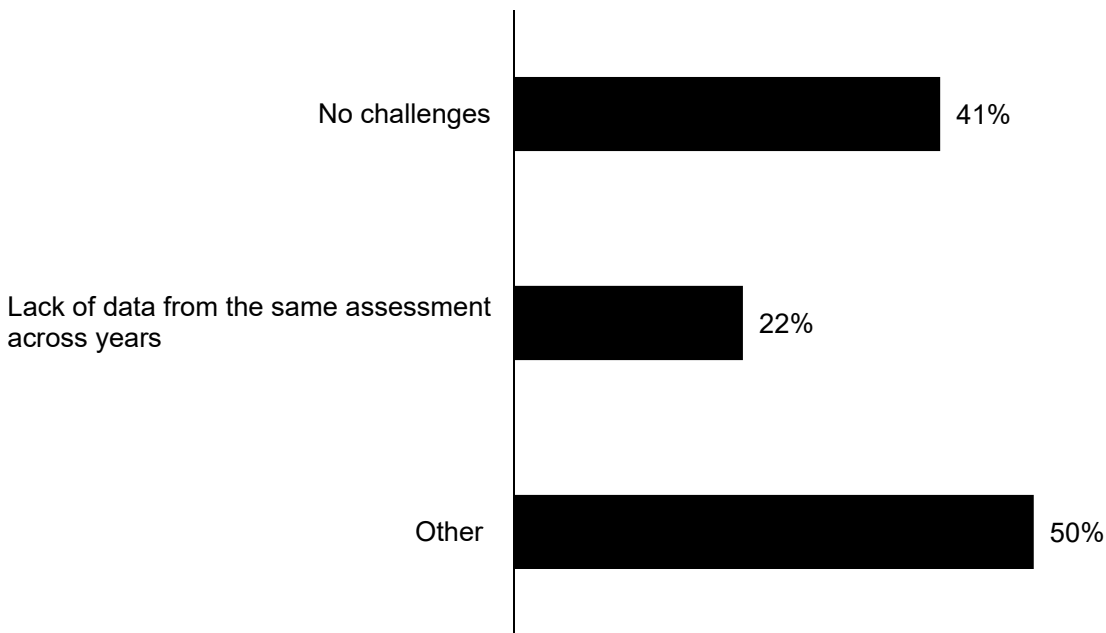

Note. Six regular states answered this question. Total percentage exceeds 100% due to rounding.

One unique state responded to this question. The unique state used or planned to use a student growth percentile for the Alt-ELP assessment.

More than 40% of regular states reported that they had no challenges in including students with disabilities in growth measures, yet as Figure 31 shows, several indicated that lack of data from the same assessment across multiple years was a challenge. Fifteen states indicated some "Other" challenges they have faced. These challenges included a small sample size for the AA-AAAS, the lack of an appropriate growth measure for students on the AA-AAAS, legislative policies and procedures, and scattered skills that make it difficult to show growth.

Figure 31. Challenges in Including Students with Disabilities in Growth Measures, Regular States
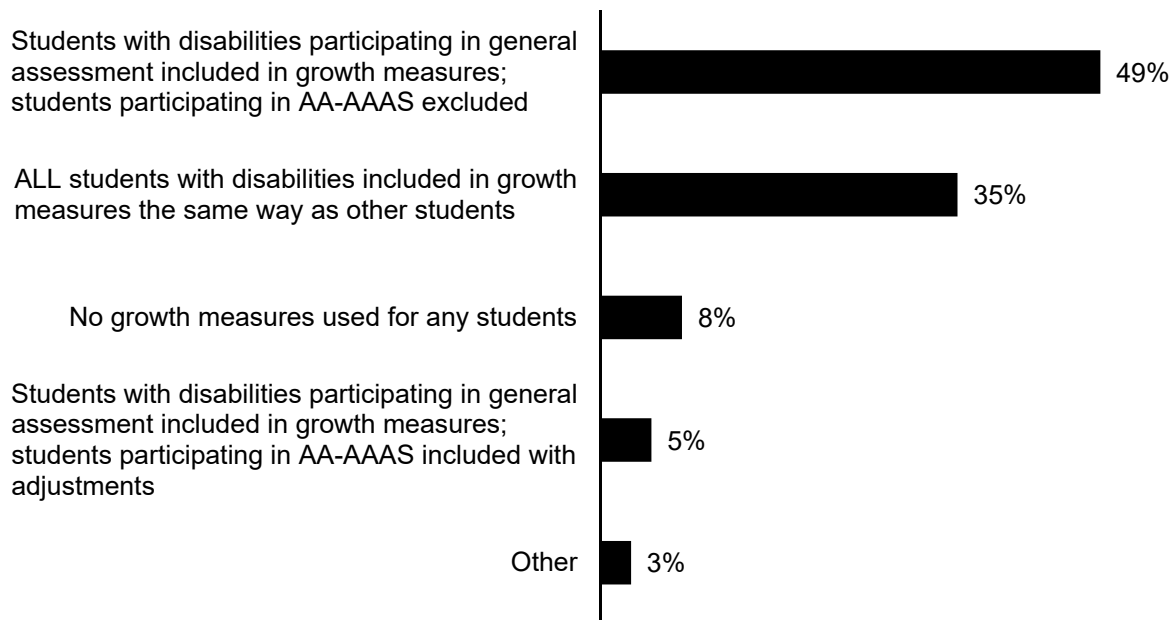

Note. Thirty regular states answered this question. Respondents were able to select multiple responses.

One unique state responded to this question. The unique state reported that there were not any challenges with including students with disabilities in growth models.

States reported on how students with disabilities were included in growth measures. Figure 32 shows that almost half of the regular states that responded to the questions indicated that students with disabilities who participated in the general assessment were included in growth measures while students who participated in the AA-AAAS were excluded, and about a third indicated that all students with disabilities were included in growth measures the same way as peers without identified disabilities.

Figure 32. Methods of Including Students with Disabilities in Growth Measures, Regular States

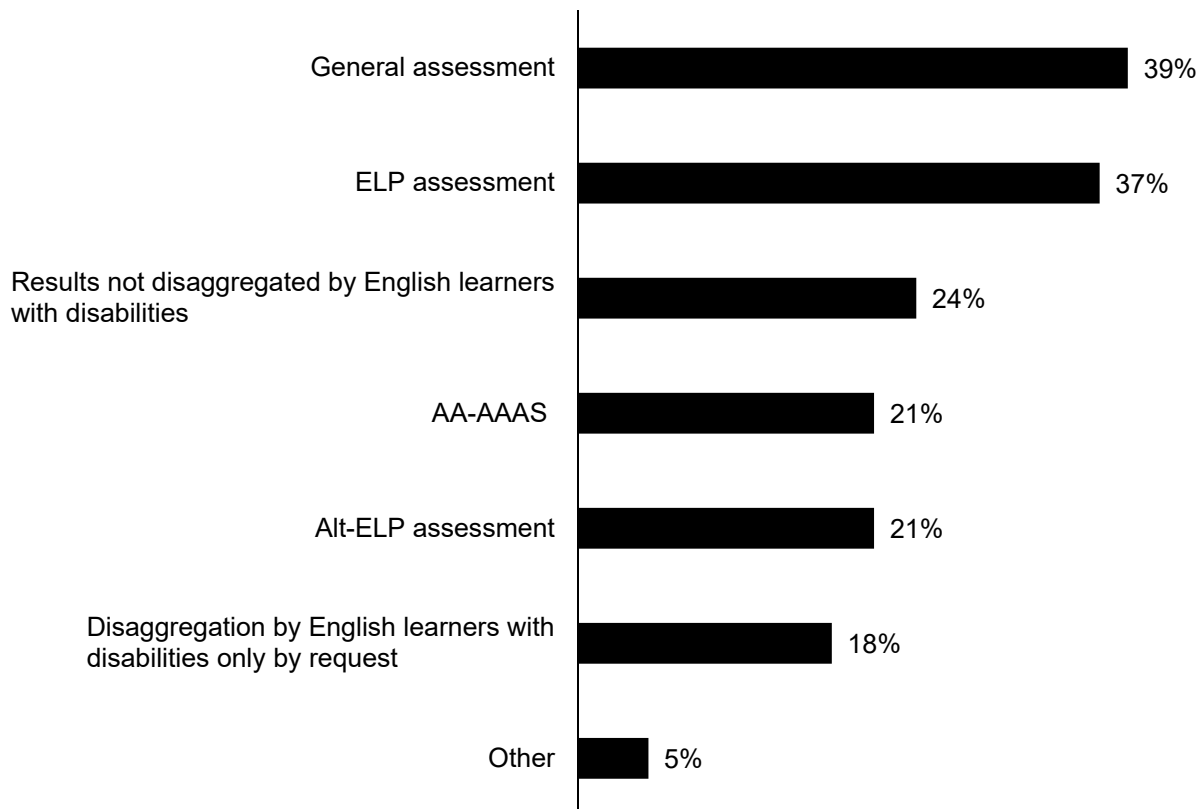*Note.* Thirty-six regular states answered this question.

