



FOCUS on...

Issues in Special Education

GUIDANCE & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
From the Missouri Division of Special Education

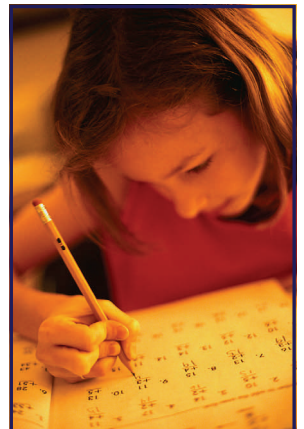
State & District-wide Assessments of School Achievement

PURPOSE OF THIS BULLETIN

This Technical Assistance Bulletin will provide IEP team members with the information they need to make decisions about each child's participation in these assessments.

What IEP Teams Need to Know...

Passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 has resulted in a greater focus on the accountability of educational services for students with disabilities. The Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP) uses the performance of all students on the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) subject area assessments and MAP-Alternates (MAP-A) in determining a district's performance level for district accreditation. The NCLB Act requires states to annually report on the performance of students with disabilities as measured by the MAP (which includes the MAP-A) as well as other sub-groups of students. The Division of Special Education has identified the improved performance of students with disabilities on the MAP as one of its performance goals as required by IDEA. This focus on educational achievement and outcomes for students with disabilities is intended to direct attention to the accommodations and supports needed by students with disabilities to access and progress in the general education curriculum. Participation in state and district-wide assessments goes hand in hand with access to the general education curriculum.



1. Why are students with disabilities required to participate in the Missouri Assessment program and district-wide assessments of student achievement?

Participation of students with disabilities in state and district-wide assessments of student achievement is required by a number of state and federal laws and regulations. But more importantly, it sets the expectation that students with disabilities can achieve the standards that have been established for all students. Participation in these assessments should lead to improved teaching and learning. Participation of students with disabilities also will allow local administrators and boards of education to consider the needs of all students when they make instructional decisions and set policy (i.e., curriculum adoptions, staffing patterns, and professional development). It is important to expect students with disabilities to meet the high standards that have been set for all students. This may involve using the accommodations and supports provided by special education. It is also important to remember that the majority of students with disabilities identified under IDEA do not have significant cognitive disabilities which would inhibit their ability to participate and progress in the general education curriculum.



2. In general what decisions does the IEP team have to make regarding a student's involvement in state and district-wide assessments of student achievement?

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) team must make decisions about how students with disabilities participate in assessment programs. These decisions include whether a student will participate in the subject area assessments of the regular MAP or the alternate assessments (MAP-A). When making the decision about participation in the MAP subject area assessments, the IEP team must also consider the student's need for accommodations. If they decide that the MAP subject area assessments are not appropriate for an individual student, even with the use of accommodations, then they can determine the student's eligibility for the MAP-A.

The IEP must address the same considerations for district-wide assessments of student achievement. If the IEP team determines that a child will not participate in a district-wide assessment (or a part of an assessment) even with accommodations, the IEP must state why the assessment is not appropriate and how the child will be assessed to measure the skill and/or knowledge being assessed by the district-wide assessment.

In making these decisions, the IEP team has the responsibility and authority to determine the individual accommodations that a student needs to ensure his or her participation in state and district-wide assessments of student achievement. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) or local school districts cannot limit the authority of an IEP team in the selection of accommodations.

If a specific accommodation is not on the list of accommodations in the Examiner's Manual, the accommodation can still be used. However, there are some accommodations that will invalidate a student's test results for accountability purposes. All assessment accommodation decisions made by the IEP team must be documented in the IEP. See questions 5 and 7 for further information on the documentation of accommodation decisions and accommodations that invalidate test results.

3. Do students with disabilities have to take all parts of the MAP?

Students with disabilities must take all of the MAP subject area assessments administered in their school district or the MAP-A assessments that are developed for their grade level. Students may not participate in some of the subject area assessments and the MAP-A. This policy is based on the Office of Special Education Programs' (OSEP) Memorandum #00-24, which is referenced at the end of this document.



