

Improving Accommodations Outcomes:

Monitoring Instructional and
Assessment Accommodations
for Students with Disabilities



Improving Accommodations Outcomes: Monitoring Instructional and Assessment Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

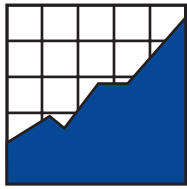
Laurene L. Christensen, Martha L. Thurlow, and Ting Wang

June 2009

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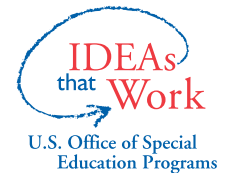
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Deb Tanner, publication design



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This project was commissioned by the Accommodations Monitoring Study Group of the Assessing Special Education Students (ASES) State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS). The members of the Accommodations Study Group, over the three-year span of this project, included:

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What is a SCASS?

SCASS stands for State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS). The mission of the SCASS is to provide leadership, advocacy, and service in creating and supporting effective collaborative partnerships through the collective experience and knowledge of state education personnel for the purposes of developing and implementing high standards and valid assessment systems that maximize educational achievement for all children. This mission statement is in alignment with the overall vision and mission of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO).

Program specialists from the state education agencies continue to be the principal representatives in each of the SCASS partnerships with supplemental representatives from districts, federal agencies, higher education, research, and private sector consultants. Additionally, each of these partnerships continues to allow state education agencies to draw from a greater pool of experience not easily available when a state confronts the same challenge alone. Each partnership also allows a larger scale operation that supports a more collegial atmosphere and the deployment of economic resources more efficiently.

What is the ASES SCASS?

The Assessing Special Education Students (ASES) SCASS addresses the inclusion of students with disabilities in large-scale assessment, standards, and accountability systems and the effects of these systems on related educational reform efforts. The ASES SCASS has been carefully monitoring the implementation of Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for impacts on states and students with disabilities.

ASES capitalizes on the synergy of the shared efforts of member states to improve practices for students with disabilities and accomplishes this mission in these areas by:

- increasing awareness among state education agency staff of issues, trends, promising practices, and resources,
- development and/or review of potential policy statements that can be adapted or adopted by state and federal agencies, and
- developing other products, research, and resources useful for reference or adaptability to state educational agencies

During the period in which this project was undertaken, the ASES SCASS involved teams from the following 31 member states:

Alaska	Kansas	North Carolina
Arkansas	Kentucky	Ohio
California	Louisiana	Oregon
Colorado	Maryland	Pennsylvania
Connecticut	Michigan	Rhode Island
Delaware	Minnesota	South Carolina
Florida	Minnesota	South Dakota
Georgia	Nebraska	Texas
Hawaii	New Hampshire	Utah
Iowa	New Mexico	Washington
		Wyoming

Background of this Document

In 2006, the Accommodations Monitoring group requested that the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) undertake an analysis of the federal peer review comments relating to accommodations for students with disabilities. The Accommodations Monitoring group wanted to find out the emergent issues from peer review with regard to accommodations for students with disabilities. The initial analysis of peer review comments resulted in two documents:

1. Christensen, L.L., Lail, K.E., & Thurlow, M.L. (2007). *Hints and tips for addressing accommodations issues for peer review*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.
2. Thurlow, M.L., Christensen, L.L., & Lail, K.E. (2008). *An analysis of accommodations issues from the standards and assessments peer review* (Technical Report 51). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.

A key finding of this initial analysis was the need to monitor accommodations. Thus, the Accommodations Monitoring group asked NCEO to further investigate monitoring in order to develop a document that could be used by states to evaluate and improve their monitoring of accommodations.

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Introduction

This document presents a five-step process for schools, districts, and states to use in monitoring accommodations for instruction and assessment. This document was designed to be a companion to the Council of Chief State School Officers' *Accommodations Manual: How to Select, Administer, and Evaluate Use of Accommodations for Instruction and Assessment of Students with Disabilities* (2005).

The guidance in this manual applies to students with disabilities who participate in large-scale assessments and the instruction they receive. The five steps are:

1. Know the Rules and Regulations for Accommodations
2. Document Decisions about Accommodations
3. Document the Use of Accommodations
4. Review Accommodations Decisions and Use
5. Evaluate and Report on Accommodations

Each step provides monitoring questions to ask, current examples from states, samples of forms that might be used, a checklist for evaluating your state's activities for each step, and space for action planning and questions. At the end of this document, there are appendices that contain sample forms that can be adapted for use by your state as well as a glossary of key terms related to monitoring.

Important Note to States

This document was developed to establish guidelines for states to use in monitoring accommodations for instruction and assessment of students with disabilities. The examples in each step and the companion materials in the Appendices should be used by facilitators to support the implementation of the information in this manual.

This document gives examples of best practices being used in states along with tools and tips for monitoring accommodations for instruction and assessment. The examples were chosen following a careful examination of publicly available states' materials and materials that were directly provided to us by state Department of Education personnel. This document was designed to include a variety of best practices with the recognition that each state has its own unique set of circumstances. Some states are large, some are small. Some states have local control regulations. States have different assessments, and often, different test vendors. There may be many factors that influence the implementation of monitoring activities. Although federal laws requiring the provision of accommodations have been codified through such legislative initiatives as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), there is some variability among states with regard to implementation practices, and this is especially true for monitoring accommodations.

State personnel should carefully determine how the information contained in this document fits current policies, procedures, and practices. State personnel can adapt the information contained in this document as needed in order to maintain consistency in language for local education agencies. Furthermore, **state assessment and special education personnel are strongly encouraged to collaborate in the monitoring of accommodations.** States that are currently successful in their monitoring efforts have found that close collaboration between assessment and special education is one of the most important keys to monitoring success.



Know the Rules and Regulations for Accommodations

Federal Laws Pertaining to the Monitoring of Accommodations

Both the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) include provisions for the inclusion of students with disabilities in accountability assessments.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provides federal support for services for students with disabilities. One of the eligibility requirements for states to receive federal funds under Part B of IDEA is:

PARTICIPATION IN ASSESSMENTS.—(A) IN GENERAL.—All children with disabilities are included in all general State and districtwide assessment programs, including assessments described under section 1111 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, with appropriate accommodations and alternate assessments where necessary and as indicated in their respective individualized education programs. (B) ACCOMMODATION GUIDELINES.—The State (or, in the case of a districtwide assessment, the local educational agency) has developed guidelines for the provision of appropriate accommodations. [Sec. 612 (a) (16)].

The IDEA statute also stipulates that the “individualized education program” or “IEP” includes:

...a statement of any individual appropriate accommodations that are necessary to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the child on State and districtwide assessments...

IDEA requires that states monitor implementation of its provisions by local educational agencies and that the focus of this monitoring should be on:

- (a) improving educational results and functional outcomes for all children with disabilities; and
- (b) ensuring that States meet the program requirements under this part, with a particular emphasis on those requirements that are most closely related to improving educational results for children with disabilities. [Section 616 (a)]

IDEA does not specifically require states to monitor accommodations for students with disabilities but permits states to monitor other relevant areas. Providing appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities is an important component in improving educational accountability and outcomes.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

Just as IDEA provides for free appropriate public education of students with disabilities, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) holds the educational system accountable for student achievement. ESEA requires all students in certain grades to participate in accountability testing, and states are required to report the results of certain groups and subgroups of students. ESEA states the following with regard to the provision of accommodations for students with disabilities:

The reasonable adaptations and accommodations for students with disabilities—as defined under Section 602(3) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act—necessary to measure the academic achievement of such students relative to state academic content and state student academic achievement standards [Sec. 1111 (3) (C)(ii)].

The emphasis on monitoring accommodations comes from the system-wide accountability provisions in ESEA. Additional regulations stemming from ESEA have also brought the issue of monitoring accommodations into focus.

Beginning in 2004, the United States Department of Education began a peer review process to evaluate each state's standards and assessments to determine whether the state's system meets the federal guidelines for high quality systems under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. One component is accommodations. The peer review process evaluated not only whether states provide and use accommodations, but also the extent to which states monitor accommodations (e.g., analyze use of accommodations, examine consistency of test and instructional accommodations).

More recently, April 2007 regulations on alternate assessments based on modified achievement standards included the following statements about accommodations:

these regulations provide that a State's (or in the case of district-wide assessments, an LEA's) guidelines require each child to be validly assessed and identify, for each assessment, any accommodations that would result in an invalid score. Consistent with Title I, a student with disabilities must receive a valid score in order to be counted as a participant under the IDEA. (U.S. Department of Education, 2007, p. 17750)

Monitoring the extent to which an accommodation results in a valid score is one component of monitoring accommodations.

Much of this document has been designed to address monitoring requirements for ESEA. However, IDEA monitoring activities are also addressed.

What is Monitoring?

Monitoring accommodations is an important step in the process of ensuring that a state's assessment system is inclusive of students with disabilities and English language learners.

For the ESEA Standards and Assessments Peer Review, states are required to show evidence of monitoring accommodations. For example, Critical Element 4.6 of the Standards and Assessments Peer Review asks, "Has the State evaluated its use of accommodations?"

Examples of acceptable evidence for this critical element include the following:

The State has analyzed the use of specific accommodations for different groups of students with disabilities and has provided training to support sound decisions by IEP teams.

The State routinely monitors the extent to which test accommodations are consistent with those provided during instruction.

These examples are ones of compliance; states are expected to engage in monitoring activities to comply with the provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Monitoring is about Improving Outcomes

However, monitoring should also be seen as an important component of improving outcomes for students with disabilities. When the provision of accommodations is systematically attended to, students with disabilities are best able to show what they know and can do.

What is Involved in Monitoring?

Monitoring accommodations involves several activities. Some activities take place at the state level and some take place at the district and school level. Monitoring activities may include the following:

Training for decision-making teams. Do decision makers have information on how to make decisions to choose appropriate accommodations?

Evaluating the accommodations a decision-making team chooses. Are the selected accommodations the best choice for the student, given his or her characteristics and needs? Do the selected accommodations make sense, given the tasks that the student is being asked to do? Do the accommodations maintain the validity of the assessment? Do the selected accommodations ensure that the student can demonstrate what she or he knows and can do?

Tracking the accommodations students use for instruction and for assessment. Does the student receive the accommodations listed in the IEP/504 plan? Does the student get the accommodations she or he needs for instruction? Does the student get the accommodations she or he needs for the assessment? Does the student use the accommodations?

Keeping track of the extent to which accommodations use results in a score that is valid. On a system level, one might ask whether all accommodations maintain the intent of the assessment, specifically the construct being measured. Or, whether the list of allowable accommodations includes accommodations that are appropriate for the assessment tasks? Are certain accommodations overused? On an individual student level, one might ask, is the student receiving accommodations that are appropriate, given the student's characteristics and the tasks the student is being asked to do?

Reporting the use of accommodations. What accommodations are used by students with disabilities for the assessment? How does the use of accommodations vary by school? By district?

