



Measuring Achievement: What Families Need to Know about Modified Academic Achievement Standards

The U.S. Department of Education has released final regulations under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) providing additional flexibility to states to more appropriately measure the achievement of certain students with disabilities. These regulations allow states to develop modified academic achievement standards that are challenging for eligible students and measure a student's mastery of grade-level content, but are less difficult than grade-level achievement standards. The new regulations are part of an ongoing effort to ensure that all students, including those with disabilities, fully participate in a state's accountability system and are assessed in an appropriate and accurate manner.

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. Currently, 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.

For this group of students, states may develop alternate assessments based on modified academic achievement standards. States may count the proficient and advanced scores on those assessments when measuring adequate yearly progress (AYP) under NCLB, as long as the number of those scores does not exceed **2.0%** of all students assessed.

A student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team, which includes the student's parents, will determine whether the student will be assessed based on modified academic achievement standards.

States must develop guidelines for IEP Teams to ensure that they appropriately identify students to be assessed based on modified academic achievement standards.

The regulations include several safeguards to ensure that students are not inappropriately assessed based on modified academic achievement standards, including not choosing such an assessment solely because of a particular disability; considering the student's performance on multiple items of objective evidence over time; and evaluating annually whether it is appropriate to continue using such assessments.

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IEP goals that are based on grade-level content standards must be included in the IEPs of students who are assessed based on modified academic achievement standards. This will help ensure that these students receive instruction in grade-level content so that they can make progress toward meeting grade-level achievement. IEP goals that are based on grade-level content standards focus the teacher, student, and parents on grade-level content and on providing the education supports and services that a student needs to reach those standards.

With the addition of the final regulations on modified academic achievement standards under NCLB, students with disabilities may be assessed in the following ways (unless otherwise noted, the proficient and advanced scores for all students being appropriately assessed may be counted towards AYP):

- * General state assessment
- * General state assessment with appropriate accommodations
- * Alternate assessment based on grade-level academic achievement standards
- * Alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards (up to 2% of all proficient and advanced scores may count toward AYP)
- * Alternate assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards (up to 1% of all proficient and advanced scores may count toward AYP).

As part of a new Special Education Partnership to help states implement the new regulations, the U.S. Department of Education is providing funding to develop

assessments. \$21.1-million is available to help states develop assessments based on modified academic achievement standards. Competitive funds will be available as follows:

- * \$7.6-million under the Title I Enhanced Assessment Grants program that states can use to develop these new assessments.

- * \$13.5-million under the IDEA General Supervision Enhancement Grants program. A notice of proposed priority has been published in the Federal Register for public comment at www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/proprule/2007-1/033007d.html.

States also may use funds from Title I, Title VI, State Assessment Grants, and the IDEA to develop these new assessments.

The Special Education Partnership is also providing technical assistance to states. Non-regulatory guidance has been released simultaneously with the new regulations to provide further details and information and is accessible on the department's web site. The Department will host a meeting with interested states in Washington D.C. in July to discuss the development of alternate assessments based on modified academic achievement standards. Monthly teleconferences will provide ongoing assistance to states that wish to implement this regulation. Title I staff will also be available to provide ongoing technical assistance and guidance.

The Department also recognizes the need to provide this information to parents of students with disabilities. The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) is undertaking outreach efforts with parent groups to ensure that information about this new flexibility is communicated to parents. For more information, visit www.ed.gov, or call 1-800-USA-LEARN.

You Are Your Child's Best Advocate

Parents want to know: 'Does advocating for my child with a disability make a difference?'

At some point, you may meet with your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team and you may encounter an issue on which you and the other team members disagree. Maybe it will concern the services your child is receiving, or perhaps it will be about the IEP goals. Whatever the issue, it presents an opportunity for you to play a role that only you can: your child's advocate.

While it might be tempting to avoid the conflict, "advocating for your child with a disability is the most important job you'll ever have," says Carolyn Anderson, a parent advocate at PACER. "What you do is very important and can have lifelong implications. You are the permanent member of the IEP team, once your child grows up, the people from school will be gone," she continues. "You will be left with the results, so it's important to make sure they are the ones you and your child want."

"It is always appropriate to advocate for your child as best you can, even if you make mistakes," Anderson adds. "Just learn and do better next time. There are many ways to increase your skills such as workshops about special education law, leadership and advocacy."

"It's helpful to realize that your viewpoint is bound to be different from that of educators. Parents are free to focus on their child," Anderson says. "Schools are government agencies and they have different constraints than parents do. Even the best staff people are not free to be as focused on the child as the parent is."

It's also useful to know that schools are not required to offer the "best," only what's appropriate for the child. "When parents

understand this, they are more likely to be successful advocates," Anderson says. "If you ask for 'what's best for my child,' you set yourself up for a dynamic of opposition. If you instead ask for what's appropriate for your child, you're working within the process, using their language, and avoiding the adversarial dimension."