The MAP-A has been developed to allow all students with disabilities to participate in the State Assessment Program. The MAP-A is designed for the student whose educational program is focused on Alternate Performance Indicators which are based upon Grade Level Expectations and the Show-Me Standards. The student's IEP team must agree that the student meets all five of the criteria outlined in the eligibility checklist for MAP-A. These criteria are listed in Table 1 on page 3. MAP-Alternate assessments in both Communication Arts and Math are required for eligible children in grades 3-8. In addition, the MAP-A Math assessment is required at grade 10 and the MAP-A Communication Arts assessment at grade 11. **Beginning in the Spring of 2008, MAP-A assessments will also be required for eligible students in Science at grades 5, 8, and 11.**



TABLE 1
Eligibility Criteria for MAP-A

The five criteria that a student with a disability must meet to be eligible for the MAP-A are:

1. The student has a demonstrated significant cognitive disability and adaptive behavioral skills. Therefore, the student has difficulty acquiring new skills, and skills must be taught in very small steps.
2. The student does not keep pace with peers, even with the majority of students in special education, with respect to the total number of skills acquired.
3. The student's educational program centers on the application of essential skills to the Missouri Show-Me Standards.

MAP-A Participation Eligibility Criteria Supplement

The statements below provide additional information for criterion number three: "The student's educational program centers on the application of essential skills to the Missouri Show-Me Standards." These statements may assist IEP teams in identifying students whose instructional focus is on the application of essential skills to the Missouri Show-Me Standards.

1. The student's reading ability is limited and, as such, the student acquires information primarily through other methods.
 2. The student's ability to demonstrate knowledge by writing or speaking is limited; thus, the student must often use other methods to express ideas and share information.
 3. The student requires significant supports to access the general education curriculum while demonstrating modest progress in that curriculum.
 4. The student typically has difficulty solving problems or using newly acquired skills in differing situations.
 5. The student's educational priorities primarily address essential skills that will be used in adult daily living.
 6. The student's post-secondary outcomes will likely require supported or assisted living.
 7. The student requires instruction in small groups or on a one-to-one basis, with frequent prompts and guidance from adults.
4. The IEP team, as documented in the IEP, does not recommend participation in the MAP subject area assessments or taking the MAP with accommodations.
 5. The student's inability to participate in the MAP subject area assessments is not primarily the result of excessive absences; visual or auditory disabilities; or social, cultural, language, or economic differences.

4. What assessments must be considered at the district level?

District-wide assessments include those assessments that are part of the district assessment program used to determine levels of student achievement. Districts should provide IEP teams with a list of the district-wide assessments administered in their districts and the grades at which they are administered so the IEP team can make participation decisions. If an IEP team determines that a particular district-wide assessment (or a part of the assessment) is not appropriate for an individual student, the IEP team must document in the IEP why the assessment is not appropriate and how the student will be assessed.

When determining alternative assessment methods for district-wide assessment, the IEP team must ensure that the alternate method of assessment will be consistent with that purpose. In other words, if the purpose of the district-wide assessment is to assess reading ability, the alternative method must also result in an assessment of the student's reading ability. The MAP-A is not an alternate to a district-wide assessment of student achievement. Please note that effective the 2007-2008 school year there will be no voluntary Social Studies MAP assessment available for district use.



5. What do IEP teams need to know in order to make effective decisions about a student’s participation and accommodations?

It is important that IEP teams know how the MAP subject assessments have been constructed and what skills students will need to take the test. MAP assessment items consist of a combination of multiple choice, constructed response, and performance event questions. Multiple choice questions require students to “bubble in” their answers. The constructed response and performance event items require written responses. Being familiar with the nature of the assessment items on the MAP and district-wide assessments will assist teams in making decisions about accommodations. DESE has a number of “released” assessment questions that IEP teams can review to assist them in making these decisions. More information can also be found at the following DESE web site: <http://dese.mo.gov/divimprove/curriculum/releaseditems/index.htm>.

Each IEP team must determine what accommodations, if any, the student needs in order to participate in the state or district-wide assessments. The purpose of an accommodation is to “level the playing field” so that a student with a disability can demonstrate what he knows and is able to do, not to provide the student with an advantage.

Typically, the accommodations needed by students with disabilities in a testing environment are also used by students in their instructional program. The accommodation can not be used solely on the MAP test, but must be needed in order for the student to learn in his/her school environment or to show what he/she has learned. For example, the test can be scribed for a student who requires scribing in the everyday school environment to show the content he/she has learned. However, scribing is not an appropriate accommodation for spelling or for poor handwriting, as students without disabilities also have poor handwriting and make spelling errors. The scoring procedures do not penalize students for spelling errors or poor handwriting. A second example would be reading the mathematics portion of the test to a student. It would be appropriate to consider reading the mathematics assessment to a student, depending on his/her individual reading difficulties, but it would not be fitting to read the mathematics assessment to a student who is capable of reading the material, but may be inattentive. IEP teams need to be sensitive to the use of accommodations and involve students, especially older students, in making accommodation decisions. Districts need to make every attempt to administer accommodations in a sensitive and discreet manner.