One unique state responded to this question. The unique state reported that all students with disabilities were included in growth measures the same way as other students were.

English Learners with Disabilities

STATES AND LEAs TYPICALLY HAVE TWO SEPARATE IDENTIFICATION PROCESSES FOR students who are English learners with disabilities. One process identifies English learners who are entitled to English language development (ELD) services, while the second process identifies students with disabilities. English learners with disabilities are students who have been identified and met the criteria for both processes.

States reported for which assessments they disaggregated assessment results for English learners with disabilities (see Figure 33). Less than 40% of states disaggregated results for any assessment for English learners with disabilities. The most common assessments for which states disaggregated results were the general assessment and the ELP assessment. One state noted that they were unsure, while another indicated that the designation of being an English learner with a disability was a variable in the secure student data files provided to districts and researchers.

Figure 33. Assessment Results Disaggregated for English Learners with Disabilities, Regular States

General assessment — 39%
ELP assessment — 37%
Results not disaggregated by English learners with disabilities — 24%
AA-AAAS — 21%
Alt-ELP assessment — 21%
Disaggregation by English learners with disabilities only by request — 18%
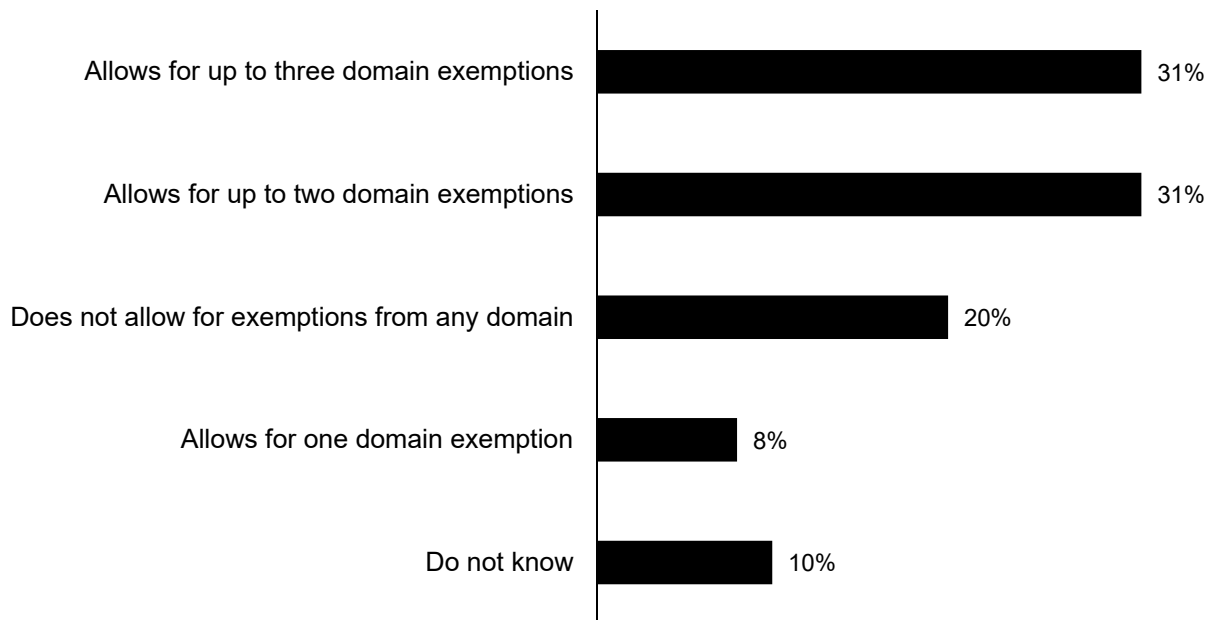Other — 5%

Note. Thirty-eight regular states answered this question. Respondents were able to select multiple responses.

One unique state responded to this question. The unique state reported that results were disaggregated for English learners with disabilities for general assessments and the AA-AAAS.

Some states have a policy that allows exemption from one or more domains (e.g., reading, writing, speaking, listening) of the ELP assessment for some English learners with disabilities. Slightly more than 30% of the regular states allowed up to three domain exemptions on the ELP assessment for some English learners with disabilities (see Figure 34). Similarly, more than 30% of states allowed up to two domain exemptions. A few regular states allowed for only one domain exemption.

Figure 34. ELP Domain Exemption Policies, Regular States

| Category	Percentage
Allows for up to three domain exemptions	31%
Allows for up to two domain exemptions	31%
Does not allow for exemptions from any domain	20%
Allows for one domain exemption	8%
Do not know	10%

Note. Thirty-nine regular states answered this question.

One unique state responded to this question. The unique state did not allow exemptions for any of the domains of the ELP assessment for English learners with disabilities.

States that indicated that they allowed exemptions from at least one domain of the ELP assessment also reported from which domains students could be exempted. All states with domain exemptions allowed exemptions for speaking, while many allowed exemptions for listening, reading, and writing (see Figure 35).

Figure 35. Allowed Domain Exemptions on ELP Assessments for English Learners with Disabilities, Regular States
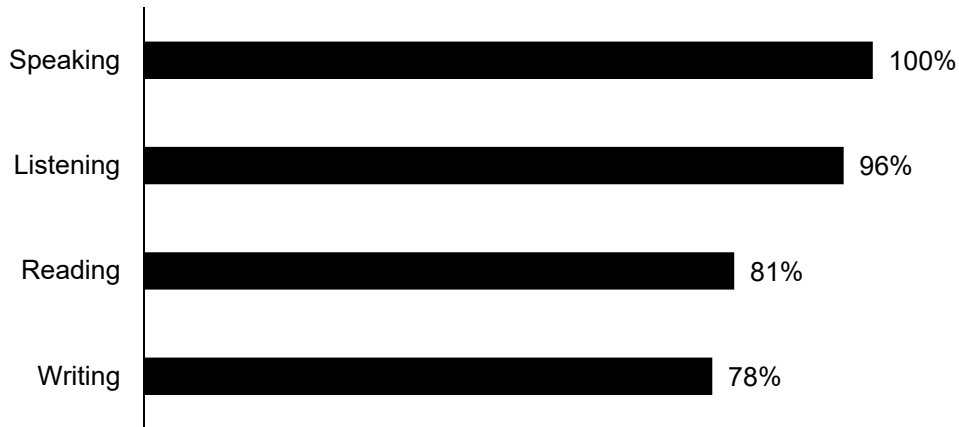
| Domain	Percentage
Speaking	100%
Listening	96%
Reading	81%
Writing	78%

Note. Twenty-seven regular states answered this question. Respondents were able to select multiple responses.

