



NATIONAL ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT CENTER

Step 2: Why is This Happening?



The National Alternate Assessment Center is supported through a cooperative agreement through the US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (Grant Number H324U04001). However, the contents of this presentation do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the Office of Special Education or the US Department of Education, and participants should not assume endorsement by the federal government.

Why is this happening?

- To begin to understand alternate assessments, we first have to understand where they originated and what their purpose is.

Purposes of assessment requirements of IDEA and NCLB

- Improved results for students with disabilities through improved teaching and learning
- Raise expectations for students with disabilities
- Increase access to the general curriculum
- Provide parents information about their child's achievement in relation to the performance of other children in their school
- Evaluate schools and programs
- Accountability for student learning

March 31, 2006

Assessing Students with the Most Significant
Cognitive Disabilities

IDEA 1997

■ IDEA 1997

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- Mandated ALL students be included in large-scale assessment systems
- How these students show progress in the general curriculum
- Must be implemented by July 1, 2000.

NCLB 2001

- **NCLB 2001**
 - **No Child Left Behind Act of 2001**
 - **Alternate assessments must:**
 - **be aligned with the State's content standards,**
 - **yield results separately in reading/language arts and math, and**
 - **designed and implemented to support use of the results to determine AYP.**

NCLB 2001

- **Alternate assessments should have:**
 - **Clearly defined structure**
 - **Guidelines for which students may participate**
 - **Clearly defined scoring criteria and procedures**
 - **Report format that clearly communicates student performance in terms of the academic achievement standards defined by the State**

NCLB 2001

- **1% Cap Rule:**
 - **Limits the use of alternate achievement standards to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.**
 - **Provides an incentive for schools to provide maximum learning opportunities for each student.**
 - **Protects meaningful interpretation and use of State assessment results for determining AYP and ensures accountability for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.**

NCLB 2001

- Applies to the number of proficient and advanced scores that may be included in AYP determinations
- Does not limit the number of students taking an assessment against alternate achievement standards
- Applies at the State and district levels

NCLB 2001

- NCLB says districts should:
 - Provide training to support sound IEP team decisions about which students should participate in an alternate assessment.
 - IEP Team decisions should always be on a case-by-case basis and support access to the most challenging curriculum possible for the individual student.
 - Monitor local implementation of assessments based on alternate achievement standards to ensure that alternate achievement standards are being used consistent with the best instructional practices known for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

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NCLB 2001

- **Additional requirements from NCLB:**
 - **Document that students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are, to the extent possible, included in the general curriculum and in assessments aligned with that curriculum**
 - **Promote use of appropriate accommodations to increase the number of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who are tested against grade-level academic achievement standards**

NCLB 2001

- **Ensure that regular and special education teachers and other appropriate staff know how to administer assessments, including making appropriate use of accommodations, for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.**
- **States required to report separately on the number and percentage of students taking an alternate assessment based on grade-level achievement standards or on alternate achievement standards.**

IDEA 2004

■ IDEA 2004

- Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- All states were required to have alternate assessments implemented by 2000, so that language has dropped out of the new reauthorization.
- Emphasizes raising expectations for students with disabilities through challenging academic standards
- Mandates that if states choose to develop alternate assessments judged against alternate achievement standards, then they must align [or be linked] to academic content standards at grade-level

IDEA 2004

- IEP's must include a statement of any individual appropriate accommodations that are necessary to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the child on State and district-wide assessments.
 - If the IEP team decides the child shall take an alternate assessment, the IEP must document why:
 - The student cannot participate in the regular assessment
 - The particular alternate assessment selected for the child is appropriate.

References

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 (IDEA), PL 105-17, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 *et seq.*
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA), PL 108-446, Part B. (2004).
- No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. No.107-110, 115 Stat.1425 (2001).



Checkpoint

- Does anyone have any questions at this time?