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Teacher Perspectives of School-Level Implementation of Alternate Assessments for Students With Significant Cognitive Disabilities

A Report From the National Study on Alternate Assessments

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April 2010

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Institute of Education Sciences

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1. Introduction

The National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA) was mandated by Section 664(c) of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA). Specifically, the law called for a "study on ensuring accountability for students who are held to alternative achievement standards" to examine the following:

"(1) the criteria that States use to determine –

(A) eligibility for alternate assessments; and

(B) the number and type of children who take those assessments and are held accountable to alternative achievement standards;

(2) the validity and reliability of alternate assessment instruments and procedures;

(3) the alignment of alternate assessments and alternative achievement standards to State academic content standards in reading, mathematics, and science; and

(4) the use and effectiveness of alternate assessments in appropriately measuring student progress and outcomes specific to individualized instructional need." (P.L. 108-446, 118 Stat. 2784 (2004))

The first three topics were addressed by NSAA in two earlier reports (Cameto et al. 2009a; Cameto et al. 2009b). This report presents information about one component of the fourth mandated topic—the use of alternate assessments. The report examines teachers' perspectives of school-level implementation of alternate assessments for students with significant cognitive disabilities; it does not address the effectiveness of alternate assessments. SRI International and its partners, the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) at the University of Minnesota and Policy Studies Associates (PSA), were selected by the Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research to conduct this study. In 2009, SRI and its partners administered a survey to special education teachers in three states whose alternate assessment systems based on alternate achievement standards were approved by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and had remained unchanged since the 2005–06 school year. This report presents aggregated teachers' responses to each survey item.

Legislative Background

The IDEA Amendments of 1997 (IDEA 1997) directed states to develop, and, by 2000, conduct alternate assessments for students with disabilities who were unable to participate in regular assessments, even with accommodations. In response, states adopted a variety of approaches for designing and implementing alternate assessments, including portfolios, individualized education program (IEP) analysis, rating scales, and performance assessments (Thompson and Thurlow 2001; Cameto et al. 2009a; Cameto et al. 2009b).

Federal policies following IDEA 1997 have required increased integration of alternate assessments into state systems for academic accountability. The *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965,* as amended (ESEA) required states to implement for all public schools a statewide accountability system that was based on challenging state standards in reading, mathematics, and science and on annual testing of students in prescribed grades. States were required to establish three levels of achievement (basic, proficient, and advanced) on the grade-level assessments and to set annual performance targets against which to measure adequate

yearly progress (AYP) to ensure that all groups of students remained on a trajectory toward proficiency by 2014. In addition, ESEA required that AYP targets must be determined, met, and reported for specific subgroups of students, including those students with disabilities who participated in alternate assessment systems.

In two Notices of Proposed Rulemaking from the ED Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (Aug. 6, 2002; Mar. 20, 2003) prior to issuing final regulations under ESEA, ED proposed to allow the use of alternate achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities for determining the AYP of states and local education agencies. In 2002, ED issued regulations regarding the implementation of assessment provisions of ESEA that stated that "the State's academic assessment system must provide for one or more alternate assessments for a student with disabilities [who] cannot participate in all or part of the State assessments…even with appropriate accommodations." These regulations further required that "alternate assessments must yield results in at least reading/language arts, mathematics, and, beginning in the 2007–08 school year, science" (Title I—Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged, Final rule, 34 C.F.R. Sec 200, 45041–45042 (2002)).

On December 9, 2003, ED issued final regulations under ESEA permitting states to develop alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant disabilities. An alternate achievement standard was defined as "an expectation of performance that differs in complexity from grade-level achievement standard" (Title I—Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged, Final rule 34 C.F.R. Sec 200 (2003)). The regulation stated the following:

> "…a State may, through a documented and validated standards-setting process, define alternate academic achievement standards, provided those standards—(1) Are aligned with the State's academic content standards; (2) Promote access to the general curriculum; and (3) Reflect professional judgment of the highest achievement standards possible." (Title I—Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged, 34 C.F.R. Sec 200, 686702 (2003)).

