

**GUIDELINES FOR MAKING DECISIONS FOR THE PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
IN THE NORTH CAROLINA TESTING PROGRAM**

According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), all students with disabilities must participate in the statewide testing program. As stated in a memo (August 24, 2000) from the U.S. Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services and the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs, “Including all children in assessment programs can help to ensure a high quality educational experience for each student by creating high education expectations for all children and accountability for the educational results of all students.” There are several ways in which a student may participate in the North Carolina Testing Program: standard test administration without accommodations, standard test administration with accommodations, North Carolina Alternate Assessment Academic Inventory (NCAAAI), or North Carolina Alternate Assessment Portfolio (NCAAP). The following guidelines are for Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams and Section 504 committees to use when making decisions on how a student will participate in the statewide testing program. These guidelines were created in a collaborative effort by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) Division of Accountability Services and the NCDPI Exceptional Children Division.

	Standard Test Administration without Accommodations	Standard Test Administration with Accommodations		North Carolina Alternate Assessment Academic Inventory (NCAAAI) (On Grade Level)	North Carolina Alternate Assessment Academic Inventory (NCAAAI) (Below grade level)	North Carolina Alternate Assessment Portfolio (NCAAP)
		Approved Accommodations (other than NCCATS)	North Carolina Computerized Adaptive Testing System (NCCATS) Accommodation ¹			
	May or may not have an IEP or Section 504 Plan ²	Has an IEP or Section 504 Plan	Has an IEP or Section 504 Plan	Has an IEP	Has an IEP and may or may not have a significant cognitive disability*	Has an IEP and has a significant cognitive disability*
Assigned Grade Levels	Assigned to grades 3-8 or 10 according to the student management system (e.g., SIMS or NC WISE) or enrolled in a course for credit that requires an end-of-course test	Assigned to grades 3-8 or 10 according to the student management system (e.g., SIMS or NC WISE) or enrolled in a course for credit that requires an end-of-course test	Assigned to grades 3-8 according to the student management system (e.g., SIMS or NC WISE)	Assigned to grades 3-8 or 10 according to the student management system (e.g., SIMS or NC WISE) or enrolled in a course for credit that requires an end-of-course test	Assigned to grades 3-8 or 10 according to the student management system (e.g., SIMS or NC WISE)	Assigned to grades 3-8 or 10 according to the student management system (e.g., SIMS or NC WISE)

* To identify students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, all of the following must be true:

- The student requires extensive and explicit instruction to acquire, maintain, and generalize new reading and mathematics skills for independent living.
- The student exhibits severe and pervasive delays in multiple areas of development and in adaptive behavior (e.g., mobility, communication, daily living skills, and self-care).
- The student's IEP annual goals focus on the functional application of academics (reading, mathematics, and writing).
- The student's performance is evaluated against alternate achievement standards (essences of the standard course of study or 3 or more years below grade level).

Guidelines for Making Decisions for the Participation of Students with Disabilities in the NC Testing Program

	Standard Test Administration without Accommodations	Standard Test Administration with Accommodations		North Carolina Alternate Assessment Academic Inventory (NCAAAI) (On Grade Level)	North Carolina Alternate Assessment Academic Inventory (NCAAAI) (Below grade level)	North Carolina Alternate Assessment Portfolio (NCAAP)
		Approved Accommodations (other than NCCATS)	North Carolina Computerized Adaptive Testing System (NCCATS) Accommodation ¹			
Access to and Instruction in the NCSCS ³	Accesses and is instructed in the NCSCS on assigned grade level	Accesses and is instructed in the NCSCS on assigned grade level	Accesses and is instructed in the NCSCS on assigned grade level or up to 2 grade levels below assigned grade level	Accesses and is instructed in the NCSCS on assigned grade level	Accesses and is instructed in the NCSCS below assigned grade level	Accesses and is instructed in the NCSCS through the NCSCS Essences ⁴ ; the student's academic performance is measured through those IEP goals that address the NCSCS Essences
Participation in Standard Test Administration	The IEP team or Section 504 committee determines that the student is able to participate in the standard test administration in a given content area without accommodations.	The IEP team or Section 504 committee determines that the student is able to participate in the standard test administration in a given content area with accommodations.	The IEP team or Section 504 committee determines that the student is unable to participate in the standard test administration in a given content area. The student routinely uses the computer to access classroom instruction/assessment and the NCCATS, with or without other accommodations, would be an appropriate accommodation for the student.	The IEP team determines that the student is unable to participate in the standard test administration in a given content area with or without accommodations that do not invalidate the test results. In addition, the AAP is an inappropriate assessment for the student.	The IEP team determines that the student is unable to participate in the standard test administration in a given content area with or without accommodations that do not invalidate the test results. In addition, the AAP is an inappropriate assessment for the student.	The IEP team determines that the student is unable to participate in <u>any</u> standard test administration with or without accommodations. In addition, the AAI is an inappropriate assessment for the student.
Historical Student Data	<p>All available data are to be used when making testing decisions for students with disabilities. Each student is to be assessed in the most appropriate, yet challenging, test administration, as supported by available data.</p>					

¹ NCCATS for grade 10 is currently under development and will not be available for the 2004-05 school year.

² In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), students with disabilities may receive instructional and assessment accommodations as documented in their Section 504 Plans.

³ North Carolina *Standard Course of Study*

⁴ The NCSCS Essences, components of the North Carolina *Standard Course of Study*, are adopted by the NC State Board of Education as alternate content standards.