Resources:

Christensen, L.L., Lail, K.E., & Thurlow, M.L. (2007). *Hints and tips for addressing accommodations issues for peer review*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.

Cortiella, C. (2006). *NCLB and IDEA: What parents of students with disabilities need to know and do*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.

Thurlow, M.L., Christensen, L.L., & Lail, K.E. (2008). *An analysis of accommodations issues from the standards and assessments peer review* (Technical Report 53). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.

U.S. Department of Education. (December 21, 2007). *Standards and assessments peer review guidance: Information and examples for meeting the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. Washington, DC: Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. Available online at <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/saaprguidance.pdf>.

U.S. Department of Education. (April 9, 2007). *34 CFR Parts 200 and 300 Title I—Improving the academic achievement of the disadvantaged; Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); Final Rule. Federal Register, 72 (67)*. Available online at www.nceo.info/2percentReg/FederalRegApril9TwoPercent.pdf

Step 1 Checklist: Know the Rules and Regulations for Accommodations Monitoring

Our State...

Yes No

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | updates our accommodations policies and accompanying materials regularly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | has regular training for accommodations decision-making teams |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | makes information on accommodations policies and decision making easily accessible to all members of the decision-making team |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | has practices in place to document and track accommodations decisions for accommodations used for instruction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | has practices in place to document and track accommodations decisions for accommodations used for assessments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | monitors both the provision and use of accommodations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | monitors the frequency and use of accommodations at the school, district, and state level |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | reports the use of accommodations by school and district |

Rules and Regulations for Accommodations Monitoring: Action Steps

1.

2.

3.

4.

Questions to Ask

1.

2.

3.



Document Decisions about Accommodations

Successful monitoring of accommodations begins with consistent documentation of accommodations decisions. Such documentation involves at least three primary activities:

1. Keeping track of how IEP teams are trained to make accommodations decisions
2. Keeping track of what specific accommodations are noted on the student's IEP
3. Attending to consistency in providing accommodations for instruction and for assessments
4. At the state level, keeping track of all requests for unique accommodations

Each of these activities requires consistent documentation in order for the information to be useful later on.

How are IEP Teams Trained?

States provide training to IEP teams on the selection of accommodations. There is a wide range of approaches that states take to provide information to IEP teams.

Regular training on accommodations is an opportunity for the state and district to ensure that everyone knows how to make appropriate decisions about accommodations. Training workshops can also serve to update participants on current accommodations policies. In addition, states and districts can take the opportunity to find out what questions or concerns exist about accommodations.

Monitoring questions to ask:

1. Does your state offer regular trainings on accommodations?
2. Does your state keep track of who attends these trainings? Who is attending the training? (Test coordinators? Assessment directors? Special education directors? General education and special education teachers? Parents?)

3. Are clearly marked PowerPoints and other training materials available online to workshop participants? Do participants know where to find these materials online for use in the future?
4. How are materials on accommodations made available to decision makers *when they need them*? Are materials distributed in paper form, and are additional copies available online? If training is held in the fall, but assessments are conducted in the spring, how do state personnel and others responsible for training know that IEP teams remember what they learned?

States may provide information on accommodations decision making to stakeholders in a variety of ways, including in-person trainings, video presentations, webinars, and other formats. Some states use a train-the-trainer approach in which a small group of individuals is given training by the state, and then this expert group brings the training in-person to districts and schools.

Whichever method your state or district uses, it is important to make sure that the integrity of the information is preserved as it travels from the state level to the individual IEP team.

How are Decisions Documented on IEPs?

A cornerstone to the provision of services for students with disabilities is the Individualized Education Program, or IEP. IEPs may vary widely from state to state, and even district to district, in their look and organization, but they must include information on accommodations.

IEPs are a critical component to monitoring because they provide documentation on accommodations for instruction and for assessment. Consistent and careful documentation on an IEP can be useful in ensuring that the student receives the accommodations he or she needs.

Monitoring questions to ask:

1. Does your state have model IEP forms for districts to use? Sample IEP forms can model clear documentation of accommodations for instruction and assessment.
2. Do your IEP forms reference current state policies so that decision makers are aware of possible consequences of accommodations decisions? Whenever possible, encourage IEP teams to complete the section on accommodations *while referencing state policies* so that they know they are making decisions about appropriate accommodations for the student.

State Example: Michigan



In Michigan, assessment accommodations are documented as part of the IEP section on participation in assessments. Instructional accommodations are documented as part of supplementary aids and services. The following example from Michigan's IEP form illustrates how assessment accommodations are documented in Michigan. Note that IEP teams must indicate that accommodations for assessment are standard according to current state guidelines.

Section 2: Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP)

MEAP Content Area Assessed	Is the assessment appropriate for the student? Check the appropriate box below.		If YES, for each content area, indicate if the student needs any assessment accommodation(s) and what specifically is needed. If NO, state the reason why the specific MEAP assessment is not appropriate for the student.	Is the Assessment accommodation(s) standard as per current guidelines? Check the appropriate box below.	
	YES	NO		YES	NO**
English Language Arts (Grades 3-8 and 11)					
Mathematics (Grades 3-8 and 11)					
Science♦ (Grades 5, 8 and 11)					
Social Studies♦ (Grades 6, 9 and 11)					

(Example from 2007)

Advantages:

Allows IEP teams to indicate specific accommodations for each assessment area.
Encourages IEP teams to consult current state policies by requiring teams to acknowledge that chosen accommodations are standard.

Considerations:

Assessment accommodations are listed separately from instructional accommodations, thus making it more challenging to ensure that there is consistency between the two.

Please see Appendix A for additional excerpts of IEP forms that illustrate methods of documenting instructional and assessment accommodations.

Consistency Between Instructional and Assessment Accommodations

The ESEA Standards and Assessments Peer Review requires that accommodations that are used for assessment must be consistent with those used for instruction. This is also best practice. If a student is unfamiliar with an accommodation, he or she may not feel comfortable using it on a test.

Monitoring questions to ask:

1. Do your IEP forms clearly indicate accommodations for instruction and assessment? Making sure that instructional accommodations are noted separately from assessment accommodations will reduce the likelihood that the student receives accommodations for the assessment that may invalidate her score.
2. Are your state's IEP forms organized so that the consistency between instructional and assessment accommodations can be easily observed?

How are Requests for Unique Accommodations Addressed?

Most states have a mechanism in place when requests are made for accommodations that are not on an approved list. Some states require that a member of the IEP team contact the state with the request. Others insist that the request must be approved by the State Board of Education. A few states have a committee review process to approve these requests.

It is important to keep track of what requests for accommodations are made each year. Simply addressing the individual request is not enough. States should keep track of what these requests are for, and on annual basis, the requests should be reviewed and policies should be revised if necessary.

State Example: Washington



Washington has recently implemented a review process to address requests for unique accommodations. When requests for accommodations that are not on an approved list are made, the requests are logged. Then, at the end of the year, a review panel that includes teachers, state personnel, and assessment experts, comes together to discuss the requests. Recently, the panel noted a number of requests for a read-aloud accommodation. The panel discussed the implications of this accommodation, and they decided to allow a form of the read aloud accommodation. Now, Washington has a new policy that allows high school students only to receive a DVD version of the read aloud accommodation. (Example from 2008)

Advantages:

Logging accommodations requests allows the state to note patterns, for example, differences between instructional accommodations and those allowed for an assessment. The state has a clear process for making changes to accommodations policies. Decisions are made by an expert group that represents various stakeholders.

Considerations:

An expert panel requires a time commitment on the part of the group members. The panel also requires coordination on the part of the state.

Monitoring questions to ask:

1. Do decision-making teams know how to make special requests for accommodations? Do they know whom to contact? Do they know what information should be provided to help the state make a determination?
2. Is there a clear process in place so that teams know how and when decisions on special requests will be made?
3. How are special requests tracked at the state level?

Some states have a formal application process to request a special accommodation. In keeping track of these requests as they come in, some states use a log sheet, while others monitor and record them online.

Conclusion

Monitoring instructional and assessment accommodations begins with consistent documentation of decisions. In order for IEP teams to make appropriate decisions, they must receive adequate training on both the decision-making process and on the current policies on accommodations. Participation in these trainings should be documented and monitored to make sure that everyone knows how to make appropriate decisions about accommodations. IEP forms should clearly indicate what accommodations are allowed for instruction, and what accommodations are allowed for assessments. Finally, states should have practices in place to monitor requests for unique accommodations. That way, future policies can be responsive to the current needs that students with disabilities have for assessment accommodations.

Resources:

Bolt, S.E., & Roach, A.T. (2009). *Inclusive assessment and accountability: A guide to accommodations for students with diverse needs*. New York: Guilford Press.

Michigan Department of Education (2007). *Individualized education program manual*. Available online at http://www.michigan.gov/documents/7-28-05IEPManual_132279_7.pdf.

Thompson, S., Morse, A., Sharpe, M., & Hall, S. (2005). *The accommodations manual: How to select, administer, and evaluate use of accommodations for instruction and assessment of students with disabilities and Professional development guide*. Available online at CCSSO.org. (see "Projects", then "Browse by Topic," then "Assessing Special Education Students," then "accommodations manual")

Step 2 Checklist: Document Decisions about Accommodations

Our State...

- | Yes | No | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | holds regular training on accommodations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | keeps track of who attends accommodations trainings in order to ensure that all stakeholders are up-to-date on accommodations policies and decision-making procedures |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | makes training information, such as PowerPoints, videos, and handouts, available online |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | makes information on accommodations policies and decision making easily accessible to all members of the decision-making team |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | has model IEP forms for districts to use |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | references current accommodations policies on IEP forms so that decision-makers are aware of the possible consequences of accommodations decisions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | has practices in place to document and track accommodations decisions for accommodations used for instruction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | has practices in place to document and track accommodations decisions for accommodations used for assessments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | has clear procedures for making special requests for accommodations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | keeps track of special requests for accommodations at the state level |

Document Decisions about Accommodations: Action Steps

1.

2.

3.

4.

Questions to Ask

1.

2.

3.

A graphic consisting of a grey square with the word "STEP" written vertically in white capital letters on the left side, and a large white number "3" on the right side.

Document the Use of Accommodations

Keeping careful track of what accommodations were used on testing day, as well as how they were used, is the next step in monitoring accommodations. Activities to monitor accommodations use on assessment day include the following:

1. Documenting the use of accommodations on student demographic sheets
2. Documenting instances of inappropriate use of accommodations on test irregularity forms
3. Documenting that students were given the accommodations called for on their IEP

Consistent documentation of accommodations use, before and after the test, can provide important information on how accommodations are used, so that state personnel can make revisions to accommodations policies, or provide additional training on accommodations and test security, if needed.

Documenting Accommodations on Student Demographic Sheets

Student demographic sheets can provide a wealth of information on accommodations used on test day. This is particularly true of forms that request detailed information about the student and his or her disability along with specific information about accommodations to be used for the test.