States were permitted to use alternate achievement standards to evaluate the performance of students with significant cognitive disabilities and to give equal weight to proficient and advanced performance based on the alternate standards in AYP calculations, provided that the number of such scores based on the alternate achievement standards did not exceed 1.0 percent of all students in the grades tested at the state or local education agency level. Under certain circumstances, states could receive an exception permitting them to exceed this cap (Title I—Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged, Final rule, 34 C.F.R. Sec 200 (2003)).

Organization of the Report

The report is organized to provide information on the school-level implementation of alternate assessments for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Chapter 2 describes the study design and methods, including the development of the teacher survey and data collection procedures and analyses. Chapter 3 describes background information for teacher respondents, the students they teach, and the classrooms in which they work. Chapter 4 describes teachers' potential instructional influences, their understanding of the alternate assessment system, and

their expectations and beliefs related to students with significant cognitive disabilities. Chapter 5 describes the teachers' professional capacity and the availability and use of resources. Chapter 6 describes students' opportunity to learn academic content. Chapter 7 highlights key study findings. The appendix contains the survey that was administered to participating teachers.

Technical Notes

Readers should remember the following issues when interpreting the findings in this report:

- The purpose of this report is descriptive. All analyses conducted for this report are conventional frequency distributions calculated for each survey question. As a nonexperimental study, the NSAA does not provide data that can be used to address causal questions. None of the findings should be interpreted as implying causal relationships, and no conclusions can be drawn from this report regarding the relative merits of any given school-level strategy. More complex analyses and research questions can be explored using the NSAA survey data; however, they are beyond the scope of this report.
- The descriptions provided in this document concern the teachers' perception of the implementation of alternate assessments for students with significant cognitive disabilities. No attempt is made to "validate" respondents' reports with information on their understanding of the survey items or with third-party information on their experiences (e.g., from administrators). Further, the report does not attempt to explain why teachers responded as they did. Finally, the report presents responses from special education teachers from three states; the findings should not be generalized to special education teachers throughout the nation.
- Technical adequacy of the survey items should be taken with caution. A number of the items were taken from existing surveys with some information about their technical adequacy, but some items were created for the purpose of this survey and lack reliability and validity data.
- The phrase "alternate assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards" will be referred to as "alternate assessment."
- The phrase "students with the most significant cognitive disabilities" will be referred to as "students with significant cognitive disabilities."

2. Study Design

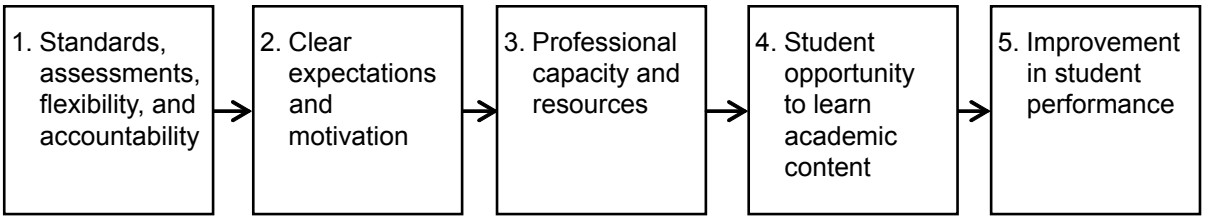
The *NSAA Teacher Survey Report* was designed to describe the school-level implementation of alternate assessments for students with significant cognitive disabilities. This chapter describes the study design and methods, including the study research questions, development of the teacher survey, and data collection procedures and analyses.

Development of the NSAA Teacher Survey

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework that guided both the study research questions and the design of the teacher survey (appendix) is grounded in the standards-based reform (SBR) movement and influenced -by the recommendations of the Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education (Elmore and Rothman 1999) (figure 1). SBR places greater emphasis on academic achievement and accountability and shifts attention from the process of education to its outcomes (Geenen, Thurlow, and Ysseldyke 1995; Goertz 2001; McLaughlin and Thurlow 2003). Generally, the premise of standards-based reform is that an aligned education system of standards, assessment, and accountability can raise student performance.