No unique states responded to this question.

States indicated whether there was a policy that allowed an exemption from one or more domains of the Alt-ELP assessment. Figure 36 shows that almost a third of the regular states allowed up to three domain exemptions, while about a quarter allowed up to two domain exemptions. Almost 30% of states did not allow any exemptions for the Alt-ELP assessment.

Figure 36. Alt-ELP Domain Exemption Policies, Regular States
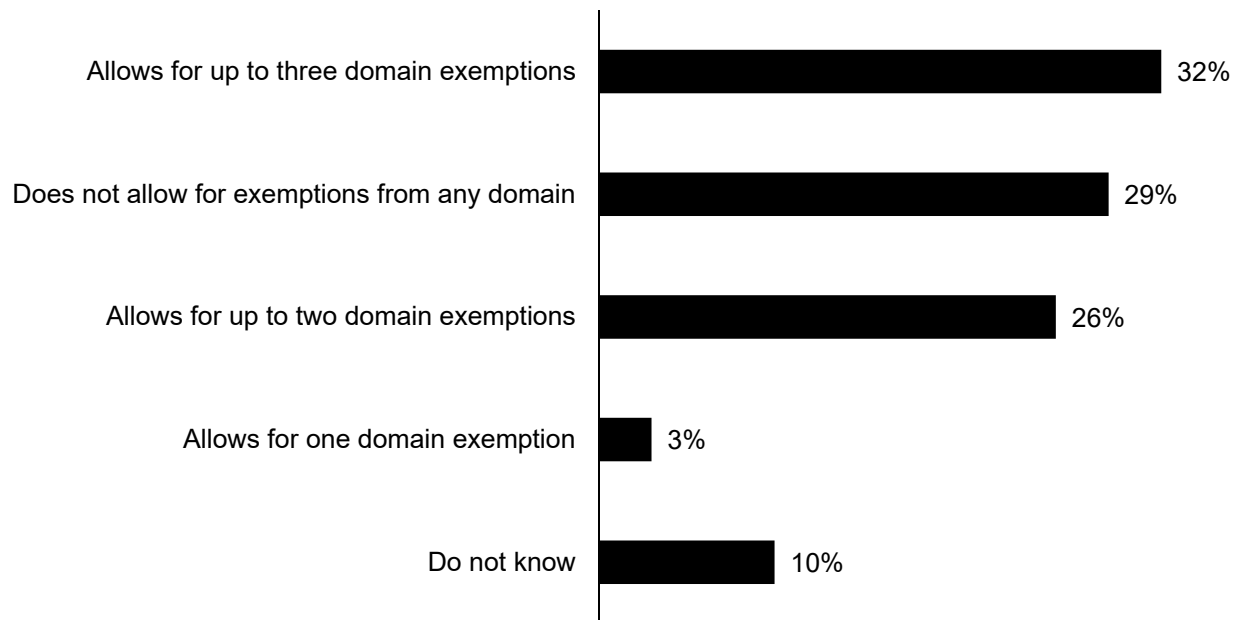
Note. Thirty-eight regular states answered this question.

Three unique states responded to this question. None had a policy that allowed exemptions for any of the domains on the Alt-ELP assessment.

States that indicated that they allowed exemptions from one or more domains of the Alt-ELP assessment also reported from which domains of the Alt-ELP assessment students could be exempted. All states with domain exemptions allowed exemptions for speaking, while many allowed exemptions for listening, reading, and writing (see Figure 37).

Figure 37. Allowed Domain Exemptions on Alt-ELP Assessments for English Learners with Disabilities, Regular States

Domain	Percentage
Speaking	100%
Listening	96%
Reading	78%
Writing	78%

Note. Twenty-three regular states answered this question. Respondents were able to select multiple responses.

No unique states responded to this question.

States reported whether IEP teams for English learners with disabilities were required to have an English learner specialist included on the team. As seen in Figure 38, almost 60% of regular states did not require an English learner specialist be part of the IEP team.

Figure 38. Requirement for IEP Teams of English Learners with Disabilities to Include English Learner Specialist, Regular States

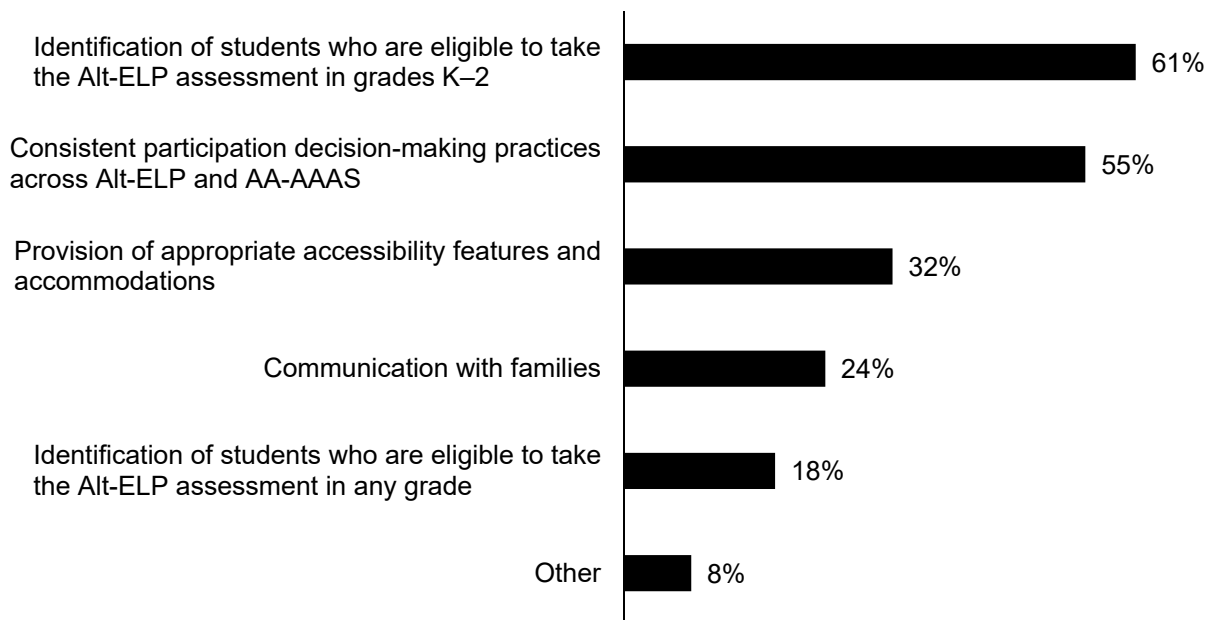| Response	Percentage
Yes	41%
No	59%

Note. Thirty-seven regular states answered this question.

Three unique states responded to this question. Two unique states indicated that an English learner specialist was required to be part of English learners with disabilities' IEP teams, and one did not have a requirement.

States reported their challenges regarding the Alt-ELP assessment. More than half of the regular states indicated that it was challenging to identify students who were eligible to take the Alt-ELP assessment in kindergarten through second grade and that it was challenging to have consistent participation decision-making practices across the Alt-ELP and AA-AAAS (see Figure 39). Two states reported the lack of an appropriate screener as an "Other" concern. One state was concerned about the federal Alt-ELP requirements.

