



**Volume 1**

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## **What is Meant by Link to Content Standards?**

Alternate assessments must be linked to state academic content standards. Defining what is meant by “linked” is the crux of alignment of alternate assessments to grade-level academic content standards. For alternate assessments to be linked to grade-level standards the target for achievement must be academic content that is referenced to the student's assigned grade based on chronological age. While functional activities and materials may be used to promote understanding, the target skill is academically-focused. Some intentional prioritization of the academic content may occur, but efforts should be made to permit access to all the

content strands to which students in the general curriculum have access to, while maintaining the integrity and fidelity of the academic content. While alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards may focus on prerequisite skills or some partial attainment of general education achievement standards, students should still have the opportunity to meet high expectations, to demonstrate both a range and depth of knowledge, to achieve regardless of receptive and expressive communication levels, and have an opportunity to demonstrate longitudinal, academic growth across grade levels, or grade bands.

### **Upcoming Activities:**

- **NAAC Advisory Board Meeting: March 14, 2007 in Alexandria, Virginia**
- **NAAC Expert Panel Meeting: March 15-16, 2007 in Alexandria, Virginia**

## **Inclusive Assessment Seminars Revisited**

The National Alternate Assessment Center (NAAC) and the New Hampshire Enhanced Assessment Initiative (NHEAI) in conjunction with the Inclusive Assessment and Accountability Community of Practice hosted bi-coastal seminars in October of 2006. These Inclusive Assessment Seminars were designed to help states better understand alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards (AA-AAS). The purpose of these seminars was three-fold: 1) assist states in recognizing what aspect of their system should remain flexible and what might be more standardized, 2) provide participants with a framework for helping states conceptualize the evaluation of technical quality, and 3) provide specific tools for documenting technical quality of AA-AAS.

These one and a half day seminars blended presentations from researchers, technical assistance providers, and state practitioners with time for state teams to interact and collaborate to examine their own state situations. Across the two locations, 31 states and two unique entities sent cross-sectional teams consisting of assessment and special education representatives along with contractors for the AA-AAS for these states. Overall, participants noted that the six poster sessions which provided them an overview of the key issues related to documenting technical adequacy were helpful and that the time for their state teams to work directly with experts was invaluable. The Community of Practice is currently investigating the most effective way to make the seminar information available to the field.

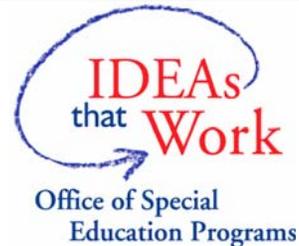


# NATIONAL ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT CENTER NEWSLETTER

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## New Study of Alternate Assessments

The National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA) is funded by the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER) in the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) of the U.S. Department of Education. The congressionally mandated NSAA is required by Section 664(c) of the 2004 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). SRI International, a research organization located in Menlo Park, California, is conducting this study, in close partnership with Policy Studies Associates of Washington, DC, and with the National Center on Educational Outcomes at the University of Minnesota in an advising role.

To address one of its major research questions—"What is the current status of alternate assessment development, policy, and practice in the states?" - SRI is currently developing state and national profiles through document analysis and state telephone interviews. In an effort not to overburden states with study activities, SRI has completed the

document analyses for each state by compiling state alternate assessment data submitted for the peer review and by conducting searches of state websites.

The NSAA is moving into a new phase of data collection, which will require SRI and its associates to contact state officials familiar with the alternate assessment system. The NSAA will be contacting directors of accountability and assessment in each state and the District of Columbia during the winter and spring of 2007 to determine the appropriate people to assist in gathering information on the state's alternate assessment.

For questions about the study or the data collection process, contact Dr. David Malouf at the National Center for Special Education Research in the U.S. Department of Education or Renee Cameto at SRI International.

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### Important Update:

**Please note the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) will be hosting a teleconference in the Spring of 2007 focusing on what strong linkage to grade-level academic science content looks like for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Details will be distributed soon, but currently the date for the teleconference is set for March 12, 2007. Please stay tuned for more details!**