Monitoring questions to ask:

1. What demographic information about the student's disability is asked for? Knowing the federal category of the student's disability will be useful for reporting and evaluating the use of accommodations.
2. Are all accommodations listed on the student demographic sheet? Or, are only broad categories of accommodations listed (presentation, response, etc)?
3. Are accommodations that will invalidate the student's score (also called modifications) noted on the answer sheet? Having this information on the student

demographic sheet is a helpful reminder that the student cannot be counted as a participant if using modifications.

4. When "Other" is a choice for an accommodations category, what additional information must be filled in? ("Other" provides minimal useful data on the use of accommodations.)

There is a wide range of practices in states with regard to student demographic forms. The following examples were taken from current state demographic forms.

Information on Student Characteristics

Here are two examples that illustrate additional information on the student:

Example 1

PROGRAMS
<input type="radio"/> IEP
Former IEP
<input type="radio"/> Exceed \leq 2 yrs
<input type="radio"/> Exceed \geq 2 yrs
<input type="radio"/> 504

(Example from 2007)

Advantages:

Includes information on whether or not the student has an IEP, a 504 plan, and whether a former IEP student has been exited from services for more or less than 2 years.

The state can keep track of students who are no longer receiving special education or language support services to ensure they are continuing to meet achievement standards.

Considerations:

Minimal additional information is provided about the student.

Example 2

ALL STUDENTS	
1. Student is (<i>indicate only one</i>): <input type="radio"/> Male <input type="radio"/> Female	
2. Student is (<i>indicate only one</i>): <input type="radio"/> White (non-Hispanic) <input type="radio"/> American Indian or Alaska Native <input type="radio"/> Black/African American (non-Hispanic) <input type="radio"/> Multi-Racial/Ethnic <input type="radio"/> Latino/Hispanic <input type="radio"/> Asian or Pacific Islander	
3. Student has an IEP (not gifted). <input type="radio"/> Yes	
4. If the student has an IEP, the primary disability is (<i>indicate only one</i>): <input type="radio"/> Autism <input type="radio"/> Deaf-Blindness <input type="radio"/> Deafness <input type="radio"/> Emotional Disturbance <input type="radio"/> Hearing Impairment <input type="radio"/> Mental Retardation <input type="radio"/> Orthopedic Impairment <input type="radio"/> Other Health Impairment <input type="radio"/> Specific Learning Disability <input type="radio"/> Speech or Language Impairment <input type="radio"/> Traumatic Brain Injury <input type="radio"/> Visual Impairment, including Blindness	
5. Student is Gifted <u>and has</u> a GIEP. <input type="radio"/> Yes	
6. Student has a 504 Plan under Chapter 15. <input type="radio"/> Yes	
7. Student participates in Title 1 program. <input type="radio"/> Yes	

(Example from 2007)

Advantages:

Includes information on federal categories of disability.

Differentiates among students with IEPs, gifted students with IEPs, and students with 504 plans.

Ethnicity information may be useful in keeping track of disproportionality issues.

Considerations:

Additional information requires more space on the student demographic sheet—may be difficult to encourage test vendors to add additional space.

Information on the Accommodation Used

Whenever possible, the more information that can be provided on accommodations used on the day of the test, the better. While it may be tempting to save space and list only the broad accommodations categories of Presentation, Response, Setting, and Timing/Scheduling, these categories do not provide enough information about what accommodations were actually used on test day.

Another important consideration in documenting accommodations is to document only those accommodations that were actually *used* rather than accommodations that were provided. In many cases, a student may be provided with an accommodation, such as a place marker or a template, but the student may not actually use the accommodation in the testing situation.

State Example: Missouri

On Missouri's student demographic sheet, all of the allowable accommodations are listed in columns by subject area. In addition, accommodations that may invalidate the student's score are noted so that at the time of the test, the consequences for scoring are evident. See the Resources at the end of this Step for more information on Missouri's student demographic sheet. (Example from 2007)

Advantages:

All of the allowable accommodations are listed directly on the demographic sheet by name, rather by code.

Accommodations that invalidate the score are listed as such, so teachers are reminded of the consequences of using these accommodations for a test.

Considerations:

Listing all of the allowable accommodations takes up space on the demographic sheet.

It would be important to have space to list Other Accommodations.

If accommodations policies change, the demographic sheet must be reprinted.

Please see Appendix B for a sample student demographic sheet that includes detailed information on both the student and the accommodations used.

Documenting Inappropriate Use of Accommodations

While it is hoped that everything is smooth sailing on test day, there are occasions when things do not work out as planned. A student may get an accommodation not listed on an IEP. Or, a student may need an accommodation, and somehow, provision of that accommodation is overlooked. Keeping track of these instances is critical; doing so allows states to note when these irregularities are patterns and when they are simply isolated incidents.

Monitoring questions to ask:

1. Does your state have a test irregularity form? If so, does your test irregularity form document irregularities with regard to accommodations?
2. Who is responsible for keeping track of test irregularity forms?
3. How are these forms reviewed? How is the information used to improve accommodations use?
4. Does your state require a signature at the building level to ensure that testing procedures were followed appropriately? If so, does your test certification form require a building-level person to indicate that students were given the accommodations on their IEP?

Documenting that Appropriate Accommodations Procedures were Followed

Adherence to testing procedures is an important part of test security in general, and one element is documenting that students received the accommodations that are included on their IEPs. Certifying that testing procedures, including the provision of accommodations, were followed can happen at multiple levels, including the building level, district level, and above.

Monitoring questions to ask:

1. Does your state require a signature at the building and district level to ensure that testing procedures were followed appropriately?
2. If so, does your test certification form require a building-level person to indicate that students were given the accommodations on their IEP?

Please see Appendix C, which includes a sample Certification form that also includes information on testing irregularities. This form is an example of a form that has been used in Georgia.

Conclusion

Keeping track of the appropriate use of accommodations on test day is a critical component of monitoring. It is not enough to note that “accommodations were used.” When specific information can be given about the student and his or her disability, along with detailed information about the accommodations used for the assessment, this information can be used for evaluation of accommodations on both the individual student level and on a system-wide level. Knowing how accommodations are actually used for testing can go a long way in improving outcomes for students with disabilities.

To know how accommodations are being used for an assessment, it is important to keep track of how they are used for the individual, by including detailed information on the student demographic sheet. In addition, other mechanisms of accountability, including testing irregularity forms that note inappropriate use of accommodations, and testing certification forms that document that students received the accommodations listed on their IEPs, can serve to monitor accommodations use on a system-wide level.

Resources:

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2008). *Test coordinator's manual*. Available online at http://www.dese.mo.gov/divimprove/assess/Released_Items/documents/2008_test_coord_manual.pdf.

Step 3 Checklist: Document Accommodations Use

Our State...

Yes No

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | collects demographic information about the student's disability on the student demographic sheet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | lists specific accommodations on the student demographic sheet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | notes accommodations that will invalidate the student's score on the student demographic sheet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | requires additional information to be provided if Other is filled in as an accommodation on the student demographic sheet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | has a process in place to document and track testing irregularities that include accommodations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | has a designated staff person at the district and state level to keep track of testing irregularities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | has a process in place to review testing irregularities so that accommodations use can be improved |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | requires that testing procedures, including the provision of accommodations, must be certified at the building and district level |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | requires a building-level coordinator to indicate that students were given the assessment accommodations listed on their IEP |

Document Accommodations Use: Action Steps

1.

2.

3.

4.

Questions to Ask

1.

2.

3.

STEP 4

Review Accommodations Decisions and Use

Accommodations decisions and accommodations use should be reviewed on a regular basis. Depending on the needs of your state, accommodations reviews may happen during the assessment window or afterward. What is important, however, is that accommodations decisions and use are reviewed because information from these reviews can be used to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

Reviewing accommodations decisions and use may involve a number of activities:

1. Direct observations of test administrations, including the provision of accommodations, on testing day
2. Online record reviews and/or desk audits
3. On-site monitoring visits that include record reviews
4. Interviews with students, teachers, and administrators about the use of accommodations

With each of these activities, it is important to ensure that there is a valid method for gathering data.

Direct Observations of Test Administrations

Knowing what actually happens on test day can be an important component of monitoring accommodations. Depending on the situation in your state, doing direct observations of test administrations may or may not be possible.

Monitoring questions to ask:

1. Does your state have a process in place to observe test administrations on test day?
2. How are schools chosen for monitoring? Some states choose schools based on previous testing irregularities. Others choose schools at random.
3. Are visits announced or unannounced? While some states prefer to do unannounced visits for compliance purposes, other states are finding that announced visits provide an opportunity for technical assistance.

4. For states with announced visits, do schools have requirements to prepare for in advance? For example, some states require that schools complete a self-study before they are monitored on test day.

State Example: Arkansas



In Arkansas, on-site monitoring is conducted every year on test day. While special education and the Curriculum, Assessment, and Research units work together to develop the logistics for testing, on-site monitoring is a whole state department of education endeavor. School sites are selected for test monitoring visits based on several factors. Some schools are visited on the basis of random selection. The exact number of the random visits depends on the number of professional staff members available to make the visits. If schools had testing violations the previous year that required investigations, they are scheduled for a visit to check on their continued compliance. Schools with new administrators, especially new district test coordinators or principals, are often visited to make certain they are administering the exams properly. During these visits, the emphasis is on prevention of possible problems. All visits to the schools for the test day monitoring are made unannounced to the local schools. Prior notice of a visit would not allow for a natural administration of the test procedures. During the on-site visit, the monitors will interview the school test administrator about test security and the distribution and handling of testing materials. The administration of several levels of the test will be observed including accommodated students with disabilities. The monitors also will observe the collection of testing materials at the end of a test section. When the visit is completed, a monitoring checklist is submitted to the Assessment Unit. Any irregularities in administration, breaches in security, violations in the administration of accommodations, or other testing issues are noted in the checklist. (Information on monitoring in Arkansas provided by Tom Hicks, from 2008.)

Advantages:

The state department of education collaborates to ensure as many schools as possible are visited.

In-person visits allow state personnel to make direct observations of the provision of accommodations on testing day.

Considerations:

In-person observation requires a commitment of human resources.

The selection process to determine which schools are visited needs to be carefully determined, in order to ensure fairness.

Online Record Reviews/Desk Audit

To monitor the consistency between instructional and assessment accommodations, a record review may be appropriate. Depending on a state's method of data keeping, record reviews may be online or desk audits. In this case, records, or copies of records, are sent to the reviewer who conducts the audit without going to the school. This type of monitoring is especially useful for large states that have well-developed data systems.

Monitoring questions to ask:

1. What format of record review is used by the state?
2. How are records chosen to be reviewed?
3. When records are chosen for review, how is information on accommodations tracked?

It may be important to note the consistency of instructional and assessment accommodations for the individual student. In addition, keeping track of what types of accommodations, for instruction and assessment, are used in a school or district is also important. Do accommodations seem appropriate for the student's characteristics? Do the accommodations match the tasks the assessment requires of the student? Is there a tendency to assign certain accommodations over others?