Figure 1. A theory of action: SBR and students with significant cognitive disabilities



SBR is a series of interrelated education reform initiatives designed to bring about changes in the basic operations of the public school system. According to Elmore and Rothman (1999), SBR has become the centerpiece of education reforms including ESEA, which "fits squarely within that tradition" (p. 15). The key elements of SBR are illustrated in figure 1 and described below.

Standards, assessments, flexibility, and accountability (box 1)

The theory of action behind SBR has evolved over time and rests on four major interlocking components: standards, assessments, flexibility, and accountability. The premise of SBR is that if central authorities such as the state establish content and achievement standards, develop assessments, allow schools and districts curricular and pedagogical flexibility, and require accountability, then schools will be motivated to meet the standards and student outcomes will improve. In such a system, districts, schools, and teachers will set clear expectations and goals, provide professional development, and use data to inform instruction and instructional programs. In this way, an education system based on SBR is coordinated in its efforts and is focused on student outcomes in content and skills defined by the standards.

Clear expectations and motivation (box 2)

According to the SBR theory of action, student and teacher outcomes are linked to clear expectations and motivations. Under SBR, all stakeholders should understand what those directly responsible for raising student achievement are expected to do and, moreover, how to respond in constructive ways to support their colleagues and enable academic expectations to be met (Elmore and Rothman 1999). State content and achievement standards set these expectations and establish goals for the education system by describing what all students should know and be able to do. Results on state assessments are then used to gauge school success, identify areas where improvement is needed, and identify consequences for schools and districts based on student performance. In this way, according to SBR, the accountability system motivates teachers and administrators to make changes in their expectations and motivations that will directly and positively influence classroom practice and student achievement.

Professional capacity and resources (box 3)

Another key element of the SBR theory of action is related to teachers' access to the supports they need. Such supports may include instructional materials, textbooks, equipment, and professional development activities. As the Commission articulated, "standards-based policies can affect student learning only if they are tied directly to efforts to build the capacity of teachers and administrators to improve instruction" (Elmore and Rothman 1999, p. 20). The SBR theory of action highlights the link between teaching and learning and, in particular, focuses on the need to build the capacity of teachers to provide high-quality instruction in the state's academic content standards to all students.

Student opportunity to learn academic content (box 4)

Several researchers (Marion and Pellegrino 2006; Quenemoen, Rigney, and Thurlow 2002) have pointed out that both ESEA and IDEA have moved alternate assessments—and therefore students with significant cognitive disabilities—firmly into the world of standards-based reform. In an SBR system, there are expectations that classroom practices will change to meet the individual needs of all students served and that all students, including students with significant cognitive disabilities, will have an opportunity to learn the state's content standards. As a result, researchers are beginning to address how students with significant cognitive disabilities learn academic material and interact with standards-based curriculum to determine how classroom instruction can be improved to meet the unique learning needs of this population. For example, work by Browder et. al, 2008, Kleinert, Browder, and Towles-Reeves 2009, NCEO and the New Hampshire Enhanced Assessment Initiative described the learning characteristics and instructional needs of students with cognitive disabilities within the context of the general education curriculum. Research by Browder et al. (2003) and Karvonen et al. (2006) identified additional factors related to instruction and access to the general curriculum, such as the support of the school principal and general education teachers, professional development in academic content areas, and extra time to plan instruction and collect data. Finally, emerging research (Browder et al. 2009; Browder, Flowers, and Wakeman 2008; Marion and Pellegrino 2006) suggests that students with significant cognitive disabilities are benefiting from this inclusion because they are provided better opportunities to learn academic content.

Improvement in student performance (box 5)

SBR emphasizes education outcomes and proposes that systems aligned based on standards, assessment, and accountability can raise student performance. Researchers are finding that students with significant cognitive disabilities can learn challenging academic content at higher levels than educators thought possible (Browder et al. 2009; Browder et al. 2008). As a result, interest in the application of SBR for improving outcomes of students with significant cognitive disabilities is growing (Quenemoen 2008).

