
District-wide Assessment Guidance Policy

Administration and Reporting Requirements for Students with Disabilities



Special Education Programs
Updated July 2019

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide districts with information regarding South Dakota's policy guidance for districts to meet the district-wide assessment requirements.

This document has four parts:

1. Guidance from Every Student Succeeds Act for the testing and reporting transparency requirements and IDEA for participation in testing;
2. Guidance for school districts in implementing federal and state regulations regarding use of district-wide assessments for students with disabilities;
3. A self-assessment for school districts to determine what areas need improvement; and
4. A chart to document assessments administered to students as well as the corresponding alternate assessment for students who require an alternate assessment.

If you have any questions regarding district-wide assessment requirements, please contact Special Education office at 605-773-3678.

ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) – Testing and Reporting Transparency Requirements

Testing Transparency and Assessment Reporting Requirements (from [ESSA](#) – 1112 (e)(2)(A-B))

- A. At the beginning of each school year, districts will provide the parents on request (and in a timely manner), information regarding any State or local educational agency policy regarding student participation in any assessments mandated include a policy, procedure, or parental right to opt the child out of such assessment, where applicable.
- B. Districts will make available through public means (including by posting in a clear and easily accessible manner on the district's website and on the website of each school in the district) for each grade in the district, information on each assessment required by the State, and, assessments required by the district—
 - i. the subject matter assessed;
 - ii. the purpose for which the assessment is designed and used;
 - iii. the source of the requirement for the assessment; and
 - iv. where such information is available—
 - I. the amount of time students will spend taking the assessment, and the schedule for the assessment; and
 - II. the time and format for disseminating results.

At the present time, South Dakota codified law [13-3-55](#) requires all students participate in required assessments.

IDEA (Education of Individuals with Disabilities)

Sec. 1412 State Eligibility (a)(16)

(16) Participation in assessments

(A) All children with disabilities are included in all general State and districtwide assessment programs with appropriate accommodations and alternate assessments where necessary and as indicated in their individualized education programs.

(B) The State (and district for districtwide assessments) has developed guidelines for appropriate use of accommodations.

(C) Alternate assessments

(i) The State (and districts for districtwide assessment) has developed and implemented guidelines for the participation of children with disabilities in alternate assessments for children who cannot participate in regular assessments with accommodations as indicated in their individualized education programs.

(ii) Alternate assessments

(I) are aligned with the challenging State academic content standards and alternate academic achievement standards; and

(II) if the State has adopted alternate academic achievement standards measure the achievement of children with disabilities against those standards.

(iii) Provide the alternate assessments as described above

(D) The State (and district for districtwide assessments) reports to the public with the same frequency and same detail as it reports on the assessment of nondisabled children, the following:

(i) The number of children with disabilities participating in regular assessments, and the number of those children who were provided accommodations in order to participate in those assessments.

(ii) The number of children with disabilities participating in alternate assessments

(iv) The performance of children with disabilities on regular assessments and on alternate assessments (if the number of children with disabilities participating in those assessments is sufficient to yield statistically reliable information and reporting that information will not reveal personally identifiable information about an individual student), compared with the achievement of all children, including children with disabilities, on those assessments.

(E) The State educational agency (or, in the case of a districtwide assessment, the local educational agency) shall use universal design principles in developing and administering any assessments

South Dakota District-wide Assessment Guidance

What is a district-wide assessment?

A district-wide assessment is one that is administered to an entire grade(s) at a district level to measure the achievement of students. Screenings which are administered for making placement decisions are not considered district-wide assessments, unless results are publicly reported. District-wide assessments furnish rich, compelling evidence about the achievement of district goals. Districts may select large-scale assessments (some examples may include: Stanford 10, Iowa Test of Basic Skills, SBAC Interims, PSAT or NWEA MAPs) that align with district goals, reflect classroom practice and provide evidence of student learning. District-wide assessment data is often used to gain formative information on student progress, help districts determine areas for school improvement, provide feedback to teachers and parents, and report academic progress to the community. All students must participate in the district-wide assessment to gauge the effectiveness of the education system.

Districts which administer district-wide assessments must:

- Include all children with disabilities in all district-wide assessments;
- Determine allowable accommodations for district assessments and establish guidelines for the use of accommodations;
- Have available an appropriate alternate assessment for students whose IEPs indicate alternate assessment for state and district-wide assessment;
- To the extent feasible, use universal design principles in developing and administering any assessments; and
- If district-wide assessment results are reported publicly, districts must report results for students with disabilities (on both the district assessment and district alternate assessment) with the same frequency and detail as students who do not have disabilities.

Determining accommodations for district-wide assessment:

Accommodations on large-scale assessments are typically very codified and structured. Test publishers should have available information regarding accommodations that are allowed for administration.

Alternate assessment for district-wide assessments:

If a school district has a district-wide assessment, then that district must also have a district alternate assessment for those students who cannot participate in the regular assessment even with accommodations and whose IEP indicates participation in the alternate assessment. Students in South Dakota must meet the significant cognitive disability criteria and have alternate assessment indicated on the student's IEP to be eligible to participate in alternate assessments. If the student's IEP team determines an alternate assessment is necessary, the IEP must include a statement of why the child cannot participate in the regular assessment and why the particular alternate assessment selected is appropriate for the child. The student's IEP must

also have a description of benchmarks or short-term objectives. The alternate assessment must assess the same content areas as the regular district-wide assessment.

Options for alternate assessment could consist of a body of evidence or a performance-based assessment. These assessments should be used to measure student progress in the district's academic curriculum. If the district assessment covers several different content areas (reading, writing, math, science, etc.) then the district alternate assessment must also measure progress in those content areas and should be linked to grade level expectations.