Figure 39. Alt-ELP Assessment Challenges, Regular States

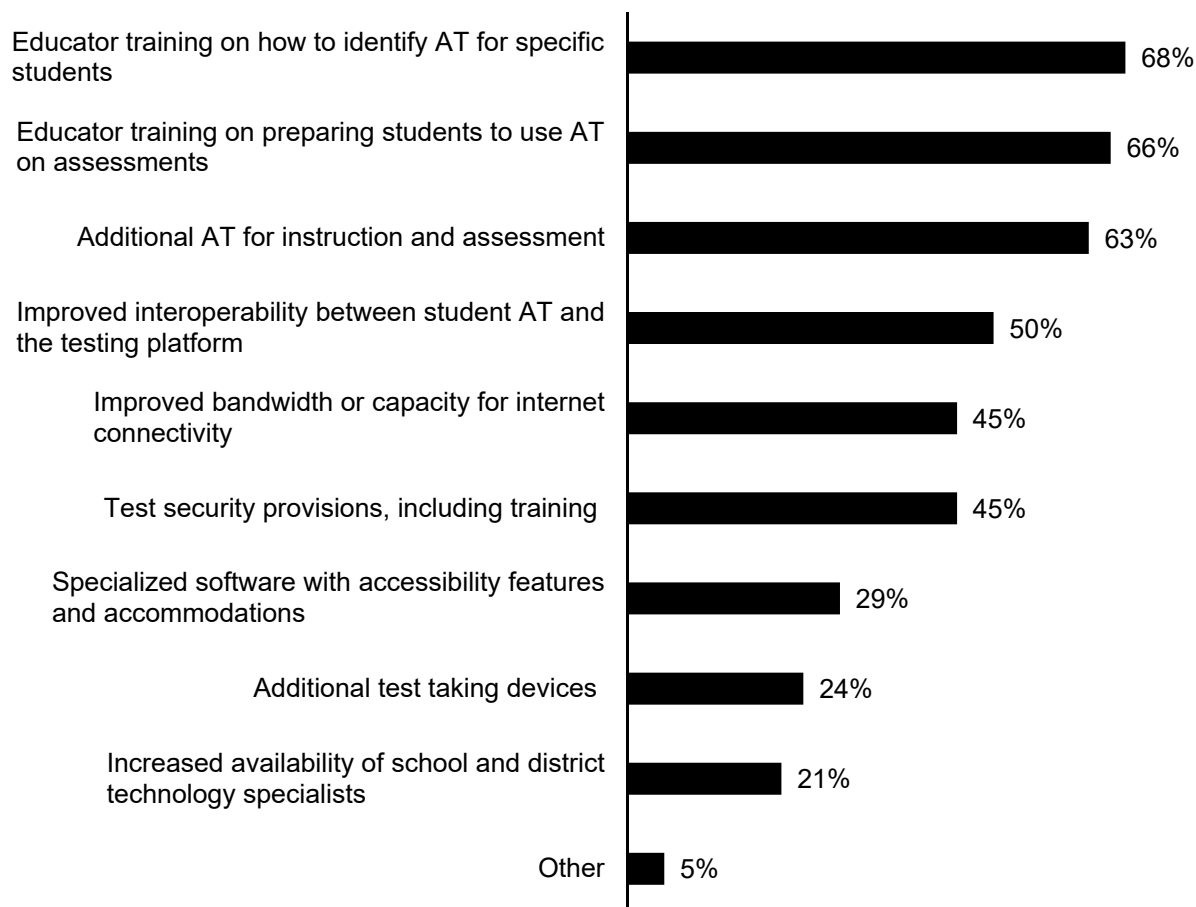| Challenge	Percent
Identification of students who are eligible to take the Alt-ELP assessment in grades K–2	61%
Consistent participation decision-making practices across Alt-ELP and AA-AAAS	55%
Provision of appropriate accessibility features and accommodations	32%
Communication with families	24%
Identification of students who are eligible to take the Alt-ELP assessment in any grade	18%
Other	8%

Note. Thirty-eight regular states answered this question. Respondents were able to select multiple responses.

Three unique states responded to this question. The most frequent responses were the need for consistent participation decision-making practices across the Alt-ELP and AA-AAAS, provision of appropriate accessibility features and accommodations, and communicating with families.

Technology

IN REGARDS TO ASSESSMENTS, STATES HAVE VARYING TECHNOLOGY-RELATED NEEDS. States reported on the types of technology-related investments that LEAs will need to make to better enable students with disabilities to participate in instruction and assessments (see Figure 40). More than 60% of the states indicated that there was a need for educator training on how to identify AT for specific students, educator training on preparing students to use AT on assessments, and additional AT for instruction and assessments. Under "Other," one state reported the need for additional staff. Additionally, one state noted that needs vary locally and that priorities and resources differ across LEAs.

Figure 40. Needed Technology-related Investments for Better Participation of Students with Disabilities in Instruction and Assessment, Regular States

Category	Percentage
Educator training on how to identify AT for specific students	68%
Educator training on preparing students to use AT on assessments	66%
Additional AT for instruction and assessment	63%
Improved interoperability between student AT and the testing platform	50%
Improved bandwidth or capacity for internet connectivity	45%
Test security provisions, including training	45%
Specialized software with accessibility features and accommodations	29%
Additional test taking devices	24%
Increased availability of school and district technology specialists	21%
Other	5%

Note. Thirty-eight regular states answered this question. Respondents were able to select multiple responses.

Three unique states responded to this question. The most reported technology investment needs were educator training on preparing students to use AT on assessments, additional AT for instruction and assessment, and specialized software with accessibility features and accommodations.

Graduation Requirements

STATES REPORTED WHETHER THERE HAVE BEEN CHANGES IN GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS for students with disabilities in the past two years. Figure 41 shows that most regular states have not made graduation requirement changes in the past two years.

Figure 41. Changes in Graduation Requirements for Students with Disabilities in Past Two Years, Regular States

Note. Thirty-nine regular states answered this question.

Three unique states responded to this question. Two unique states reported there had been no changes to graduation requirements for students with disabilities in the past two years, and one reported that changes had been made.

States indicated whether they expected to change any graduation requirements for students with disabilities in the next two years. As shown in Figure 42, more than 80% of the regular states indicated that there were no expected changes.

Figure 42. Expected Change in Graduation Requirements for Students with Disabilities in Next Two Years, Regular States
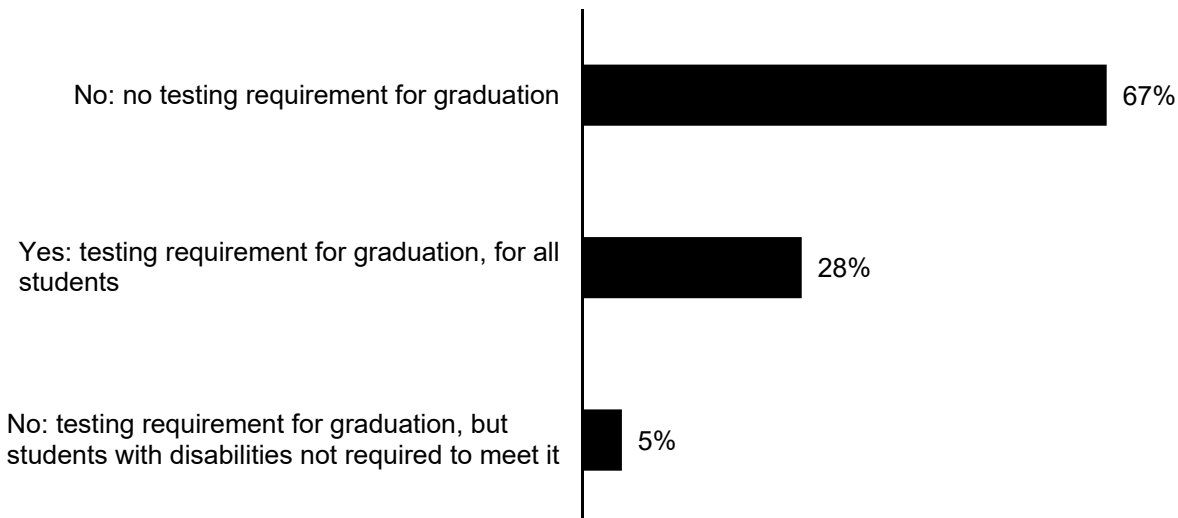
Yes	18%
No	82%

Note. Thirty-nine regular states answered this question.