Research questions and survey content

Because this study addresses the school-level implementation of alternate assessments for students with significant cognitive disabilities, the teacher survey gathered information about the background and characteristics of teachers who administer alternate assessments and their students and explored three aspects of the theory of action presented above: clear expectations and motivation (box 2), professional capacity and resources (box 3), and student opportunity to learn academic content (box 4). Survey items related to standards, assessments, and accountability (box 1) were not created because the teachers who participated in the survey were from states that met the SBR assumptions that clear and challenging state academic content and achievement standards had been established, that state assessments were aligned with these standards, and that accountability for the academic achievement of all students was expected. Similarly, survey items related to improvement in student performance were not created (box 5) because no data on student performance before the introduction of the alternate assessments were available and alternate assessments in participating states had not been stable long enough to discern, with confidence, changes in student performance data. The teacher survey data describe characteristics of teachers who administer alternate assessments and the students they teach, the implementation of alternate assessments, stakeholders' expectations related to teaching and assessing students with significant cognitive disabilities in academic content, the preparedness of teachers to instruct and assess these students, and the nature of the students' instructional experiences in academic content. The sections below describe the development of the teacher survey and the research questions the NSAA teacher survey addresses.

Background, environment, and demographics

The context in which SBR takes place may play an important role in the reform initiative's ultimate success, and there is convincing evidence that teachers are an important key to school improvement and to closing the student achievement gap (Hanushek and Rivkin 2007; Loeb and Darling-Hammond 2005). However, there is often wide variation in teachers' background and experience, as well as their instructional environments and the ages and skill levels of the students they teach (Burstein et al. 2004; Everhart 2009; Fisher, and Meyer 2002). The NSAA teacher survey collected data on these contextual factors. This information provides the reader with a greater understanding of the differences and similarities of teachers of students with significant cognitive disabilities and the contexts in which they work. The NSAA teacher survey addressed the following research questions:

- What are the qualifications of teachers who teach and assess students with significant cognitive disabilities?

  - How many years have these teachers been in the teaching profession, been providing instruction to students with disabilities, and been providing instruction in the academic content areas?
  - What degrees, certifications, and concentrations do these teachers hold?
- What is the typical classroom environment of teachers who teach and assess students with significant cognitive disabilities?
- What are the characteristics of students who take the alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards?
  - What are their primary and secondary disability categories?
  - How old are these students and what is their assigned grade level?
  - At what levels do they function in terms of overall grade-level performance; communication skills; vision, hearing, and motor abilities; health and engagement; and reading and math abilities?
  - What is their typical instructional setting?

Clear expectations and motivation (box 2)

According to the SBR theory of action, student and teacher outcomes (changes in teaching and learning) are linked to clear expectations and motivations when all stakeholders understand what is expected and, moreover, respond in constructive ways to support their colleagues. The NSAA teacher survey addressed the following research questions:

- To what extent is instruction influenced by alternate assessment requirements and results, state content standards and curriculum materials, instructional materials used in general education, local priorities or initiatives, and administrator expectations?
- What are teachers' perceptions of how the school or district uses alternate assessment results to allocate resources; evaluate, reward, or punish teachers; and develop school improvement plans?
- What are teachers' perceptions of whether parents and students understand the alternate assessment process and results?
- What are teachers' beliefs about the alternate assessment requirements and outcomes?
  - Do teachers support academic content instruction and accountability for students with significant cognitive disabilities?
  - Do teachers believe that alternate assessments reflect student skills, knowledge, and performance accurately?
  - Do teachers believe that students with significant cognitive disabilities can meet state academic content standards?
- What challenges or conflicts do teachers encounter in providing instruction to students with significant cognitive disabilities?

To address these questions, the survey gathered information from special education teachers regarding their perceptions of the level of understanding and support they received as they instructed students with significant cognitive disabilities in academic content based on alternate academic achievement standards. The survey addressed teachers' understanding of the alternate assessment system in their state and their own expectations and beliefs about alternate

assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities. The survey also collected information from teachers on the influences of alternate assessments and alternate achievement standards on their classroom instruction. The survey measured teachers' perceptions of district and school leader understanding of state academic content and alternate academic achievement standards for students with significant cognitive disabilities, the challenges for special educators, and the nature of the instructional change required within schools and classrooms.