On-Site Monitoring Visits That Include Record Reviews

In some states, it may be feasible to conduct on-site monitoring visits. Often, these visits occur outside of the testing window. Some states use these visits as an opportunity to provide technical assistance to districts. In such cases, visits are often announced ahead of time. On-site monitoring visits work best when personnel from assessment and special education are able to collaborate.

Monitoring questions to ask:

1. How are schools chosen for on-site monitoring visits?
2. Who is responsible for conducting the review?
3. How are records sampled for review?
4. How is information on accommodations tracked?

These questions are similar to those asked for on-line reviews and desk audits. However, one benefit to in-person monitoring visits is that state personnel can talk directly with district and school personnel about accommodations questions and concerns and address issues as they are discovered during the review process. See Appendix D for samples of on-site monitoring forms used in South Carolina.

State Example: South Dakota



As part of its focused monitoring, South Dakota includes several questions on accommodations, to be answered through a review of IEPs. These questions include the following:

1. Are the accommodations/modifications appropriate for the skill area affected by the disability (no oral testing for math disability)?

Yes No If no, example:

2. Are the accommodations identified in the IEP for state and district-wide assessment provided in their instructional program? (Do they match?)

Yes No If no, example:

3. Were the accommodations identified in the IEP for state and district-wide assessment "USED" during assessment administration? (compare the coding on the assessment data sheet with the assessment accommodations listed in the IEP)

Yes No If no, example:

4. If the student is identified as taking an alternative assessment, does he or she meet the criterion and has it been documented on the IEP?

Yes No If no, example:

Observe that some questions have notes for reviewers, to help them determine how to answer the question. These are just four questions from a comprehensive review conducted in South Dakota.

Advantages:

The state includes accommodations as part of its focused monitoring efforts. The documentation process asks for examples when the question is answered “no.” This way, the state can gather additional information to improve accommodations.

Considerations:

Those involved with focused monitoring efforts should be trained in order to ensure consistency among reviewers.

When using a form similar to South Dakota’s, it may be helpful to have additional procedures in place to provide professional development in districts that demonstrate inconsistencies in IEPs.

Interviews with Students, Teachers, and Administrators

In addition to record reviews, a good method for learning about the effectiveness of accommodations, as well as the consistency with which they are used, is to interview students and teachers.

Monitoring questions to ask:

1. Who is responsible for interviewing students, teachers, and administrators?
2. How will potential interviewees be selected?
3. How will data be collected from the interviews? (Will someone take notes? Will you record interviews?)
4. Will interviews be done individually or through focus groups?
5. How will the information from interviews be used?

These interviews may be a great opportunity for information-gathering. They also can provide a good time to answer questions, clarify policies, and uncover future professional development needs.

On the following pages, sample interview questions for students, teachers, and administrators are included.

Questions for Students:

1. What accommodations do you use for instruction? How do they help you learn?
2. What accommodations do you use for assessments? How do they help you do your best?
3. Do you have any questions about the accommodations you use for instruction or assessments?
4. How do your teachers make sure you have the accommodations you need on test day?
5. Is there anything else about the accommodations you use that you want to share?

Questions for Teachers:

1. How do you ensure that students receive the necessary accommodations as indicated on the IEP?
2. How do IEP teams make decisions about what assessment a student will be given (i.e., what data are used to make the determination)?
3. How do IEP teams make decisions about what assessment accommodations a student needs? How do you ensure that accommodations happen?
4. How are families/parents involved in assessment and accommodations selection?
5. How is the provision of accommodations monitored by the school?

Questions for Administrators:

1. How do you ensure that students receive the necessary accommodations as indicated on the IEP?
2. How do IEP teams make decisions about what assessment a student will be given (i.e., what data are used to make the determination)?
3. How do IEP teams make decisions about what assessment accommodations a student needs? How do you ensure that accommodations happen?
4. How are families/parents involved in assessment and accommodations selection?
5. How is the provision of accommodations monitored by the school?
6. As an administrator, how do you ensure that decision-making teams receive appropriate training on accommodations?

Conclusion

Reviewing accommodations decisions and use is an important part of monitoring accommodations in action. Whether your state monitors through on-site visits on the day of testing or after, desk or online reviews of records, or in-person reviews of records, the information gathered is valuable to ensuring that accommodations are used appropriately and consistently.

Resources:

Regional Resource Centers. Available online at <http://www.rrfcnetwork.org>

Step 4 Checklist: Review Accommodations Decisions and Use

Our State...

Yes No

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | has a process to observe accommodations decisions and use, whether through direct observation, record review, or some other means |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | has a process in place to observe test administrations on test day |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | has a clear process for choosing which schools will be observed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | has a clear rationale for using announced or unannounced visits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | has a process for selecting records to be reviewed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | has review forms that include questions on accommodations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | conducts interviews with students on the effectiveness of accommodations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | conducts interviews with teachers on the effectiveness of accommodations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | conducts interviews with administrators on the effectiveness of accommodations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | has a process in place to use information gained from observations, record reviews, or interviews to improve accommodations decisions and use |

Review Accommodations Decisions and Use: Action Steps

1.

2.

3.

4.

Questions to Ask

1.

2.

3.



Evaluate and Report on Accommodations

Evaluating and reporting on accommodations takes a system-wide approach to improving accommodations decisions. In Step 4, information on accommodations decisions was collected. Such information can be used to improve accommodations for an individual student, and it can also be used to improve decision making at the state and district level.

Evaluating and reporting on accommodations may involve three primary activities:

1. Conducting analyses for accommodations
2. Reporting information on accommodations
3. Revisiting state procedures and policies

Analyze Accommodations

Although several methods of data collection have been mentioned in Step 4, there are other means of gathering information on the effectiveness of accommodations in instruction and assessment. Analyzing accommodations does not necessarily require conducting a research study on accommodations in the state. For example, states may want to consider the following best practices:

1. Documenting how your state analyzes its accommodations data, including a timeline of analysis
2. Applying existing research on accommodations to the decision-making process
3. Triangulating formal literature reviews, a collection of expert judgments, and empirical evidence on accommodations

In order to draw the most useful conclusions from data, it is important to use care when combining data from different sources.

Monitoring questions to ask:

1. Currently, how does the state analyze its accommodations data?

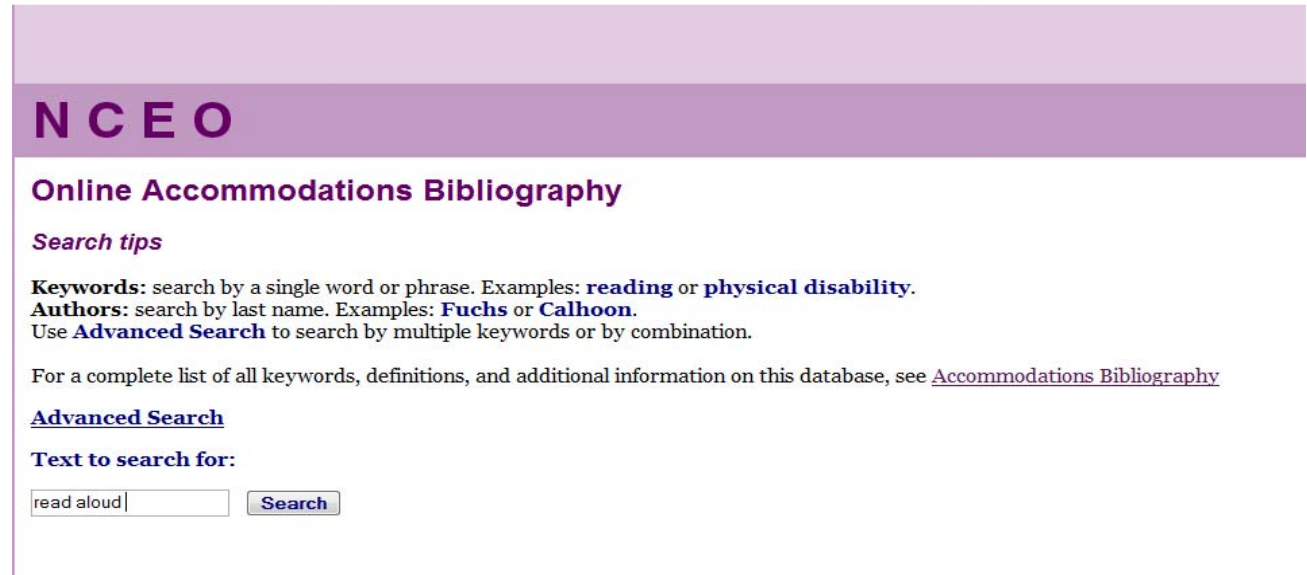
2. How can existing data routinely collected be used to improve accommodations?
3. What additional information may be needed to improve accommodations in the state?

Monitoring Resource: The NCEO Accommodations Bibliography

One approach that states may use is to gather existing research information on accommodations and their effects. An easy way to do this is through the NCEO Accommodations Bibliography.

The NCEO Accommodations Bibliography is a searchable collection of abstracts on research conducted on accommodations. The Accommodations Bibliography is updated regularly and is available online at www.nceo.info.

The Accommodations Bibliography allows users to conduct basic and advanced searches. For example, if a user wanted to know about research conducted on the read aloud accommodation, a search would look something like this:



The screenshot shows the NCEO Online Accommodations Bibliography search interface. It features a purple header with the NCEO logo, followed by the title "Online Accommodations Bibliography". Below the title, there are "Search tips" including instructions on using keywords and authors, and a link to "Advanced Search". At the bottom, there is a search form with a text input field containing "read aloud" and a "Search" button.

N C E O

Online Accommodations Bibliography

Search tips

Keywords: search by a single word or phrase. Examples: **reading** or **physical disability**.
Authors: search by last name. Examples: **Fuchs** or **Calhoon**.
Use **Advanced Search** to search by multiple keywords or by combination.

For a complete list of all keywords, definitions, and additional information on this database, see [Accommodations Bibliography](#)

Advanced Search

Text to search for:

read aloud

The Accommodations Bibliography provides a list of entries that meet the search criteria:

[Home](#) [Site Map](#)

N C E O

Online Accommodations Bibliography

Page: of 1.

Search:
search all titles, authors, keywords, publishers, and publication dates for 'read aloud '
3 work(s) found.

[Detail](#) Bolt S;Bielinski J; (2002). The effects of the read aloud accommodation on math test items . [Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Council on Measurement in Education, New Orleans, LA](#)

[Detail](#) McKevitt, Brian C., and Elliot, Stephen N. (2003). Effects and Perceived Consequences of Using Read Aloud and Teacher-Recommended Testing Accommodations on a Reading Achievement Test . [The School Psychology Review](#) , 32 (4) , 583 -600.

[Detail](#) Meloy LL;Deville C;Frisbie D; (2002). The effect of a read aloud accommodation on test scores of students with and without a learning disability in reading . [Remedial and Special Education](#) , 23 (4) , 248 -255.

Page: of 1.