Accommodations determined necessary by the IEP team must be documented in the IEP. DESE has identified a list of common accommodations that might be needed by students with disabilities. Table 2 (see page 5) lists accommodations currently allowed on the MAP. IEP teams are encouraged to review and understand the accommodations and notes in Table 2, as many changes have been made to the accommodations list. If an IEP team determines the need for an accommodation that is not on this list, the accommodation must be identified in the IEP and coded as “other.” Any accommodation used should allow students to demonstrate what they know and can do.



6. What scores are generated by the MAP subject assessments and what impact does the use of accommodations have on these scores?

The MAP subject area assessments generate several scores. Two are especially important to IEP team decision-making:

1. Achievement Level score
2. National Percentile score

There are 4 achievement levels for the MAP and the MAP-A :

1. Below Basic
2. Basic
3. Proficient
4. Advanced

The achievement level score for students who take the MAP-A are integrated into the building and district MAP scores for all students to determine Adequate Yearly Process.

The MAP subject area assessments also generate a score that is referred to as a National Percentile (NP). This score is based solely upon the student’s performance on the Terra Nova Survey. **This NP score can be used to compare an individual student’s performance with other students in the nation. However, in order to make such a comparison, the student must take this portion of the assessment under the conditions in which the Terra Nova Survey was normed.** For example, this portion of the assessment is timed. In order for a student to generate an NP that can be compared with other students, extended time cannot be used as an accommodation. However, if the IEP team determines that extended time is a needed accommodation for this portion of the test, then that extended time is permitted. **The IEP team members need to understand that the NP generated under these conditions cannot be interpreted as or compared with an NP generated under standard conditions.**

The district has the same obligation to identify those accommodations that will impact a student’s score or results on district-wide assessments. IEP teams need to understand the implications of their decisions and how those decisions might impact individual students when considering accommodations for district-wide assessments.

7. What accommodations may invalidate a student’s response?

The following table lists several reasons why a MAP assessment will be invalidated. Some invalidation reasons apply specifically to Communication Arts. Other invalidation reasons affect all content areas.

Reasons for invalidating the test:

| If... | Then... |
|---|---|
| an Examiner reads any part of the Communication Arts test to a student... | bubble in “04 Oral Reading – invalidates CA”. This code applies to all sessions of the Communication Arts test. |
| an Examiner signs any part of the Communication Arts test to a student... | bubble in “05 Signing of assessment – invalidates CA”. This code applies to all sessions of the Communication Arts test. |
| an Examiner paraphrases the test questions in any content area... | bubble in “06 Paraphrasing – invalidates all tests”. This code applies to all content assessments. |
| an Examiner reads any part of the Communication Arts test to a student in the students native language... | bubble in “11 Oral reading in native language– invalidates CA”. This code applies to all sessions of the Communication Arts test. |
| a student uses a bilingual dictionary for any part of the Communication Arts test... | bubble in “43 Use of bilingual dictionary – invalidates CA”. This code applies to all sessions of the Communication Arts test. |



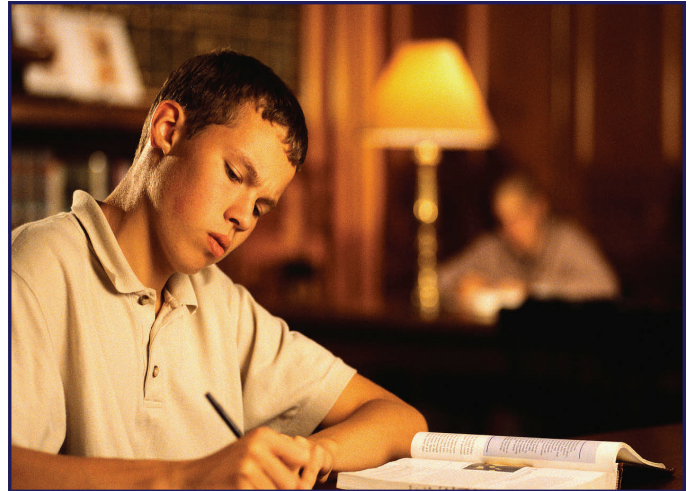
8. Can teachers preview the MAP test prior to testing?

