



## ASSESSMENT

Under federal law, all students --- including students with disabilities --- are required to be included in statewide assessment and accountability systems. Assessment provisions within the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) were intended to focus increased levels of attention on whether students were proficient, as measured against state reading and math standards. Due to this focus, many students with learning disabilities (LD) have greatly benefited from the use of assessment data to target instruction and interventions for students and professional development for teachers. This has expanded opportunities for improved academic achievement for all students, including those with LD.

In order to ensure the maximum number of students with LD are participating in the general assessment, we offer the following policy recommendations:

**1. Include the broadest range of learners in the general assessment.**

- Ensure all students with LD participate in the general education curriculum and take the same general assessments as all other students, with accommodations as needed.
- Design assessments using the principles of universal design, which include the widest range of learners while maintaining validity of results.
- Improve and update test design to match current best practices.

**2. Ensure computer-based testing (CBT) provides expanded opportunities for all learners.**

- Require all CBT used for accountability purposes to be developed with all learners in mind, based on universal design principles, and embed test accommodations to the extent possible.
- Ensure that all CBT data is transparent and included in results for all students and student groups.
- Guarantee any CBT or computerized adaptive testing (CAT) used in growth models provides valid and reliable results for the student's enrolled grade and holds all students to the same performance standards.
- Restrict the use of any CAT---for school accountability purposes---to measuring the student's knowledge of grade-level content.



- 3. Include a comprehensive review of assessment accommodations to ensure students with LD can equally and fairly participate.**
  - Guarantee that accommodation policies are grounded in research and allow students to receive the maximum number of appropriate accommodations.
  - Ensure that any assessment accommodations deemed to be non-standard (those deemed unacceptable for the assessment) have been proven through research and field-testing to alter the target skill being assessed.
  
- 4. Do not permit the use of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) as an accountability tool.**
  - Clarify that a student's IEP is not designed or used as a tool for holding schools accountable for ensuring that students with disabilities are taught to the academic content and achievement standards established by the state for all students.
  - Underscore that it is important to aggregate performance data from the IEP goals to use as valid, reliable data in determining accountability at a school, district, or state level.

**NCLD Resources:**

The 2% Policy— An Overview of the Impact on Students with Learning Disabilities  
Computer-Based Testing and Students with Disabilities  
Assessment Options for IDEA-Eligible Students