When a user clicks on "Detail," additional information for that record is shown:

[Home](#) [Site Map](#)

N C E O

Online Accommodations Bibliography

Ref Type:	Conference
Title:	The effects of the read aloud accommodation on math test items
Authors:	Bolt S;Bielinski J;
Year:	2002
Notes:	Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Council on Measurement in Education, New Orleans, LA
Keywords:	elementary;learning disability;math;multiple disabilities;presentation;read aloud;reading;
Citation:	Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Council on Measurement in Education, New Orleans, LA
Web url:	

Finally, a short abstract is provided, detailing the accommodation researched, participants, dependent variables, and the findings.

Abstract

Accommodation: The test was read aloud to students.

Participants: 1,000 randomly selected students without disabilities, 930 students with reading disabilities not receiving the accommodation, and 1083 students with reading disabilities receiving the accommodation participated in the study. All students were in 4th grade.

Dependent Variable: level analyses were conducted on multiple choice math items from the Missouri Assessment Program.

Findings: The read aloud accommodation did not appear to improve score comparability for students with reading disabilities when compared to students without disabilities. More items displaying differential item functioning (DIF) were identified for those who received the accommodation than for those who did not receive the accommodation.

In addition to using information from established resources, states may want to analyze their own data on accommodations. One approach that may be considered is a discrepancy analysis, which involves making a comparison between accommodations reported and those actually used.

State Example: Hawai'i

In the 2006-07 school year, as part of monitoring accommodations, Hawai'i noticed that some schools were not reporting accommodations use. In these schools, it appeared from recorded information that no students were using accommodations during testing. The state then set out to gather additional information about accommodations used. It looked at accommodations used during testing by student type and by test type, and also considered the maximum number of accommodations that were theoretically available to students in comparison to the number of accommodations actually used by students. In addition, they looked at individual student cases to compare the accommodations listed on the student's IEP with accommodations used for testing. In uncovering discrepancies in these areas, Hawai'i has been able to use these results to improve both accommodations decision making and accommodations reporting in the local schools. In addition, state policies were established to improve local accountability for providing testing accommodations. (Example from 2006-07)

Advantages:

The state used a sound research design to evaluate accommodations.

The state used the findings to provide direct technical assistance to schools in order to improve both accommodations decision making and reporting.

Considerations:

This design requires direct observation of schools during testing, which may require additional resources.

The method of choosing a sample population is important. In this case, the state chose to look at schools that had under-reported accommodations use.

Reporting on Accommodations

As part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, states are required to report participation data, including the use of accommodations, in their Annual Performance Reports (APRs). In addition to this required reporting, states may want to consider reporting additional information on accommodations.

Monitoring questions to ask:

1. Currently, what information on accommodations is reported in the state?
2. What information is reported publicly, and what information is used internally by state personnel for educational improvement?
3. What information on accommodations is made available to all stakeholders?

Providing information to all stakeholders on how accommodations are used in the state can improve accommodations decision making and use. Reporting overall accommodations use by specific accommodation, for example, may offer districts and schools comparison points that can be useful in order to clarify accommodations policies, provide targeted professional development, and change accommodations practices.

State Example: Delaware



In Delaware, information on accommodations use was reported for the school year 2002-03. The percentage of students using accommodations was accounted for within each of the reading performance levels, and 14 different accommodations were tracked. With this information, the state can observe the performance of students using certain accommodations. This information can also be used as part of technical assistance efforts. In addition, the information may influence future accommodations policies.

Advantages:

The state keeps track of the use of accommodations on each test by performance level. The state reports this information so that it can be used to inform technical assistance efforts as well as state accommodations policies.

Considerations:

The current reporting form does not directly identify the accommodations used, so a reader would need additional information to fully understand the table. This information is possible to report because it was collected during testing. Ensuring that your state collects adequate information on student demographic sheets is necessary in order to maintain best practices in reporting.

Table 33. Accommodation Count across Reading Performance Levels-SY 2002-2003 (cont.)

Special Education Students			Reading Performance Label					
			0	1	2	3	4	5
Number of Accommodations	0	Count	28	233	101	102	5	6
		% within Number of Accommodations	5.6%	46.9%	20.3%	20.5%	1.0%	1.2%
	1	Count	1	81	44	71	6	1
		% within Number of Accommodations	.2%	14.6%	8.0%	12.8%	1.1%	.2%
	2	Count	10	246	121	119	3	2
		% within Number of Accommodations	1.9%	50.4%	23.1%	22.7%	.6%	.4%
	3	Count	8	430	175	185	14	8
		% within Number of Accommodations	1.0%	52.1%	21.2%	22.4%	1.7%	1.0%
	4	Count	7	423	219	226	11	4
		% within Number of Accommodations	.8%	47.2%	24.4%	25.2%	1.2%	.4%
	5	Count	6	352	194	209	15	5
		% within Number of Accommodations	.8%	44.9%	24.7%	26.7%	1.9%	.6%
	6	Count	3	169	151	159	13	7
		% within Number of Accommodations	.6%	33.3%	29.7%	31.3%	2.6%	1.4%
	7	Count	0	124	77	127	4	11
		% within Number of Accommodations	.0%	35.9%	22.3%	36.8%	1.2%	3.2%
	8	Count	2	37	36	81	4	6
		% within Number of Accommodations	1.2%	21.9%	21.3%	47.9%	2.4%	3.6%
	9	Count	0	31	27	51	7	1
		% within Number of Accommodations	.0%	26.3%	22.9%	43.2%	5.9%	.8%
	10	Count	0	16	9	19	4	1
		% within Number of Accommodations	.0%	31.4%	17.6%	37.3%	7.8%	2.0%
	11	Count	0	5	7	11	1	1
		% within Number of Accommodations	.0%	20.0%	28.0%	44.0%	4.0%	4.0%
	12	Count	0	5	6	3	0	0
		% within Number of Accommodations	.0%	35.7%	42.9%	21.4%	.0%	.0%
	13	Count	0	2	3	4	1	0
		% within Number of Accommodations	.0%	20.0%	30.0%	40.0%	10.0%	.0%
	14	Count	0	4	0	3	0	0
		% within Number of Accommodations	.0%	57.1%	.0%	42.9%	.0%	.0%
Total		Count	65	2176	1171	1370	88	53
		% within Number of Accommodations	1.2%	40.8%	22.0%	25.7%	1.7%	1.0%

ACCOUNTABILITY TECHNICAL MANUAL-SY 2004-2005

(Example from 2004)

Revisiting Procedures and Policies

Using the information gained through evaluation and reporting processes, states may want to revisit accommodations procedures and policies.

Monitoring question to ask:

- Is there a need to change accommodations procedures and policies to reflect current needs in the state?

Considering the procedures and policies of other states may be useful when making revisions to state documents.

Monitoring Resource: The NCEO Data Viewer

States may want to review states' accommodation policies after obtaining information from existing research and data analyses. This type of review can assist in the consideration of policy changes or clarifications. The NCEO Data Viewer provides a mechanism for easy review of other states' policies.

The NCEO Data Viewer is an interactive data reporting Web site. It features information on participation and accommodations for students with disabilities as well as state annual performance reporting data for students with disabilities. The Data Viewer is located online at <http://data.nceo.info>.

The Data Viewer provides the following capabilities when looking at state policies on assessment participation and accommodations for students with disabilities:

- **Report Designer** — Customizable data reports that allow for deeper analysis of participation and accommodations issues, including multi-year trend reports.
- **Summary Reports** — Customizable summary data reports on state policies for assessment participation and accommodations for students with disabilities.
- **State Profiles** — Verified information from states that was used to develop the tables in the Data Viewer.
- **Participation and Accommodations Prepared Reports** — These reports have been prepared to provide immediate access to Participation & Accommodation reports of special interest, including hot topics.

Knowing what the current participation and accommodations policies are in other states may be helpful. For example, if you want to know which states allow sign interpretation of questions as an accommodation, a search could be conducted using the Report Designer. This feature allows you to set certain criteria, and the Data Viewer will generate a map and a corresponding table.

Participation & Accommodation 2006-2007 Report Designer: Accommodation

This report displays the specific policy used by each state for the Accommodation(s) selected.

Report Notes

- If you select a single accommodation for your analysis, both a map and a table will be displayed showing each state's policy for that accommodation.
- If you select two or more accommodations, only a table report will be displayed.

Reset

Run Report

State(s)

- All Regular States
- All Unique States
- All Regular and Unique States
- Alabama
- Alaska

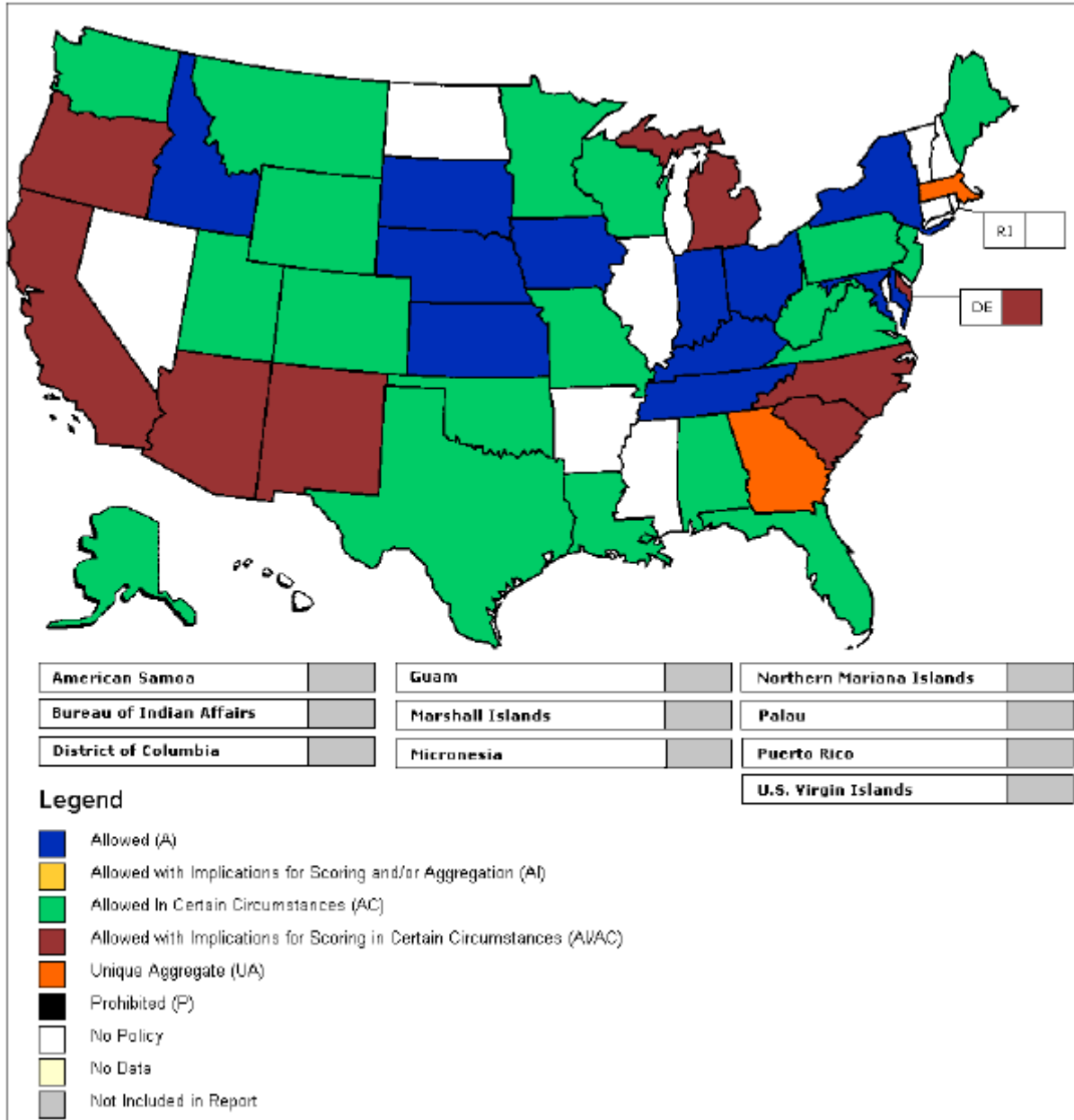
Filter by student group that policy applies to:

Any group (do not filter)

C1 - Presentation Accommodations

- Large Print
- Braille
- Read Aloud Directions
- Read Aloud Questions
- Read Aloud Passages
- Sign Interpret Directions
- Sign Interpret Questions
- Sign Interpret Passages
- Repeat/Re-Read/Clarify Directions
- Visual Cues
- Administration by Others
- Familiar Examiner
- Additional Examples

Using the criteria selected (e.g., all regular states, any student group, sign interpret question), the following policy map would be generated, showing data for a specific school year (2006-07 in this example):



In addition to the policy map, a table showing the same information is also generated. The following is a sample from the table:

Participation & Accommodation
Report Designer: Accommodation - Custom Report 2006-2007

State	Sign Interpret Questions
Regular States	
Alabama	AC
Alaska	AC
Arizona	AI/AC
Arkansas	
California	AI/AC
Colorado	AC
Connecticut	
Delaware	AI/AC
Florida	AC
Georgia	AC/UA
Hawaii	
Idaho	A
Illinois	
Indiana	A
Iowa	A
Kansas	A
Kentucky	A
Louisiana	AC
Maine	AC
Maryland	A
Massachusetts	AC/UA
Michigan	AI/AC
Minnesota	AC

Note that each policy determination is a hyperlink. Users can click on the policy for each state to be taken to additional information provided about that policy. If a state name is clicked, the full state profile, which includes all of the data collected by NCEO, is shown.

In addition to the information on participation and accommodations, the NCEO Data Viewer also gives users access to Annual Performance Report (APR) data for students with disabilities. In revisiting procedures and policies about accommodations, it may be helpful to look at the participation and performance of students with disabilities across states.

Data Viewer for Annual Performance Reports provides the following capabilities:

- **Report Designer** — Customizable summary data reports that allow for deeper visual and tabular analysis of participation and accommodations use and performance data.
- **State Profiles** — Customizable summary data reports for one state or all states (regular or unique) based on Enrollment data, Participation data (Regular Assessment, Assessment Taken Out-of-Grade Level, Alternate Assessment, Took No Assessment), Performance data (Regular Assessment, Alternate Assessment Based on Unspecified Standards, Alternate Assessment Based on Grade Level Standards, Alternate Assessment Based on Alternate Achievement Standards), and Overall Statistics.

For example, if a user wanted to know about the participation of elementary students with disabilities who use accommodations on state math assessments, a search could be conducted using the Report Designer. This feature allows users to set certain criteria, then the Data Viewer generates a map and a corresponding table. Using the APR Report Designer, a user obtains a map and a corresponding table after entering search criteria.

[NCEO Home](#) | [Data Viewer Home](#)

Annual Performance Reports 2005-2006 Report Designer: Participation

Note: All states develop their own state assessments and define their levels of achievement, including the level needed for a student to be considered proficient. Data from the assessments are reported annually to the U.S. Department of Education through Annual Performance Reports. Some state data may not be available in this DataViewer, as in the case of a state not having assessments at all grade levels or a state changing its process or policy in some way. For calculating participation rates in this analysis, the denominator used is the number of students with IEPs in the assessed grades.

Reset

Run Report

Content Area

Math

Grade(s)

Any Elementary School (1-6)

Map Divisions

- Default States will be displayed in five colors representing five equal divisions of report values
- Custom Display values in increments of 20% starting at 0%

Regular Assessment

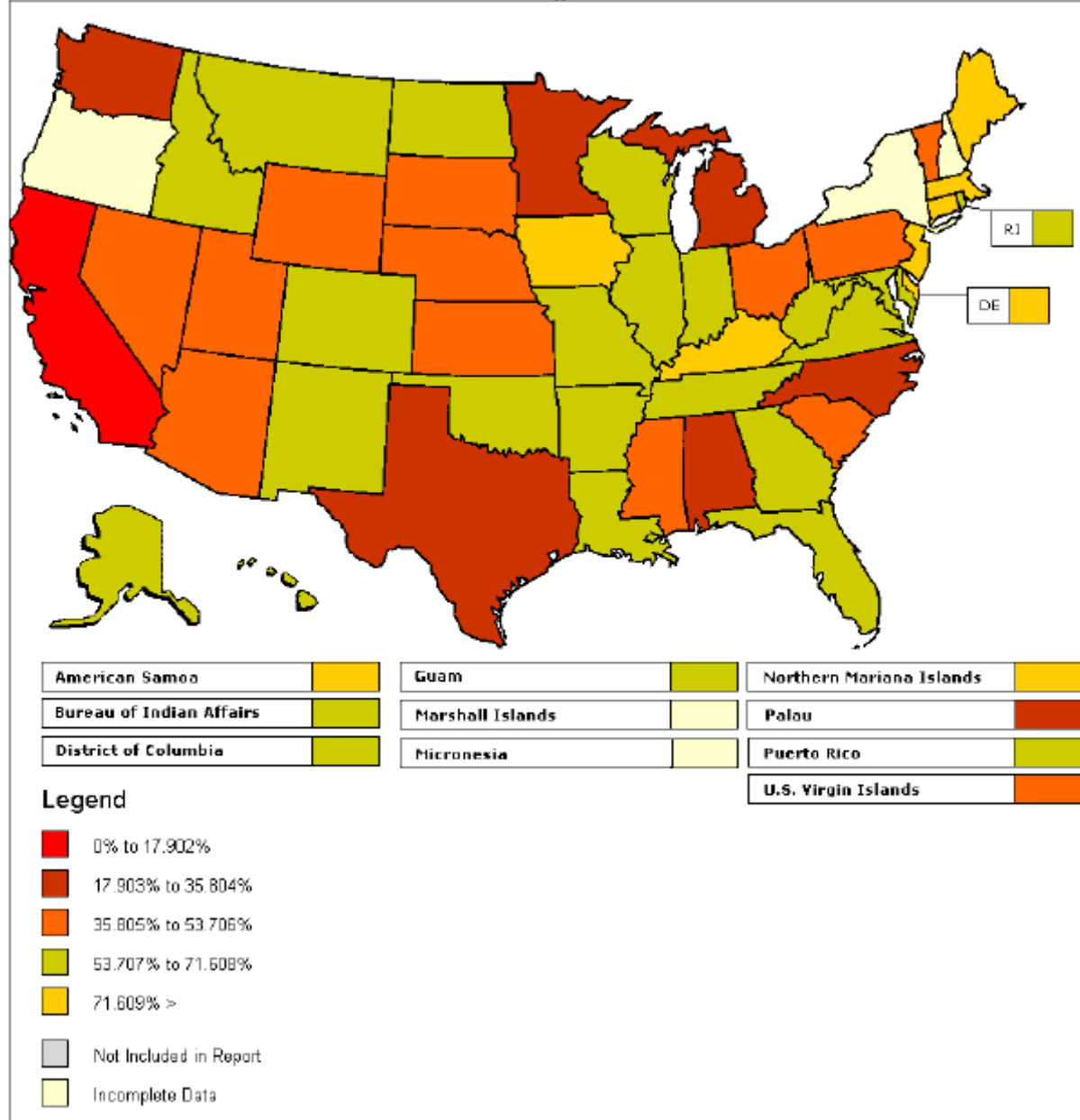
- Students Assessed
- Students Who Used Accommodations
- Invalidating Method
- Invalidating Process

Assessment Taken out of Grade Level

- Students Assessed
- Invalidating Method
- Invalidating Process

Similar to the Participation and Accommodation reporting function of the NCEO Data Viewer, the Report Designer generates both a map and a corresponding table, as shown here for the criteria selected (math, elementary level, and percentage of students who used accommodations), for 2005-06 in this example:

Percent of IEPs shown in 17.902% increments starting at 0%



Here is a sample of the table that was generated to correspond with the map:

**Annual Performance Reports 2005-2006
Participation Report**

State	Total Enrollment	% of Total Enrollment	Total IEPs	% of Total IEPs
Regular States				
Alabama	226,968	2.46%	28,073	19.88%
Alaska	38,476	9.98%	5,680	67.61%
Arizona	323,130	7.18%	45,258	51.24%
Arkansas	143,211	7.56%	18,797	57.62%
California	1,931,329	1.91%	209,598	17.64%
Colorado	228,168	6.89%	25,572	61.46%
Connecticut	172,117	9.45%	21,364	76.10%
Delaware	36,702	12.50%	5,461	83.98%
Florida	788,993	10.04%	131,423	60.30%
Georgia	481,364	8.78%	67,019	63.04%
Hawaii	55,788	6.66%	5,897	63.05%
Idaho	79,532	6.96%	8,591	64.44%
Illinois	632,483	8.22%	93,860	55.36%
Indiana	315,517	9.43%	54,487	54.59%
Iowa	136,521	10.00%	18,995	71.84%
Kansas	144,015	5.49%	18,867	41.90%
Kentucky	146,987	9.67%	19,469	72.97%
Louisiana	197,025	10.48%	28,838	71.57%
Maine	14,242	12.93%	2,479	74.30%
Maryland	251,508	8.89%	32,764	68.26%
Massachusetts	291,579	13.85%	51,613	78.25%
Michigan	495,566	4.51%	69,136	32.33%
Minnesota	238,722	5.42%	37,000	34.97%

Note that in the table above, each state name is hyperlinked. Clicking on the state name will take the user to a summary of APR data, including enrollment, participation, and performance data. All of this information may be useful in considering accommodations policies.

Conclusion

Monitoring instructional and assessment accommodations requires states to evaluate their procedures, policies, and practices for accommodations. Evaluation may include a review of current research on accommodations, solicitation of judgment from experts, and analysis of current state data. After the evaluation has been completed, the results should be publicly reported so that the information can be used to improve accommodations decision making and use. Furthermore, the monitoring process may best conclude by revisiting current policies and procedures in order to make changes that reflect the current needs in the state. Thus, the monitoring process never truly ends.