Special education teachers may preview a MAP test to preselect items for an IEP student to attempt. This procedure must be an accommodation addressed in a student's IEP and the review must be done under the supervision of the building test coordinator. The use of preselection of items as a testing accommodation should be carefully considered by the IEP team members and is not appropriate for all special education students who take the MAP assessment. These test items are privileged information and are not to be shared with other teachers.

Other teachers are not to review the test prior to the first day of testing.

When preselecting items, the special education teacher must make sure that enough items are selected to constitute participation on the part of the student. If you select only the minimum number of items, the student could receive a level score of Below Basic due to the low number of items being considered. It is advisable to consider the individual student when selecting items and attempt to select enough items to get a higher level score if appropriate for the student.

2) When selecting items, do not automatically discard the constructed response items. Some students may perform better on constructed response items than on the multiple choice items on the test. Try to select a variety of response choice items.



9. Can parents request that their child not participate in the MAP or MAP-A? What about nonparticipation requests by parents for district-wide assessments?

All students enrolled in a public or charter school are expected to participate in the MAP. There is no procedure for a parent to request that their child not participate in the MAP. MAP includes both the subject area assessments and the alternate assessment.

If the district has a policy and procedure for parents to request that their children not participate in district-wide assessments, then that same procedure must be available to parents of children with disabilities. If no policy exists for parents to request nonparticipation for nondisabled students, then districts may not have a policy for students with disabilities.

10. Is out-of-grade-level testing allowed in the MAP?

No. In order to provide coherent information about school accountability, student achievement, and attainment of state standards at specific grade levels, students must be assessed in the grade level to which they are assigned.



| Accommodations List for Students with Disabilities | | | |
|---|--------------------|---|--|
| Code | Invalidates | Administration Accommodations | Description |
| 01 | | Braille edition of assessment | Braille editions of the assessment require special processing. Consult your Braille edition test materials for specific instructions. |
| 02 | | Large Print edition of assessment | Large Print editions of the assessment require special processing. Consult your Large Print test materials for specific instructions. |
| 04 | ✓ | Oral reading of assessment. See Note 1 (below). | The test examiner reads items verbatim to the student in an isolated setting so that other students will not benefit or be disturbed. |
| 04 | | Oral reading of assessment to Blind/Partial Sight students. See Note 1. | The test examiner reads items verbatim to the student who cannot read Braille in an isolated setting so that other students will not benefit or be disturbed. |
| 05 | | Signing | A certified sign language interpreter or deaf education instructor signs the Mathematics and/or Science test (directions and test items are allowed) and/or the directions only of the Communication Arts test to the student. |
| 06 | ✓ | Paraphrasing See Note 2. | The test examiner paraphrases questions to help student understanding in an isolated setting. Terms may be defined as long as they: 1) are not the actual concept or content being assessed, 2) would not give clues, or 3) would not disclose the answer. |
| 10 | | Other administration accommodations | |
| | | Use of assistive devices | An assistive device, which permits a student to read and/or respond to the assessment, is used. Examples of assistive devices include computers that assist students with fine-motor problems, text enlargers that enable students to independently read and answer test questions, or augmentative communication devices. |
| | | Use of visual aids: Specify | Visual aids include any type of optical or non-optical devices used to enhance visual capability. Examples of visual aids include bold-line felt-tip markers, lamps, filters, bold-lined paper, writing guides, or other adaptations that alter the visual environment by adjusting the space, illumination, color, contrast, or other physical features of the environment. |
| | | Timing Accommodations | Description |
| 20 | | Extend time allotted to complete TerraNova Survey. See Note 3. | Extended time to complete the TerraNova Survey is allowed for a student whose disability may cause him/her to be unable to meet time constraints. |
| 21 | | Administer assessment using more than allotted periods | Students with disabilities may need to complete the assessments over more than one test period as a result of fatigue and/or loss of concentration. Some students may require additional breaks. Dates for taking the MAP must occur within the MAP testing window. |
| 22 | | Other: Specify | Other timing accommodations |
| | | Response Accommodations | Description |
| 35 | | Use of scribe to record student response in test booklet | The student conveys verbally or signs responses to a scribe in an isolated, individual setting so that other students cannot benefit or be disturbed. The scribe cannot suggest ideas, words, or concepts. The scribe records the student's answers verbatim. The student should indicate capitalization and punctuation if language mechanics are being assessed. |
| | | Student taped response | The student speaks responses into a tape recorder in an isolated setting so that other students cannot benefit or be disturbed. The test examiner must be present at all times. |
| | | Signed response | The student uses sign language to convey responses. A certified sign language interpreter or deaf education instructor records responses. |
| | | Pointing to respond | The student points to correct responses and the administrator records responses in the MAP test booklet. |
| | | Oral response | The student provides oral responses to the test examiner. |