Three unique states responded to this question. All reported that they did not expect there to be any changes to graduation requirements for students with disabilities in the next two years.

States indicated whether their state had testing requirements for all students, including students with disabilities, to graduate from high school. Two-thirds of the regular states indicated that there were no testing requirements for graduation (see Figure 43).

Figure 43. Graduation Testing Requirement, Regular States

|	
No: no testing requirement for graduation	67%
Yes: testing requirement for graduation, for all students	28%
No: testing requirement for graduation, but students with disabilities not required to meet it	5%

Note. Thirty-nine regular states answered this question.

Three unique states responded to this question. Two unique states did not have graduation testing requirements, while one unique state had a graduation testing requirement.

States reported whether they already had, were creating, or were planning to develop a "state-defined alternate diploma" for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities that meets the requirements of ESSA. To meet these requirements, the alternate diploma must be standards-based, aligned to requirements for a regular diploma, and received as part of a Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE). As shown in Figure 44, about a quarter of the states had an alternate diploma that met the requirements of ESSA for a state-defined alternate diploma, while about two-thirds of the states were not planning to develop one.

Figure 44. Status of State-defined Alternate Diplomas for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities, Regular States
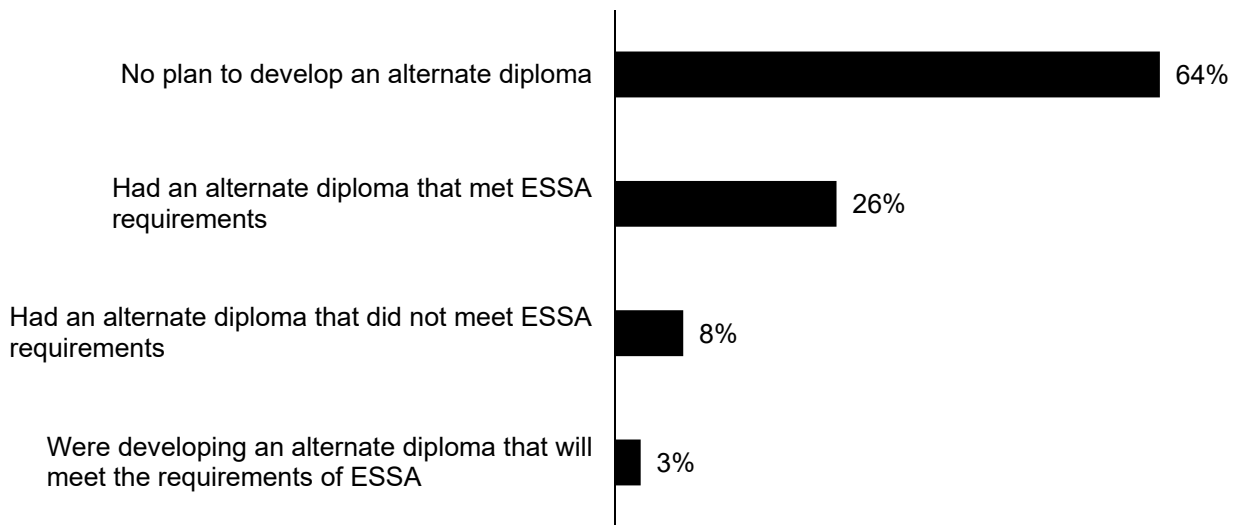
Note: Thirty-nine regular states answered this question.

Three unique states responded to this question. Two unique states did not plan to develop an alternate diploma, while one had an alternate diploma that met the requirements of ESSA.

State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) / State-identified Measurable Result (SiMR)

As part of the Office of Special Education Programs' (OSEP) Results Driven Accountability (RDA) system, states develop SSIPs. The plans include a SiMR. As shown in Figure 45, more than half of the regular states indicated that they had an assessment-related SiMR.

**Figure 45. SiMR is Assessment-related, Regular States**

Note. Thirty-seven regular states answered this question.

Three unique states responded to this question. Two unique states had an assessment-related SiMR, and one unique state did not have an assessment-related SiMR.

States estimated, on a 0–100 scale, the degree of challenge that the state had experienced in actively engaging parents, guardians, or families as stakeholders in the SSIP process. As shown in Figure 46, the regular states' responses ranged between 25 and 83, with an average of 59.

Figure 46. Estimated Challenge of Engaging Family Members as Stakeholders in SSIP Process, Regular States
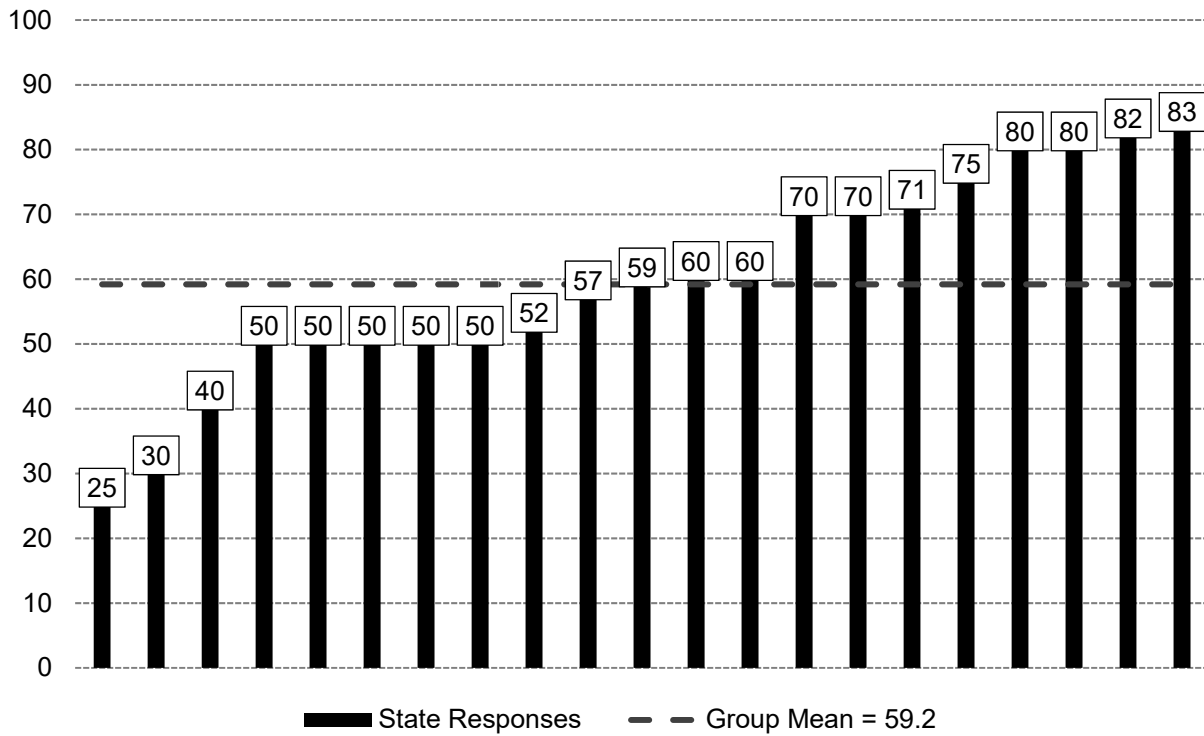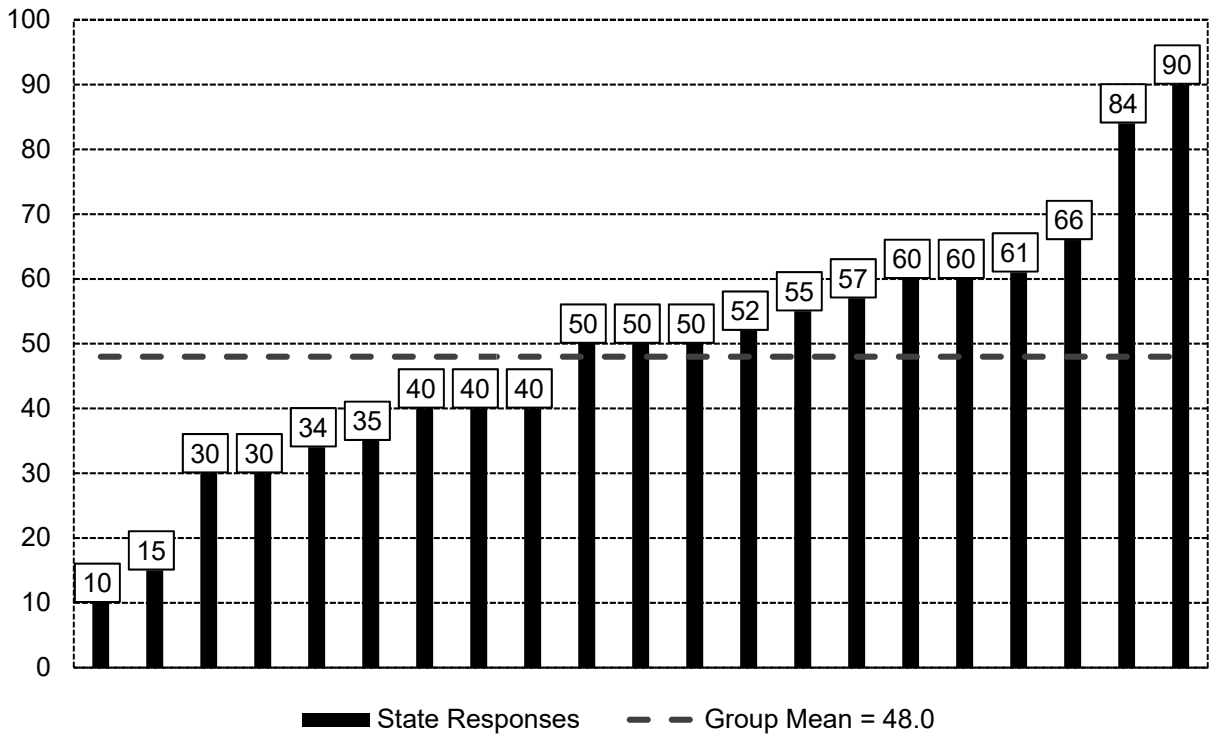

