

- IV. Assessing students with disabilities



- 4.4.6: What are some principles and characteristics of inclusive assessment and accountability systems?



Thurlow, Quenemoen, Thompson, & Lehr, 2001

- **Principle 1.**

- All students with disabilities are included in the assessment system.

- **Characteristic 1.1.**

- All students in all settings who receive educational services are included in the assessment system.

- **Characteristic 1.2.**

- Alternative ways to participate in assessment—other than the same way as other students, with accommodations, or in an alternate assessment—are allowed only to the extent that they are allowed for other students, and only after they have been carefully reviewed by stakeholders and policymakers, and their use and impact has been carefully studied.

- **Characteristic 1.3.**

- Exemptions or exclusions from assessment are allowed for students with disabilities only to the extent that they are allowed for other students.

- **Principle 2.**

- Decisions about how students with disabilities participate in the assessment system are the result of clearly articulated participation, accommodations, and alternate assessment decision-making processes.

- **Characteristic 2.1.**

- Decisions about how students participate in the assessment system are based on the student's ability to show what she or he knows and is able to do in the assessment formats available to all students – not on the student's instructional program, current level of functioning, or expectations about how well a student will perform.

- **Characteristic 2.2.**

- Accommodations are available to all students, and decisions about use are based on student need and use in instruction.

- **Characteristic 2.3.**

- The IEP team makes assessment participation, accommodation, and alternate assessment decisions on an individual student basis for each state and district assessment.

- **Characteristic 2.4.**

- The IEP team documents assessment participation, accommodation, and alternate assessment decisions and the rationale for them on the IEP, and reviews the decisions made for individual students and the rationale for these decisions at least annually.

- **Characteristic 2.5.**

- There are clear and efficient procedures for collecting, compiling, and transferring assessment decision information from each student's IEP to state and district assessment planners and administrators.

- **Principle 3.**

- All students with disabilities are included when student scores are publicly reported, in the same frequency and format as all other students, whether they participate with or without accommodations, or in an alternate assessment.

- **Characteristic 3.1.**

- All students in all placement settings who receive educational services are accounted for in the reporting system.

- **Characteristic 3.2.**

- The number and percentage of students not in the assessment system in any way (with or without accommodations, or via an alternate assessment) are reported and an explanation given for their nonparticipation.

- **Characteristic 3.3.**

- Scores that are not aggregated because of technical issues are still reported.

- **Characteristic 3.4.**

- Reports are provided to educators, parents, students, policymakers, and journalists, with a clear explanation of results and implications.

- **Principle 4.**

- The assessment performance of students with disabilities has the same impact on the final accountability index as the performance of other students, regardless of how the students participate in the assessment system (i.e., with or without accommodations, or in an alternate assessment).

- **Characteristic 4.1.**

- Performance data for all students regardless of how they participate, have the same impact as all other student performance data in accountability indices.

- **Characteristic 4.2.**

- There are incentives for including all students in the accountability system, such as including participation rates or increase in participation rates in the accountability index.

- **Characteristic 4.3.**

- There are phase-in and appeals processes for student accountability for students who have not had access to the general curriculum; but systems are held accountable immediately.

- **Principle 5.**

- There is improvement of both the assessment system and the accountability system over time, through the processes of formal monitoring, ongoing evaluation, and systematic training in the context of emerging research and best practice.

- **Characteristic 5.1.**

- All decisions about student participation, accommodations, and alternate assessment are collected, compiled, and reported, and the data are used to improve the quality of the assessment process at the school, district, and state levels.

- **Characteristic 5.2**

- The consequences of student assessment decisions are identified, compiled, and reported, and the data are reviewed by multiple stakeholders and are used to improve the quality of the accountability processes at the school, district, and state levels.

- **Characteristic 5.3.**

- Based on the results of the monitoring and evaluation of the assessment and accountability systems, training is provided to multiple audiences to increase the understanding of the purpose, options, procedures, and implications of assessment options, including consequences for promotion and graduation.

- **Characteristic 5.4.**

- Appropriate training for IEP teams and other key personnel is provided through collaboration of state, district, higher education (both preservice and inservice), and advocacy organizations.

- **Principle 6.**

- Every policy and practice reflects the belief that ***all students*** must be included in state and district assessment and accountability systems.

- **Characteristic 6.1.**

- There is broad support in the governor's office, at the state legislature and state agencies, and among professional groups for inclusion of all students in state school reform efforts linked to assessments and accountability, demonstrated by sufficient funding and resources (e.g., staff development) designed to ensure the capacity in every school for every student to succeed.

- **Characteristic 6.2.**

- All students are included in every aspect of assessment and accountability systems, including the assessments, the reporting of data, the determination of accountability measures, and the use of data for school improvement.

- **Characteristic 6.3.**

- All aspects of assessment and accountability systems are designed and reviewed collaboratively, with input from other stakeholders (e.g., parents, advocacy groups, related service providers, community members), as well as general education, special education, curriculum, assessment, and administrative personnel.

- Thurlow, Quenemoen, Thompson, & Lehr (2001)