Accommodations List for Students with Disabilities, continued on next page



Accommodations List for Students with Disabilities, continued from Previous page

| Code | Invalidates | Response Accommodations. | Description |
|------|-------------|--|---|
| | | Use of a Braille | A student records responses using a Braille. Examples of a Braille include a Braillewriter, a slate and stylus, or an electronic Braille note taker. |
| | | Use of a communication device | The student uses a communication device to provide responses to the test examiner. |
| | | Use of a computer/word processor/typewriter to respond | The student uses a computer/word processor to write the responses. (Provide a non-networked computer to avoid inappropriate use of the computer to access answers.) The student uses a typewriter to write the responses. |
| 39 | | Use of a calculator/math table/ abacus | In sessions of the MAP where calculators are allowed, the accommodation code should not be marked. The use of a calculator represents an accommodation when it is used on a section of the assessment for which calculator use is not allowed. Students may use talking calculators, but only in an isolated setting. Students may use tables to assist in simple addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division facts using whole numbers. Students may use an abacus to perform mathematical computations by sliding beads along rods. |
| 44 | | Other: Specify. See Note 4. | Other response accommodations |
| | | Setting Accommodations | Description |
| 50 | | Testing individually | The location should be free of noises, conversation, and distractions from adjoining rooms. Individual testing is appropriate when, for example, responses are given orally or questions are paraphrased. |
| 51 | | Testing in small groups | The location should be free of noises, conversation, and distractions from adjoining rooms. Students may not interact with one another about questions or answers. The test examiner must be present at all times. Testing in small groups is not appropriate for students who give responses orally or require paraphrasing of questions. |
| 53 | | Other: Specify | Other setting accommodations |

NOTES:

Note 1 *Oral reading of the Communication Arts test results in the LOSS (Lowest Obtainable Scale Score). Students identified as blind/visually impaired (who do not read Braille) may use the oral reading accommodation if it is their primary instructional method.*

Note 2 *Paraphrasing test questions invalidates all MAP assessment student scores for accountability purposes.*

Note 3 *If used, the student score cannot be compared with scores generated under standard conditions.*

Note 4 *Use of magnifying equipment, amplification equipment, graph paper, and testing with the teacher facing the student are not listed as accommodations because these are no longer required to be reported as accommodations for the MAP tests.*





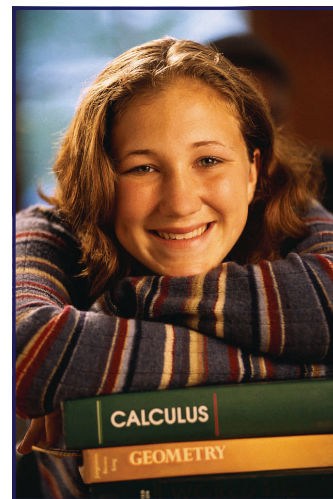
11. Are students who are receiving homebound services, enrolled in vocational schools or juvenile detention centers, or placed in approved private agencies or other out-of-district placements by local districts required to take the MAP district-wide assessments? What about home-schooled students?

All homebound students and students receiving services in other agencies must be included in the MAP testing. Depending on the student's situation, testing may have to occur off campus. If this occurs, test security measures should be cleared with the building test coordinator. If any of these students do not take the MAP, they should be recorded as absent and their achievement will be recorded as "Level Not Determined."

Home-schooled students fall into a different category. Honoring a parental request for a home-schooled student to be included in the MAP testing is a local district decision.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

OSEP Memorandum #00-24, Questions and Answers about Provisions in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 Related to Students with Disabilities and State and District-wide Assessments. [On-line]. Available: www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP.
<http://www.dssc.org/frc/AssessmentQ&A.pdf>



Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education
Division of Special Education

The development and printing of this material was supported entirely by federal funds appropriated in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This bulletin will be distributed periodically from the Division of Special Education, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, PO Box 480, Jefferson City, MO 65102; fax (573) 526-4404, phone (573) 751-0699. The Department of Elementary & Secondary Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs and activities. Inquiries related to Department programs may be directed to the Jefferson State Office Building, Title IX Coordinator, 5th Floor, 205 Jefferson Street, Jefferson City, Missouri 65102-048; Telephone number 573-751-4581.