Resources:

Christensen, L.L., Lail, K.E., & Thurlow, M.L. (2007). *Hints and tips for addressing accommodations issues for peer review*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.

Delaware Department of Education. (2006). *Accountability technical manual*. Dover, DE: Author.

Hawai'i Department of Education. (2008). *Spring 2007 Hawaii state reading and mathematics assessments: Monitoring of accommodations Usage by SpEd, ELL, and section 504 students*. Honolulu, HI: Systems Planning and Improvement Section, Systems Accountability Office.

Ketterlin-Geller, L.R., Alonzo, J., Braun-Monegan, J., & Tindal, G. (2007). Recommendations for accommodations: Implications of inconsistency. *Remedial and Special Education, 28* (4), 194-206. OSEP (2005). Topic: Monitoring, Technical Assistance, and Enforcement Available online at <http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/%2Croot%2Cdynamic%2CTopicalBrief%2C24%2C>

Thurlow, M.L. (2007). State policies and accommodations: Issues and implications. In C.C. Laitusis & L.L. Cook (Eds.), *Large-scale assessment and accommodations: What works?* Arlington, VA: Council for Exceptional Children.

Thurlow, M.L., Elliott, J.L., & Ysseldyke, J.E. (2003). *Testing students with disabilities: Practical strategies for complying with district and state requirements* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Thurlow, M., Thompson, S., & Johnstone, C. (2007). Policy, legal, and implementation issues surrounding assessment accommodations for students with disabilities. In L. Florian (Ed.), *The Sage Handbook of Special Education*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Zinesky, A.L., & Sireci, S.G. (2007). *A summary of the research on the effects of test accommodations: 2005-2006* (Technical Report 42). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.

Step 5 Checklist: Report and Evaluate Accommodations

Our State...

Yes No

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | documents how we analyze our accommodations data, including timelines |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | applies existing research on accommodations to the decision-making process |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | conducts formal literature reviews on accommodations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | seeks the judgment of experts on appropriate use of accommodations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | conducts empirical studies on accommodations when necessary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | publicly reports information on accommodations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | reports the same information publicly that is used internally by state personnel for educational improvement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | makes information on accommodations use available to all stakeholders |

Report and Evaluate Accommodations: Action Steps

1.

2.

3.

4.

Questions to Ask

1.

2.

3.

APPENDIX

A

IEP Forms

Student Name: _____ Meeting Date: _____

STUDENT SUPPORTS

To advance appropriately toward attaining annual goals; to be involved and progress in the general curriculum; to be educated and participate with other children in academic, nonacademic and extracurricular activities, the following accommodations, supplemental aids and services and/or supports for school personnel will be provided:

Instructional Accommodations
Classroom Testing Accommodations
Supplemental Aids and Services
Supports for School Personnel

ASSESSMENT DETERMINATION FOR DISTRICT AND STATEWIDE ASSESSMENTS FOR GRADES K-12

a) The student will participate in all required assessments without accommodations · Yes · No

b) The student will participate in all required assessments with accommodations · Yes · No
 If yes, complete the chart below.

c) The student will participate in the Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA) · Yes · No
 If yes, provide a statement of why the child cannot participate in regular assessment.

Specific Testing Accommodations (Accommodations used for assessment must be consistent with accommodations used for classroom instruction/testing and specified in the IEP. Some accommodations used for instruction may not be allowed for statewide assessment. Refer to the Student Assessment Handbook for the only allowable accommodations.)

Subtest	Setting	Timing/Scheduling	Presentation	Response	Standard or Conditional (Conditional on the GHSHT is called Nonstandard)

Adapted from an IEP form used by the Georgia Department of Education, August 2007. Retrieved from <http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/DMGetDocument.aspx/IEP.pdf?p=6CC6799F8C1371F62DF15444679D354AEF963DEF8D6E4F4068F25B368692F236&Type=D>

APPENDIX

B

Student Demographic Forms

Example 1.

PLACE
PRE-ED LABEL
OR LINKING LABEL
HERE.

WARNING SECURE DOCUMENT

Under no circumstances may any of the enclosed contents be conveyed orally or copied, either manually or electronically. All test booklets and answer folders must be returned to the test coordinator.

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Example 1 from most states' student demographic form. This is an example of a general form used by states.

Example 2.

PROGRAMS
<input type="radio"/> IEP
Former IEP
<input type="radio"/> Exceed \leq 2 yrs
<input type="radio"/> Exceed \geq 2 yrs
<input type="radio"/> 504

Example 2 retrieved from Nevada Department of education:

http://nde.doe.nv.gov/Assessment/CRT_GRADE_3-8_TCM_2007.pdf

Example 3.

ALL STUDENTS
1. Student is (<i>indicate only one</i>): <input type="radio"/> Male <input type="radio"/> Female
2. Student is (<i>indicate only one</i>): <input type="radio"/> White (non-Hispanic) <input type="radio"/> American Indian or Alaska Native <input type="radio"/> Black/African American (non-Hispanic) <input type="radio"/> Multi-Racial/Ethnic <input type="radio"/> Latino/Hispanic <input type="radio"/> Asian or Pacific Islander
3. Student has an IEP (not gifted). <input type="radio"/> Yes
4. If the student has an IEP, the primary disability is (<i>indicate only one</i>): <input type="radio"/> Autism <input type="radio"/> Deaf-Blindness <input type="radio"/> Deafness <input type="radio"/> Emotional Disturbance <input type="radio"/> Hearing Impairment <input type="radio"/> Mental Retardation <input type="radio"/> Orthopedic Impairment <input type="radio"/> Other Health Impairment <input type="radio"/> Specific Learning Disability <input type="radio"/> Speech or Language Impairment <input type="radio"/> Traumatic Brain Injury <input type="radio"/> Visual Impairment, including Blindness
5. Student is Gifted <u>and has</u> a GIEP. <input type="radio"/> Yes
6. Student has a 504 Plan under Chapter 15. <input type="radio"/> Yes
7. Student participates in Title 1 program. <input type="radio"/> Yes

Example 3 retrieved from Pennsylvania Department of Education, *Accommodations Guidelines*, December 2005

http://www.pde.state.pa.us/a_and_t/lib/a_and_t/2006AccommodationsGuidelines.pdf

Example 4.

COMMUNICATION ARTS	MATHEMATICS	SCIENCE
Accommodations (Fill in all that apply)	Accommodations (Fill in all that apply)	Accommodations (Fill in all that apply)
<input type="radio"/> 01 Braille edition	<input type="radio"/> 01 Braille edition	<input type="radio"/> 01 Braille edition
<input type="radio"/> 02 Large print edition	<input type="radio"/> 02 Large print edition	<input type="radio"/> 02 Large print edition
<input type="radio"/> 04 Oral reading- <i>invalidates assessment</i>	<input type="radio"/> 04 Oral reading	<input type="radio"/> 04 Oral reading
<input type="radio"/> 04 Oral reading-Blind/Partial Sight		
<input type="radio"/> 05 Signing of assessment- <i>invalidates assessment</i>	<input type="radio"/> 05 Signing of assessment	<input type="radio"/> 05 Signing of assessment
<input type="radio"/> 06 Paraphrasing- <i>invalidates assessment</i>	<input type="radio"/> 06 Paraphrasing- invalidates test	<input type="radio"/> 06 Paraphrasing- invalidates test
<input type="radio"/> 10 Other administration	<input type="radio"/> 10 Other administration	<input type="radio"/> 10 Other administration
<input type="radio"/> 11 Oral reading in native language- <i>invalidates assessment</i>	<input type="radio"/> 11 Oral reading in native language	<input type="radio"/> 11 Oral reading in native language
<input type="radio"/> 20 Extend time	<input type="radio"/> 20 Extend time	<input type="radio"/> 20 Extend time
<input type="radio"/> 22 Other timing	<input type="radio"/> 22 Other timing	<input type="radio"/> 22 Other timing
<input type="radio"/> 35 Use of scribe	<input type="radio"/> 35 Use of scribe	<input type="radio"/> 35 Use of scribe
<input type="radio"/> 39 Use of calculator, math tables, etc.	<input type="radio"/> 39 Use of calculator, math tables, etc.	<input type="radio"/> 39 Use of calculator, math tables, etc.
<input type="radio"/> 43 Use of bilingual dictionary	<input type="radio"/> 43 Use of bilingual dictionary	<input type="radio"/> 43 Use of bilingual dictionary
<input type="radio"/> 44 Other response	<input type="radio"/> 44 Other response	<input type="radio"/> 44 Other response
<input type="radio"/> 50 Testing individually	<input type="radio"/> 50 Testing individually	<input type="radio"/> 50 Testing individually
<input type="radio"/> 51 Testing in small group	<input type="radio"/> 51 Testing in small group	<input type="radio"/> 51 Testing in small group
<input type="radio"/> 53 Other setting: Specify_____	<input type="radio"/> 53 Other setting: Specify_____	<input type="radio"/> 53 Other setting: Specify_____

Example 4 from Missouri Student Information Sheet 2008 by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

COMPLETE AS NEEDED AFTER TESTING

Example 5.

SECTION 504 ACCOMMODATIONS <input type="radio"/> Student used Section 504 accommodations.	
IEP ACCOMMODATIONS <input type="radio"/> Student used IEP accommodations.	
ELL ACCOMMODATIONS <input type="radio"/> Student used ELL accommodations.	

Example 5 from Oklahoma Test Administration Manual, Oklahoma School Testing Program, Oklahoma Core Curriculum Tests Grades 5 and 8 Writing

Example 6.

<p>Student was given the following changes in test environment (mark all that apply):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Scheduled extended time <input type="radio"/> Student-requested extended time <input type="radio"/> Testing in a separate room <input type="radio"/> Hospital/home testing <input type="radio"/> Multiple test sessions <input type="radio"/> Small group testing <input type="radio"/> Other, please specify _____

Example 6 retrieved from Pennsylvania Department of Education, *Accommodations Guidelines*, December 2005

http://www.pde.state.pa.us/a_and_t/lib/a_and_t/2006AccommodationsGuidelines.pdf

APPENDIX
C

Certification Forms

Certification of Adherence to Prescribed Test Administration Procedures

Check the appropriate response. Give a full explanation for all items for which the response was "NO". Attach the explanation on an additional sheet.

YES NO

1. Test materials were properly inventoried and stored in a secure location prior to test administration.
2. A certified building level official was responsible for test material distribution and storage while materials were in the school and was held accountable for all test booklets sent to that building. **All test materials were inventoried and accounted for.**
3. This system adhered to all written regulations and procedures relating to testing and test administration, including the distribution and collection of test materials, test security, use of test results, and department testing dates and the reporting of irregularities.

4. How many irregularities were reported to the Georgia Department of Education? How many of those irregularities resulted in assessment invalidation?

