



NATIONAL ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT CENTER NEWSLETTER

Volume 1

September, 2005

Introducing the National Alternate Assessment Center

The National Alternate Assessment Center (NAAC) is a five year project funded under the [United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs \(OSEP\)](#). By the end of this project, NAAC will:

1. gather a multi-disciplinary team of experts in measurement and special education to advance theory and practice in the designs of alternate assessments.
2. articulate a theory of learning for students who take alternate assessments that includes academic content.
3. provide techniques and strategies for linking alternate assessments with grade-level content expectations and curriculum.
4. identify and describe the best practices for development, design, and administration of all types of alternate assessments.

5. consider the implications of the theory of universal design as it applies to alternate assessments.
6. bridge the gap between what we know about alternate assessments and effective measurement practices.
7. apply these new guidelines, techniques and strategies in real-life contexts with our state partners.
8. provide guidance to states as they design or re-design their alternate assessments in terms of technical quality.

Upcoming Activities:

- **February 2-3** - Technical Panel Meeting in Baltimore (tentative)
- **Spring 2006**- Advisory Board Meeting in Baltimore (tentative)



NAAC's Partnering Organizations

NAAC functions in collaboration with four specific organizations and eleven state partners.

- The National Center on Educational Outcomes provides national leadership in the participation of students with disabilities in national and state assessments, standards-setting efforts, and graduation requirements.
- University of North Carolina at Charlotte houses several projects currently underway to examine the impact of alternate assessments as well as access to the general curriculum for students with disabilities.
- CAST is a center that develops innovative technology-based educational resources and strategies based on the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL).
- University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is where the Bureau of Investigation houses our evaluation team for the NAAC project.
- CO, IA, KS, KY, MA, MD, MI, NC, NH, NM, and SC are partnering states.
- NAAC also functions in collaboration with the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education on the New Hampshire Enhanced Assessment Initiative (NHEAI). The research teams within these two projects are collaborating to develop a user's guide for developing technical reports to offer states direction on how to document the technical adequacy of alternate assessments.

The National Alternate Assessment Center is supported through a cooperative agreement through the US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. However, the contents of this newsletter do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the Office of Special Education or the US Department of Education, and readers should not assume endorsement by the federal government.





Human Development Institute
University of Kentucky
1 Quality St., Suite 722
Lexington, Kentucky 40507

Phone: 859-257-7672
Fax: 859-323-1838
www.naacpartners.org

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT:
WWW.NAACPARTNERS.ORG

Designing from the Ground Floor

Alternate Assessment on Alternate Achievement Standards

Access and Alignment to Grade-level Content

NAAC Presents at CCSSO Pre-Session

On June 17-18, 2005 at the Chief Council for State School Officers' Large-Scale Assessment Conference (CCSSO) in San Antonio, TX, NAAC presented the train-the-trainers pre-session: "Designing from the Ground Floor." One hundred twenty-five state directors of alternate assessment, program managers, SEA assessment staff, special education administrators, consultants, and higher education faculty from 35 states and 2 unique states participated in learning about and refining alternate assessment systems on alternate achievement standards. The focus was upon accessing and aligning these assessments to grade level content standards. Presentations and activities were delivered and facilitated by nationally recognized leaders in alternate assessments who were assisted by state leaders in alternate assessment systems and academic content areas.

Topics addressing terminology, theory, research, and practice included the following topic areas:

- Who Are the Students?
- Theory of Learning
- Four Steps to Access
- Is It Reading? Is It Math?
- Designing the Content Linking Document
- Measurement Perspectives for Alignment

The most current train-the-trainer module can be accessed by visiting the NAAC website. Power Point presentations, annotated bibliographies for each section, student work videos, and additional materials can be downloaded for free at www.naacpartners.org. As we discover new content pertinent to each section of the module, revisions are made and the website updated with the most current version of the train-the-trainer module.

Important Update:

The NCLB Non-Regulatory Guidance on Alternate Achievement Standards for Students with the most Significant Cognitive Disabilities was recently released. For further information, please go to:
<http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/altguidance.pdf>