Note. Twenty-one regular states answered this question.

Two unique states responded to the question on the degree of challenge (from 0 to 100) that their state had experienced in actively engaging family members as stakeholders in the SSIP process. The average was 43.

States estimated, on a 0–100 scale, the degree of challenge that the state experienced in actively engaging educators in implementing the SSIP. As shown in Figure 47, the regular states' responses ranged between 10 and 90, with an average of approximately 48.

Figure 47. Estimated Challenge of Engaging Educators in Implementing SSIP, Regular States
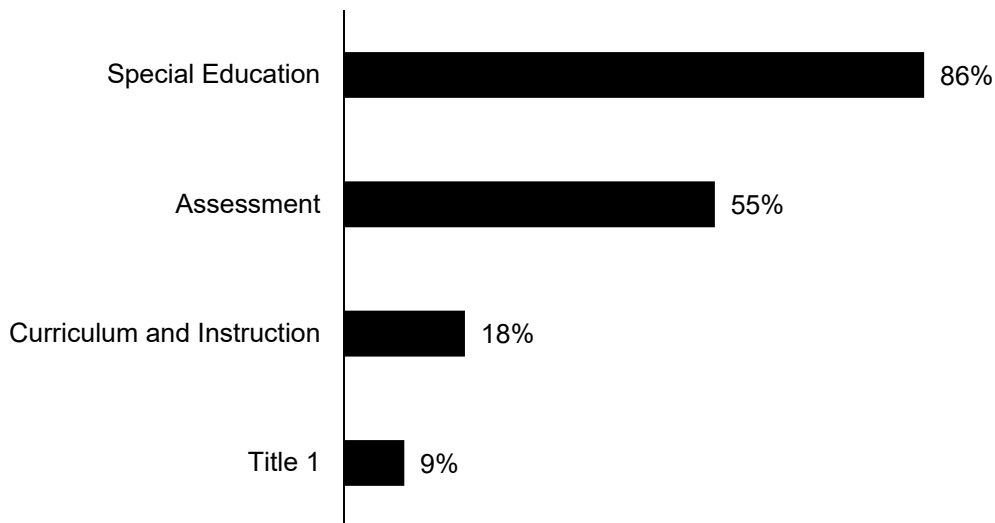

Note. Twenty-one regular states answered this question.

Two unique states responded to the question on the degree of challenge (from 0 to 100) that the state experienced in actively engaging educators in implementing the SSIP. The average was 70.

States identified which offices were involved in gathering and analyzing assessment data used to measure progress towards the SiMR. In most regular states, the special education office was involved (see Figure 48). The assessment office was involved in more than half of the states.

Figure 48. Offices Involved in Gathering and Analyzing SiMR Data, Regular States

Note: Twenty-two regular states answered this question. Respondents were able to select multiple responses.

Two unique states responded to this question. One unique state reported that the special education, assessment, and curriculum and instruction departments were involved in measuring progress towards the state's SiMR. The other indicated that only the special education office was involved.

Twelve regular states and two unique states provided summative statements on challenges and limitations they have faced when working on their SSIP or SiMR. A summary of this information is located in Table A-1 in Appendix A.

Family Engagement

FAMILIES OFTEN DO NOT KNOW MUCH ABOUT ASSESSMENTS AND MAY FACE BARRIERS when navigating the school system. The survey asked several questions about how families have been engaged in learning about the inclusion of students with disabilities in assessments and the use of assessment data to make instructional and programmatic decisions.

States reported on how accessibility features and accommodations information has been communicated to parents, guardians, and families. Almost all of the regular states provided information about accessibility and accommodations on the state website (Figure 49), while more than 40% of the states made materials available in multiple languages or provided parent brochures or flyers.