Name of Assessment	Irregularities	Invalidations
CRCT		
EOCT		
GHSHT		

5. Any possible unethical behavior occurred regarding testing policies and procedures have been reported.
6. The system superintendent reviewed and approved system testing administration plans.
7. Building level personnel received training in appropriate administration procedures.
8. Students with disabilities or students who received Limited English Proficiency services received accommodations in accordance with their IEPs, IAPs, or ELL/TPC Plan.
9. All students appropriately participated in the Statewide Student Assessment Program.
10. System and/or building administrative personnel monitored testing sites.
11. The system has accounted for, disposed of and/or returned testing materials in accordance with the state's policies and procedures.

Please return to Georgia Department of Education

_____	_____
System Name	Date
_____	_____
System Test Coordinator (signature)	Date
_____	_____
System Superintendent (signature)	Date

Adapted from a form used by the Georgia Department of Education, Page 132 of 150-August 2007

APPENDIX

D

On-Site Monitoring Forms

Accommodations Monitoring Feedback

District: _____ **School:** _____

Name: _____ **Position:** _____

Assessment or instructional issues I have questions about:

Professional Development needs for my school/district:

How did this visit help you?

Example from South Carolina, 2007-2008

Date: _____

IEP Review Log

School: _____ District: _____

Primary Disability	Grade	Instructional Setting	Present Level of Performance	Accommodations/ Modifications to Instruction	Participation in Statewide Assessment

Example from South Carolina, 2007-2008

APPENDIX

E

Glossary of
Accommodations Monitoring Terms

Glossary Monitoring Accommodation Terms

504 Plan: A legal document falling under the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The term "504" refers to the section of the Rehabilitation Act specifying this document. It is designed to plan accommodations and modifications to assist students with disabilities (as defined under the Rehabilitation Act) to have access to educational opportunities. A 504 plan is not an Individualized Education Program (IEP) as is required for special education students.

Academic Achievement: Learning progress as measured in relation to academic content grade-level expectations. Academic achievement levels serve as an important indicator of eligibility and as a continued measure of progress for students with disabilities.

Accommodation

Assessment Accommodation: Change in testing materials or procedures that enables the student to participate in assessments in ways that allow abilities to be assessed rather than disabilities. Assessment accommodations are provided to "level the playing field." Without accommodations, the assessment may not accurately measure the student's knowledge and skills.

Presentation: Presentation accommodations alter the way in which a test is presented to a student.

Response: Response accommodations are changes in the way a student provides an answer to a test question.

Setting: Setting accommodations are changes in the location of the testing environment.

Timing/Scheduling: Timing and scheduling accommodations are alterations in the pre-specified time or amount of time designated for a test.

Instructional Accommodation: Change in classroom materials or procedures that enables the student to participate in learning in ways that allow the student to fully access the content being taught.

Accountability: A term frequently applied to the role of oversight by the federal to state, state to district, and district to school regarding ensuring that students are benefiting from the education provided to them. In other words, educational entities are held accountable for results, as measured, in part, by large-scale assessments.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP): A measure, applied at various levels – school, district, and state – which indicates the degree to which all students are achieving at a proficient level on state academic standards. This is a federally-defined term, in accordance with the No Child Left Behind Act.

[see this Web page for a U.S. Department of Education Secretary's guidance letter (dated 7/24/02) to states on AYP: <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/secletter/020724.html>]

Assessment

Alternate Assessments: Tools used to evaluate the performance of students who are unable to participate in regular state assessments even with accommodations. Alternate assessments provide a mechanism for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities and for other students who may need alternate assessment formats to be included in the accountability system.

Alternate Assessment based on Alternate Achievement Standards: An assessment used with students who have significant cognitive disabilities. This assessment measures the student's proficiency on the general curriculum against grade level standards.

Alternate Assessment based on Grade-Level Achievement Standards: Achievement standards for alternate assessments based on grade-level achievement standards must be equivalent to those on the general assessment. Setting alternate achievement standards based on grade-level content standards is a challenging but rewarding process, and requires the active participation of test company partners, measurement experts, curriculum and special education state leadership, as well as educators, parents, and higher education standard-setting panelists.

Alternate Assessment based on Modified Achievement Standards: New regulations in April 2007 add an additional option. According to the Department of Education Fact Sheet: "Modified achievement standards are intended for a small group of students whose disability has prevented them from achieving grade-level proficiency and who likely will not reach grade-level achievement in the same timeframe as other students.

These students must take either the grade-level assessment, which is often too difficult, or an alternate assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, which is too easy. Neither of these options provides an accurate assessment of what these students know and can do. Alternate assessments based on modified academic achievement standards will provide a more appropriate measure of these students' achievement of grade-level content, and give teachers and parents information that can be used to better inform instruction."

[see *Modified Academic Achievement Standards: Non-Regulatory Guidance* released on 7/20/07 for more details:
www.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/nclb/twopercent.doc]

Assessment Modification: A change in testing materials or procedures that alters what the test is designed to measure or the comparability of scores. Testing with modifications may have consequences for the student, and for how the score is reported and aggregated for accountability purposes.

Compliance [see Monitoring Systems]

Construct Validity [see Validity]

Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process (CIMP) [see Monitoring Systems]

Criterion-Referenced Test (CRT): An assessment designed to compare each student's performance to specific learning objectives or academic content standards.

Desk Audit: Online or paper audits of randomly chosen records conducted at the district or state level. Records, or copies of records, are sent to the reviewer who conducts the audit without going to the school.

Disability: According to IDEA 2004, the term "child with a disability" means a child -- "(i) with mental retardation, hearing impairments (including deafness), speech or language impairments, visual impairments (including blindness), serious emotional disturbance (referred to in this title as 'emotional disturbance'), orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, or specific learning disabilities; and (ii) who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services. (B) Child aged 3 through 9.--The term 'child with a disability' for a child aged 3 through 9 (or any subset of that age range, including ages 3 through 5), may, at the discretion of the State and the local educational agency, include a child -- (i) experiencing developmental delays, as defined by the State and as measured by appropriate diagnostic instruments and procedures, in 1 or more of the following areas: physical development; cognitive development; communication development; social or emotional development; or adaptive development; and (ii) who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services." [http://idea.ed.gov]

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA): First enacted in 1965, the principal federal law affecting education from kindergarten through grade 12. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 is the most recent reauthorization of the ESEA.

Focused Monitoring [see Monitoring Systems]

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): The federal law that requires each state to ensure that a free appropriate public education (FAPE) is available to all eligible children with disabilities residing in that state. In 2004, the Individuals with Disabilities

Education Improvement Act, which was the reauthorization of IDEA, built on the bipartisan education reforms in the No Child Left Behind Act, and includes important reforms that are expected to help teachers, parents, and schools ensure that every student with a disability receives a quality education.

Individual Education Program (IEP): A required document for all students receiving special education services. As part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the IEP is a planning tool that is commonly built around four major areas that reflect the need for instruction and service delivery. Each student's IEP must be based on the least restrictive environment (LRE), and these decisions must be made on an individual student basis.

[see Federal Statute Title I, Part B, Section 614(d)(1)(A) for additional language regarding IEP: <http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/%2Croot%2Cstatute%2C1%2CB%2C614%2C>]

Standards-Based IEP: A process and a document that is framed by the state standards and that contains goals aligned with, and chosen to facilitate the student's achievement of, state grade-level academic achievement standards.

Monitoring of Accommodations: A process used to ensure that a student received the most appropriate instructional and assessment accommodations, and that the accommodations listed on the student's IEP or 504 plan were provided and used for testing. Monitoring activities include: training for decision-making teams, identifying which accommodation(s) a decision-making team chooses, tracking the accommodations students actually use for instruction and for assessment, and paying attention to the effectiveness of an accommodation.

Monitoring Systems: The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) requires states to have an established way for oversight of the progress of students with disabilities. [see OSEP's Topic Brief on *Monitoring, Technical Assistance, and Enforcement* for details:

<http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/%2Croot%2Cdynamic%2CTopicalBrief%2C24%2C>]

Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process (CIMP): A system of statewide monitoring used by many states to track their progress on attending to Part B and Part C indicators in their State Performance Plans and Annual Performance Reports and other requirements, including assessment participation and performance for students with disabilities. This model was originally developed by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and is based on accountability mechanisms, robust data systems providing timely data, state and district self-assessment, stakeholder partnerships, providing technical assistance to districts as needed, and a public and transparent process.

[For one of the original references to this system, see the Executive Summary of the *Twenty-Second Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (2000):

<http://www.ed.gov/about/reports/annual/osep/2000/execsumm.html>]

Focused Monitoring: A strategy of oversight that is directed toward tracking progress on a specific concern regarding previous low performance, such as on one Part B or Part C Indicator on the State Performance Plans and Annual Performance Reports, or a group of related indicators or areas. OSEP engages in focused monitoring of states when there are concerns about compliance with federal regulations. States now often include focused monitoring as a component of their monitoring systems, as in “Continuous Improvement and Focused Monitoring System” (CIFMS).

[See a document from OSEP issued in August 2008 which presents groupings of monitoring priorities for focused monitoring purposes:

www.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/bapr/2008/5relstedrequirements081308.pdf]

No Child Left Behind (NCLB): The most recent reauthorization of the ESEA, in 2001. Its assessment provisions require that all students be tested every year in reading and math at grades three through eight and in one high school grade. Science assessments are required by school year 2007-2008.

Norm Referenced Test (NRT): An assessment designed to compare student, school, district, and state performance to that of a norm group, typically a national sample representing a wide and diverse cross-section of students. The purpose of an NRT is to provide information on how well a student performs in comparison to other students.

On Site Audits: Reviews of assessment and accommodations records conducted in the school. Audits may be conducted during and outside of the testing window. This type of audit is used by both the smallest and largest states, and states with local control.

Performance Assessment [see Assessment]

Portfolio Assessment [see Assessment]

Reliability: The degree to which test scores obtained by a group of individuals are consistent over repeated applications. The reliability coefficient indicates the degree to which scores are free of measurement error. The conditions that the coefficient estimates may involve variations in test forms (alternate form reliability), repeated administration of the same form to the same group after a time interval (test-retest reliability), or the statistical interrelationship of responses on separate parts of the test (internal consistency).

Self-Assessment [see Monitoring Systems]

Standards-Based Assessments: Assessments that are closely aligned with and measure student achievement of academic content standards and grade-level expectations.

Standards-Based Achievement Tests: Tests that measure the degree to which students are achieving the content standards and performance standards.

Standards-Based IEP [see Individual Education Program]

Validity: Validity is the extent to which a test actually measures what it is intended to measure. Validity includes the degree to which accumulated evidence and theory support specific interpretations of test scores proposed by users of a test.

Construct Validity: Construct validity indicates the extent to which the content of a test samples the subject matter or situation about which conclusions are to be drawn; also described as "evidence based on test content." Methods used in determining construct validity are test book analysis, description of the universe of items, adequacy of the sample, representativeness of the test content, intercorrelations of subtest scores, and opinions of a jury of experts.

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