Communication skills go hand in hand with advocacy. Interested in being a more effective advocate with your IEP team? These communication tips could help:

- Be self-aware. Do you have preconceived ideas? Are you aware of your own and others' perspectives and perceptions? Do you judge others?
- Recognize your communication attitude. Are you passive, aggressive, angry, receptive, friendly, assertive? People respond to your attitude as much as to what you say.
- Listen more than you speak. Communication is a two-way process. Other people may have valuable information and insights that you need to hear.
- Ask questions. Direct your questions to the person most likely to have the information or expertise you need.
- Be clear and honest. Don't blame. Focus on solutions instead. Limit criticism. Give positive feedback and praise as often as possible. Focus on specifics, not generalities.

(Reprinted from PACESETTER, Summer 2006)

Autism Conference Slated

The Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence, the Ohio School for the Deaf, the Ohio State School for the Blind, and the Ohio Center for Deaf-Blind Education will co-sponsor the 2007 Collaborative Conference on Autism and Low Incidence Disabilities. This unique conference will focus on students who are autistic and blind, autistic and deaf, autistic and deaf-blind, or students with other multiple disabilities.

The Collaborative Conference will be held July 30 – August 1, 2007, at the Crown Plaza Hotel (formerly the Marriott Columbus North), 6500 Doubletree Avenue in Columbus, Ohio.

Featured topics include overviews of the disabilities, assessments, interventions, methods and best practices, and the Ziggurat Model – a process model for team problem solving and interventions. National presenters include Teresa Pawletko, Jay and Marilyn Gense, Ruth Aspy and Barry Grossman and Karen Ewing.

The conference will appeal to parents and family members, professionals, teachers and school teams. The cost of the three day conference is \$175.00. For more information and to register, go to the website: <http://www.ocali.org/collaborative/>

'Response to Intervention' Resource Available

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004) made important amendments to the federal special education law regarding the identification of students with learning disabilities.

Response to Intervention: Policy Considerations and Implementation is an essential resource that provides policy and implementation options for Response to Intervention (RtI). The book grounds RtI in law and policy predating IDEA 2004 in addition to walking the reader through the array of implementation issues. Topics covered in the book include:

- * Defining 'Response to Intervention' (RtI)
- * RtI Foundations in Research and Policy
- * Support for RtI in federal Law
- * Core Principles of RtI
- * Essential Components of RtI
- * Special Education Eligibility Determination in RtI
- * RtI Policy Considerations
- * RtI Professional Development

Copies of the book can be ordered from the National Association of State Directors of Special Education on line at www.nasde.org, or call 703-519-3800 for more information. The cost per copy is \$15.00, with quantity discounts being offered for over 50 copies.

Report Addresses Latinos' Barriers to Employment

A report conducted by Proyecto Visión titled "Latinos with Disabilities in the United States: Understanding and Addressing Barriers to Employment" examines the unique obstacles that Latinos with disabilities encounter in employment and offers suggestions to overcome these barriers. Specifically, the report suggests improving vocational rehabilitation programs, reconsidering the disability

community's approach to Latinos, integrating individuals with disabilities into the Latino community, and increasing the overall visibility level of Latino leaders with disabilities. The full report can be found at <http://www.proyectovision.net/report.html>

(Reprinted from the 1-23-07 issue of REFERENCE POINTS, an activity of TATRA, a project of PACER Center)

Post Secondary Options for Students with Disabilities

Several new resources are available providing information about Post Secondary options for students with disabilities.

SELF-ADVOCACY FOR STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

As students decide which college they will attend, consider reviewing the newly-published book *Self-Advocacy for Students with Learning Disabilities: Making it Happen in College and Beyond*, by Henry Reiff, dean of Student Academic Life at McDaniel College. This book gives concrete advice to students, parents and counselors about how to select and gain acceptance to college, and how to succeed once the student is enrolled. The book can be ordered from www.nprinc.com/spec_edu/mihi.htm

CIVIL RIGHTS OF STUDENTS WITH HIDDEN DISABILITIES UNDER SECTION 504 OF THE REHAB ACT OF 1973

The U.S. Department of Education has a pamphlet examining the civil rights of students with hidden disabilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The pamphlet examines issues such as disabilities covered under Section 504, the responsibilities of Department of Education recipients in preschool, elementary, secondary and adult education, and how the needs of students with disabilities can be addressed. The pamphlet can be read at www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/hq5269.html

COLLEGE PREPARATION

Researchers at the UCLA have written a paper on Multiple Pathways, a program that would allow both high school students on vocational tracks and those on academic tracks to receive equally intensive and high-quality academic career preparation. Research shows that students on a

vocational track are more successful in getting and retaining higher-paying employment when they have a training background that is strong academically as well as career-oriented.

www.idea.gseis.ucla.edu/publications/mp/reports/pdfs/mp02_OakesandSaunders.pdf

PREPARING FOR COLLEGE: AN ONLINE TUTORIAL

This web page from the DO-IT (Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology) program at the University of Washington shares Internet resources for college-bound teens with disabilities, including tools for preparing for college, discovering their learning style, choosing a major, choosing a college or university, considering what accommodations they might need and how to get them, getting funding for postsecondary education, using technology while in college, and finding role models and mentors. www.washington.edu/doit/Brochures/Academics/cprep.html

DO-IT KNOWLEDGE BASE

The DO-IT project at the University of Washington has also created a comprehensive web-based "Knowledge Base" database containing over 300 articles. Users can find answers to questions about assistive technology, accessible information technology, college and career transition, universal design of instruction, student services, and other topics, as well as case studies and promising practices. The Knowledge Base can be found at www.washington.edu/doit/kb.html

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**EMPOWERING STUDENTS WITH
DISABILITIES AS THEY TRANSITION TO
COLLEGE AND CAREERS**

This special issue of the Journal of Special Education Technology (JSET) is devoted to papers presented at the "Technology Capacity Building Institute: Empowering Students with Disabilities as They Transition to College and Careers", which was held in Seattle in April 2003. To access these papers go to www.ncset.hawaii.edu/institutes/default.htm and scroll down to "April 2003".