Figure 49. Methods of Communicating Accessibility Features and Accommodations Information to Families, Regular States
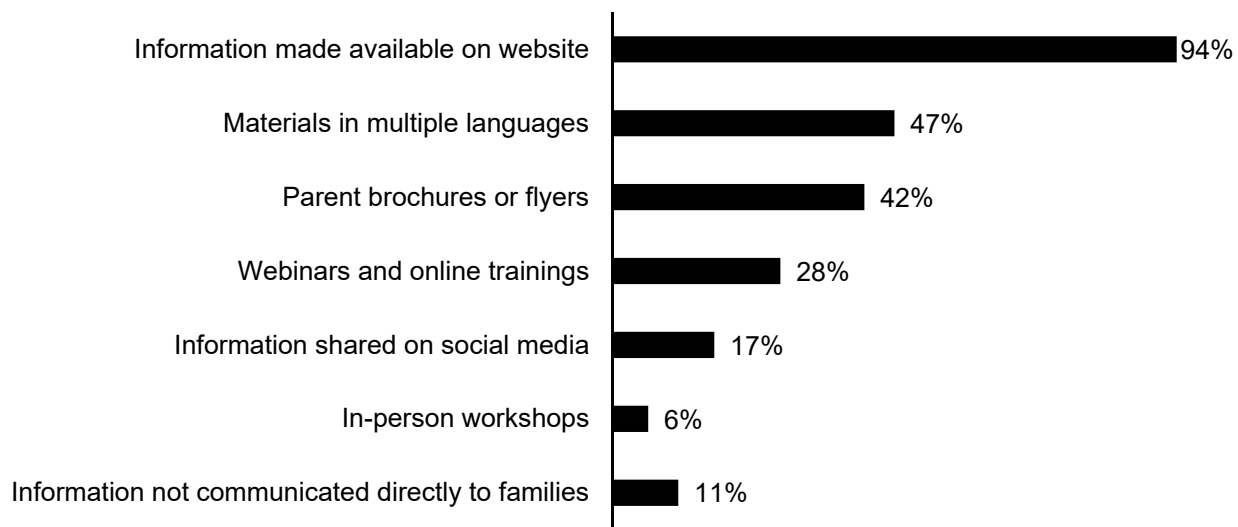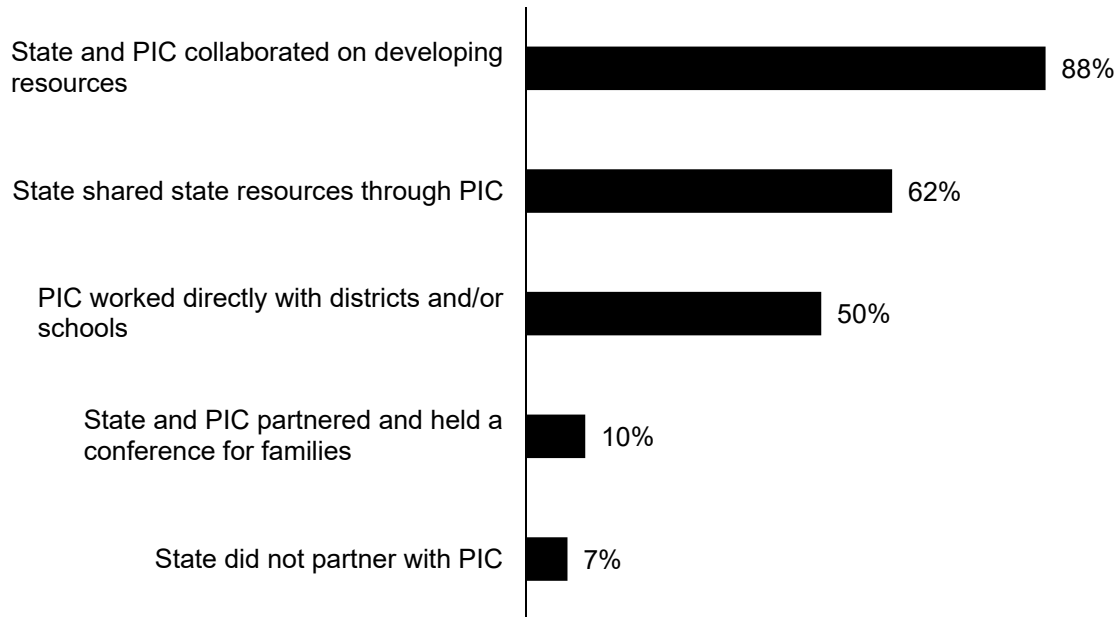

Note. Thirty-six regular states answered this question. Respondents were able to select multiple responses.

Three unique states responded to this question. The most frequent response was that the unique states did not communicate directly with parents, guardians, and families about accessibility features and accommodations.

States provided information on how they had partnered with their Parent Information Centers (PICs) in sharing information about assessments. As Figure 50 shows, most regular states collaborated with a PIC to develop resources. About half of the states shared state resources through PICs or provided direct support for LEAs from PICs.

Figure 50. Partnerships between States and PICs for Providing Assessment Information, Regular States
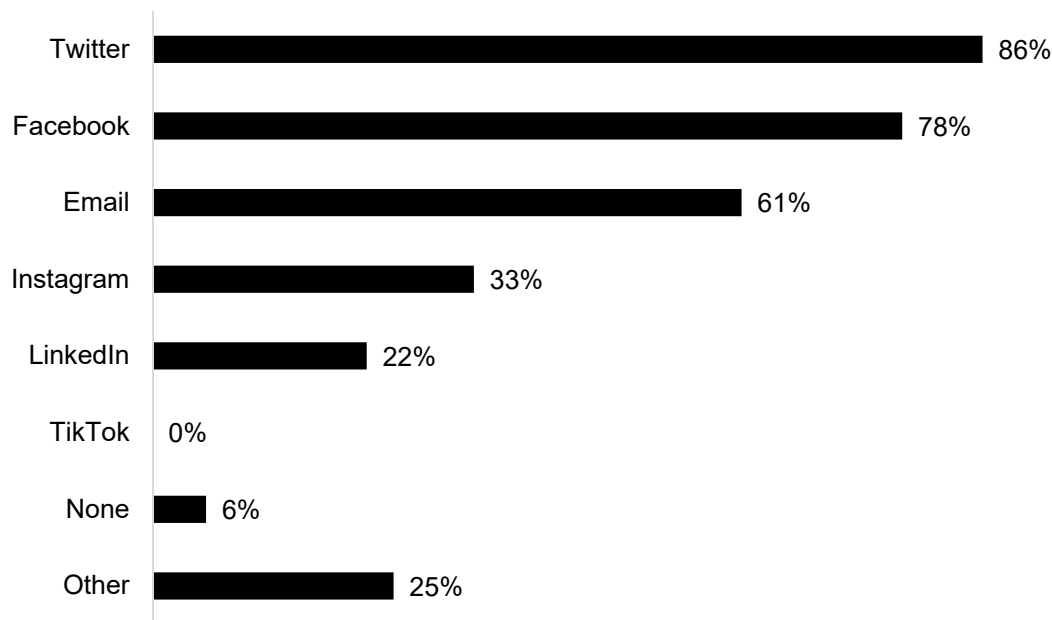

Note. Thirty-eight regular states answered this question. Respondents were able to select multiple responses.

Three unique states responded to this question. The most common responses were that PICs worked directly with LEAs or schools and that the unique states shared their resources through PICs.

States indicated which electronic or social media platforms were used to reach parents, guardians, and families. The most frequent platforms used by regular states were Twitter, Facebook, and email. "Other" methods of communication included websites, YouTube, newsletters, and "family reports" (see Figure 51). Two states reported that they were not using any electronic or social media platforms to communicate with parents, guardians, and families.

Figure 51. Electronic or Social Media Platforms for Communicating with Families, Regular States

Platform	Percentage
Twitter	86%
Facebook	78%
Email	61%
Instagram	33%
LinkedIn	22%
TikTok	0%
None	6%
Other	25%

Note. Thirty-six regular states answered this question. State respondents were able to select multiple responses.

Three unique states responded to this question. The most frequently used electronic platforms were Facebook, email, Twitter, and Instagram.

Technical Assistance Needs

STATE RESPONDENTS ESTIMATED, ON A 0—100 SCALE, THEIR STATES' LEVEL OF NEED for technical assistance (TA) for nine different topics. As shown in Table 1, regular states' responses averaged between 32 and 55, with medians of 21 to 50. The highest areas of need for TA were related to ensuring assessment interoperability with AT, improving family engagement about the assessment of students with disabilities, and meeting the 1.0% cap on participation in the AA-AAAS.

Table 1. Technical Assistance Needs, Regular States

Technical Assistance Need	Group Average	Range	Median	Number of States
Ensuring assessment interoperability with assistive technology	55	10—100	50	31
Improving family engagement about assessment of students with disabilities	53	18—100	50	33
Meeting the 1.0% cap on participation in the AA-AAAS	44	0—100	50	31
Including students with disabilities in the assessment development process	41	0—100	40	32
Selecting and providing accessibility features and accommodations	41	0—100	40	31
Including students with disabilities in accountability systems	39	0—80	50	24
Including English learners with disabilities in assessments	37	0—80	30	25
Using Universal Design of Assessment during assessment development	35	0—100	29	31
Including students with disabilities in assessments used for graduation	32	0—100	21	21

Three unique states responded to this question. The highest needs for TA were: including English learners with disabilities in assessments, including students with disabilities in the assessment development process (e.g., pilots, field tests, cognitive labs), using Universal Design of Assessment (UDA) during assessment development, and improving family engagement about assessment of students with disabilities. Areas of moderate need for unique states included ensuring assessment interoperability with AT, and selecting and providing accessibility features and accommodations.