Body of Evidence:

In terms of a district alternate assessment, a body of evidence is a collection of information about a student's progress in the general academic curriculum. A body of evidence incorporates data from multiple sources and assessment methods. Many sources of information for a body of evidence assessment are already administered, developed or gathered on an ongoing basis.

In general, the strength of the body of evidence assessment is that it allows a great deal of flexibility for teachers and students in finding evidence of academic skills and may allow for a more valid assessment of what a student knows and can do. However, the body of evidence approach may have more threats to reliability as it is difficult for the assessment to be administered and scored in the same way across several students.

Both the information collected and the scoring rubric for the body of evidence assessment should be closely aligned with the district's academic content standards. The body of evidence assessment should use a variety of clearly defined and acceptable materials to document student knowledge. It should be scored using a carefully designed rubric accompanied by extensive scoring training.

Performance Based Assessment:

A performance-based assessment is a point-in-time, direct measure of a student's knowledge and skills. This assessment typically measures how independently the student can perform an activity linked to an academic standard or to general education curriculum content. A strength of the performance-based assessment is that it in many ways mirrors components of a general assessment. For example, it uses a set of ordered questions for each student and yields quantitative data that can be analyzed in much the same way as the general assessment.

Making performance-based assessments valid for this population of students can be a challenge. Threats to validity result in part from the specific content of the assessment being more prescribed. That is, the assessment defines how a student can demonstrate reading or math, etc. in a more standardized way. Typically, this would be an advantage in an assessment system but for this population of students it may limit how they can demonstrate what they know. In addition, the demonstration of the academic knowledge or skill is at one point in time, instead of across a longer period.

To address threats to validity, the content of the assessment must be closely aligned with academic standards. Significant accommodations and modifications should be allowed because of the variety of challenges this population of students presents in accessing and responding to assessments. For example, the assessment should allow for the extensive use of assistive

technology devices, flexibility in testing session length and scheduling and changes to the materials presented to students so they may better understand, manipulate, and respond to questions and activities. Reliability on the performance-based assessment is typically strong if those administering the assessment are trained to give the same questions to all students and there is clear guidance provided on scoring the levels of independence in performing each task.

Questions districts should consider when selecting a district alternate assessment:

1. What is the purpose of the district's large-scale assessment?
2. To what extent has the district aligned assessment with standards and district curriculum?
3. To what extent does the district have a system to collect and analyze district-wide assessment data?
4. If results are reported for district-wide assessment, how will the results of the alternate assessment be reported?
5. Will your system provide meaningful information to parents and teachers? Assessment system or reporting system?

District-wide reporting requirements:

For district-wide assessments used to measure academic achievement, if the district makes available to the public, and reports to the public assessment results, the district must ensure they report with the same frequency and in the same detail for students with disabilities as it reports on the assessment of nondisabled children, the following:

1. The number of children with disabilities participating in regular assessments, and the number of those children who were provided accommodations to participate in those assessments;
2. The number of children with disabilities participating in alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards; and
3. The performance of children with disabilities on regular assessments and on alternate assessments, compared with the achievement of all children, including children with disabilities, on those assessments.

Please note that the number of students is only required to be reported if the number of children with disabilities participating in those district-wide assessment is sufficient to yield statistically reliable information and reporting that information will not reveal personally identifiable information about an individual student. For reporting purposes, **South Dakota uses an *n* size of ten.**

Guidelines for Determining District-wide Assessment

If you answer yes to these questions, you may be administering a district-wide assessment.

Question	YES	NO
<p>1. Is the assessment administered to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • entire grade(s) at the district level, • entire school, or • entire district? <p><i>(Screenings for placement purposes only would not be considered district-wide assessments)</i></p>		
<p>2. Is it used to measure student achievement?</p>		
<p>3. Does the assessment furnish rich, compelling evidence about the achievement of district goals?</p> <p><i>(These could be assessments such as but not limited to NWEA MAPs, SBAC Interim assessments)</i></p>		
<p>4. Is the data used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain formative information on student achievement, • Help districts determine areas for school improvement, and/or • Provide feedback to teachers and parents? 		
<p>5. Are the results publicly reported <i>(such as to the school board, on school's website, etc...)</i>?</p>		

District Self-Assessment

Expectations if providing a districtwide assessment.

Question	YES	NO
1. Does your district use district level assessments?		
1a: Do you have written documentation indicating which grades and content areas the district uses a district assessment?		
2. Does the district include all students in district-wide assessment, including all students with disabilities?		
3. Has the district identified allowable accommodations and guidelines for the use of accommodations on the district-wide assessments?		
4. Does the district have available an alternate assessment for every grade and content area for which a district-wide assessment is administered?		
5. Have you considered how universal design principles are incorporated in your district's assessments?		
6. Does your district publicly report results on district-wide assessments with the same frequency and in the same detail for students with disabilities as it reports on the assessment of nondisabled children? <i>(Note: only report the different subgroups if the n size is 10 or more)</i>		
6 a: Are you reporting the number of children with disabilities participating in regular assessments, and the number of those children who were provided accommodations in order to participate in those assessments?		
6 b: Are you reporting the number of children with disabilities participating in alternate assessments based on alternate achievement descriptors?		
6 c: Are you reporting the performance of children with disabilities on regular assessments and on alternate assessments, compared with the achievement of all children, including children with disabilities, on those assessments?		

District-wide Assessments Administered

Example form that includes reporting expectation according to ESSA

State and District-wide Assessments Administered									
Name of Assessment	Content Assessed	Purpose of assessment	Source of requirement	Grade(s) Assessed	Site or Link information available				Name of Alt Assessment
					Amount of time on assessment	Assessment schedule	Dissemination of reports timeline	Format of dissemination	