**EARLY ESTIMATES OF COLLEGE GRANT
MONEY FROM THE DEPT. OF ED.**

Secretary Spellings recently announced a new tool to help families plan for college. *The FAFSA4caster* gives high school juniors a leg up on financial aid planning. More information can be found at The Education Department's recently announced web site that will give students an early estimate of the college grant money they'll qualify for. For more information go to www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2007/03/03212007.html

**STEPS TO TAKE WHILE STILL AT
COLLEGE TOWARDS POST-COLLEGE
EMPLOYMENT**

This website includes suggestions for career exploration activities for college students with disabilities during their freshman, sophomore, junior and senior years. For more information go to www.csun.edu/cod/sdr/workability/steps.htm

(Reprinted from the 3-27-07 issue of REFERENCE POINTS, an activity of TATRA, a project of PACER Center)

ADA Online Course

A free on-line course on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) can be found at www.adabasics.org. *The ADA Basics Course*, developed by regional Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers, is designed to provide the **basic principles and core concepts of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990**. The 12-topic course may be accessed at any time using a computer or mobile device with an Internet connection. Each topic contains relative information and real-life examples to help increase your understanding of the ADA and includes:

- * Multiple-choice self-tests to "Apply Your Knowledge".
- * Relevant court cases and additional "Tell Me More" resources.
- * A Glossary of frequently-used terms and resources for further reference.

CEU and CRC credits are available.

Questions about the Americans with Disabilities Act? Contact the regional DBTAC serving your state (see below) or call the national toll-free ADA hotline at 1-800-949-4232 (v/tty) or visit DBTAC - ADA & IT Technical Assistance Centers at www.dbtac.vcu.edu/

ADA-OHIO, 700 Morse Road, Suite 101,
Columbus, OH 43214; 800-ADA-OHIO (800-232-6446); 800-ADA-ADA1 (800-232-2321)
TTY; www.ada-ohio.org

5th Annual Partnering for Progress: Improving Results for ALL Children Conference

hosted by the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities
in collaboration with the Ohio Department of Education, Office for Exceptional Children

Tuesday, October 16, 2007 FREE registration & lunch
Crown Plaza Hotel, Columbus (formerly Marriott North, 6500 Doubletree Avenue)

8:30-9:30 Registration and complimentary continental breakfast

9:30-11:45 Welcome and Keynote Address

_____ I WILL ATTEND THE KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Accountability Improves Results for Children with Disabilities Utilizing
Special Education Supports and Services

12:00-1:45 **_____ I WILL ATTEND THE WALTER-HORN PARTNERING FOR PROGRESS
AWARDS LUNCHEON** (Luncheon will include lunch, presentation of awards for
school district teams for their innovative strategies for working with students with
special needs, and an update from Greg Maloney, Director, Office for Exceptional
Children, Ohio Department of Education)

Dietary accommodations: _____

2:00-3:00 Sessions *Mark your choices in the order of preference (some sessions are continued)*

_____ Q & A for Parents with Greg Maloney

_____ District/State Rating (continued through next session)
Lawrence Dennis, Tom Lather, Ann Skaggs, Office for Exceptional Children, ODE

_____ Reading is Fundamental, Core Curriculum. How does this affect accountability
and children with disabilities? (continued through next session)
Angela Sangeorge, Director of the Office of Literacy, ODE

_____ Transition, Part C, School and Post School (continued through next session)
Teresa Grossi, Director Center on Community Living and Careers, Indiana
Institute on Disability and Community University Center for Excellence

_____ Measure Up, How Does Your School Measure Up? The Measure Up Tool
developed by the Center for Special Needs Population at Ohio State University
Don Washburn, former Superintendent and SERRC Director

(This is a 2 page form. Continued on next page.)

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3:15-4:15 Sessions

- _____ Q & A for Educators with Greg Maloney
- _____ District/State Rating (continued session)
- _____ Reading is Fundamental, Core Curriculum (continued session)
- _____ Transitions, Part C, School and Post School (continued session)
- _____ "Keeping Your Child with Disabilities Out of Juvenile Detention"
Elizabeth Gorman, Attorney, Dayton Legal Aide, and Margaret Burley,
Executive Director, Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities

*Four ways to register by **September 28, 2007***
at www.ocecd.org OR fax 937-842-2150 OR email ocecdcsh@earthlink.net OR
mail this form to OCECD, 165 West Center Street, Suite 302, Marion, OH 43302

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