States indicated their needs for TA on including students with disabilities in assessments. As shown in Figure 55, almost half of the regular states indicated that they needed TA on including students in alternate interim assessments and in interim and benchmark assessments (see Figure 52).

Figure 52. Technical Assistance Needs for Including Students with Disabilities in Assessments, Regular States
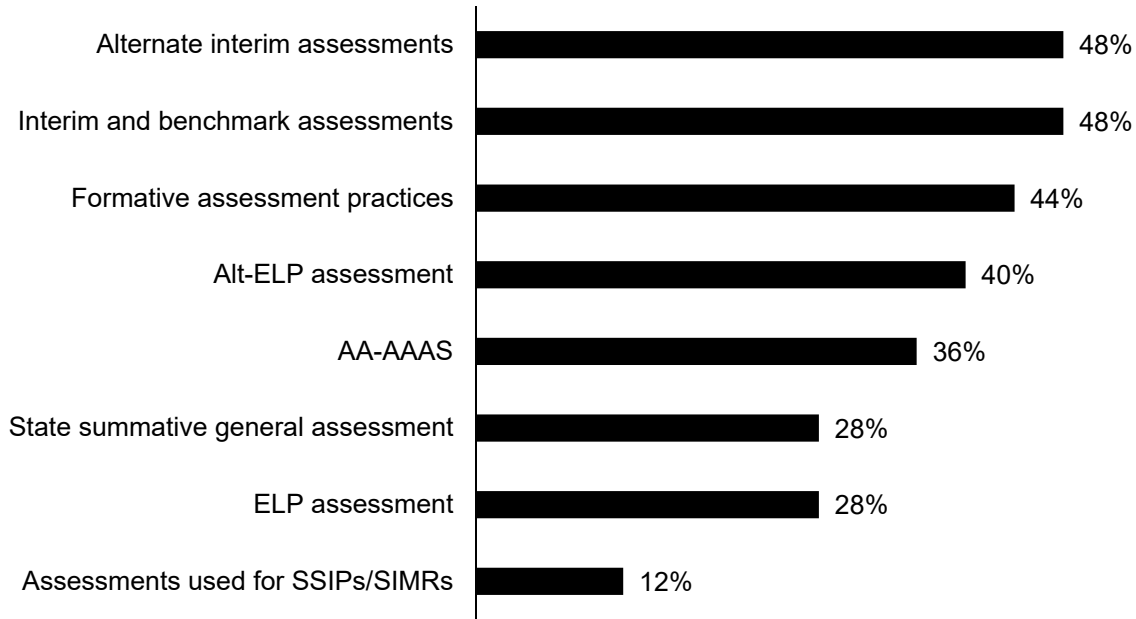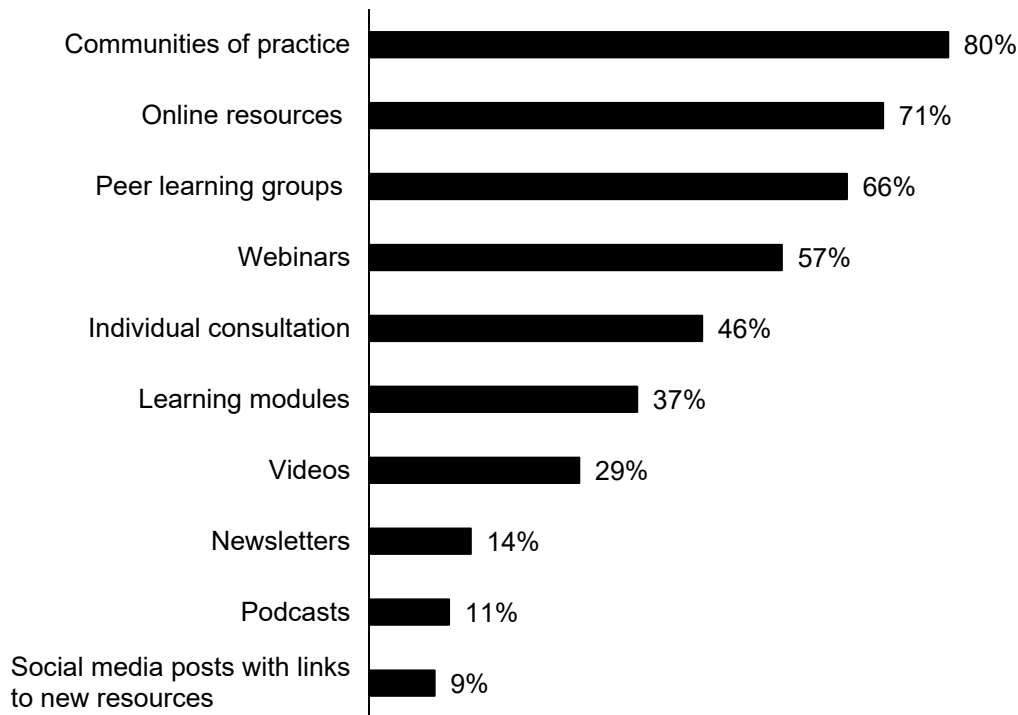

Note. Twenty-five regular states answered this question. Respondents were able to select multiple responses.

Three unique states responded to the survey question about their TA needs for including students with disabilities in assessments. TA needs identified included: formative assessment practices, assessments used for SSIPs/SiMRs, and Alt-ELP assessments.

States were asked what they found to be the most helpful TA formats. Communities of practice, online resources, peer learning groups, and webinars were preferred by more than 50% of the regular states (see Figure 53).

Figure 53. Most Helpful Technical Assistance Formats, Regular States

Note. Thirty-five regular states answered this question. Respondents were able to select multiple responses.

One unique state responded to the question about preferred TA formats. The preferred formats for receiving TA were individual consultation via in-person, phone, or web-based meetings and learning modules.

Appendix A

State Summative Statements on Challenges Related to their Assessment-related SSIP or SiMR

Table A-1. State Challenges Related to their Assessment-related SSIP or SiMR

The 2020-2021 school year presented a unique set of challenges, as many students spent a significant part of the year learning remotely. In light of these circumstances, the US ED approved the state's request to waive accountability, school identification, and related reporting requirements for a second consecutive year. The SiMR data are directly derived from the State's approved ESSA Accountability Index. Consequently, there were no FFY 2020 data available for this report.
Ensuring all data components are included and appropriate flags are set.
Linking or sharing of data with the general education data system to track and compare student performances on our local statewide assessment data. We are able to quickly disaggregate and analyze student data but only limited to the few operable features of the database.
Data availability during the pandemic.
The use of accommodations and its impact on assessment results. Lack of access to interim assessments and interim assessment requirement.
The state assessment has changed more than once over a short period of time, which makes it challenging to analyze assessment data longitudinally. Lack of formative assessment at the state level; impacts data analysis. Formative assessment data tracks growth during the school year.
The state did not have assessment data in 2020 (US ED Waiver) and 2021.
Office of Special Education is at the beginning stage of our SiMR work.
Effective collaboration pathways to support robust data interpretation/visualization across offices and with districts and effective access leading to effective data use (lack of alignment).
Schools are involved in many projects at the same time, which means that sometimes they do not have the necessary time to work on what is related to the SSIP.
Consistent testing and the pandemic disruption.
Previously Indicator 3 and the SSIP assessment data aligned and could be desegregated at the LEA level. Stakeholders agreed to continue to report data as outlined in the previous measurement table to not lose the longitudinal data we have collected over the years. With this model, we can compare year to year at the state level but have lost the ability to compare year to year at the LEA level due to small-n requirements.