The survey gathered information on the extent to which teachers perceived that results from their state's alternate assessment reflected student knowledge and skills in academic content and whether they used results from the alternate assessment to make changes in classroom instruction in academic content. Finally, the survey collected information from teachers on their perceptions of the consequences to themselves or the school and district arising from alternate assessment results and on their perceptions of the usefulness of including alternate assessment results in school and district accountability systems.

Professional capacity and resources (box 3)

The educational experience of students with significant cognitive disabilities traditionally has been individualized and based on functional or practical curricula focused on independent daily living skills, such as communication skills, meal time skills, and self-care skills (Browder et al. 2006; Browder, Flowers, and Wakeman 2008). As the educational experience of students with significant cognitive disabilities has shifted to include a greater emphasis on an academic curriculum, it is important for teachers of students with significant cognitive disabilities to have access to instructional materials, textbooks, equipment, other resources, and professional development related to the academic content specified in state standards (Browder et al. 2005; Karvonen et. al. 2006). The NSAA teacher survey addressed the following research questions in this area:

- What are teachers' self-perceptions of their understanding of the alternate assessment process and their ability to provide instruction to students with significant cognitive disabilities?
- Do teachers perceive that they have adequate resources for administering alternate assessments and providing instruction to students with significant cognitive disabilities? How do teachers utilize these resources?

To address these questions, the survey gathered information from special education teachers on their perceptions of the quality, quantity, and usefulness of the resources and professional development they received in instructing and assessing students with significant cognitive disabilities in the academic content areas of reading/English language arts, mathematics, and science.

Opportunity to learn academic content (box 4)

A key motivation for the standards-based theory of action is the creation of equity across schools and classrooms. Equity is achieved by providing all students with access to the same content standards (Resnick and Zurawsky 2005). Embedded in this goal is the expectation that in an SBR system, classroom practices can be adapted to provide instruction in the state content standards that will be assessed. Although each state currently defines its content standards, local districts, schools, and teachers have the flexibility to design their own curricula and instructional

programs based on the characteristics and learning needs of their students. The NSAA teacher survey addressed the following research questions in this area:

- What types of instructional approaches and assessments do teachers use when teaching and measuring achievement of students with significant cognitive disabilities?
- Who typically plans and delivers instruction to students with significant cognitive disabilities?
- How frequently do students with significant cognitive disabilities receive instruction in the academic content areas?

To address these questions, the survey gathered data on teacher perceptions of their students' opportunities to learn academic content based on their state's content standards.

Survey development

The study team developed the NSAA teacher survey instrument using a multistage process to facilitate maximum input from the technical working group (TWG), ED, and teachers experienced in working with students with significant cognitive disabilities and administering the alternate assessment in their state.

The NSAA teacher survey included items from previously developed measures and items developed by the NSAA team. Items from previously developed instruments have been standardized and subject to some preliminary reliability and validity studies. The questions developed by the NSAA team do not have information about their reliability or validity but were included because they addressed relevant knowledge and skills for which other measures about teachers' implementation of alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards were not available. The details of the instrument development process are described below.

Initial development

The study team carefully developed the survey items to answer the research questions that were developed from the SBR framework. The team reviewed the Learning Characteristics Inventory (LCI, Kearns et al. 2006; Towles-Reeves et al. 2009) and Curriculum Indicator Survey (Karvonen et al. 2007) to determine whether any items from either instrument fit within the SBR framework or addressed the research questions. The Learner Characteristics Inventory (LCI, Kearns et al. 2006; Towles-Reeves et al. 2009), an instrument designed to collect information about students with significant cognitive disabilities who take alternate assessments, was incorporated into the survey to address research questions related to the background and characteristics of students instructed by the surveyed teachers. The LCI was developed by researchers with expertise in alternate assessment in conjunction with experts in special education and academic content areas (Towles-Reeves et al. 2009). Ten experts across these fields reviewed the survey for its clarity, utility, accuracy, and understandability. The survey was revised and then piloted with approximately 25 teachers. To calculate interrater reliability participating teachers and partner respondents (e.g., speech and language pathologists, school psychologists, or general education teachers) independently scored an LCI for a single student. Interrater agreement was 84 percent. The LCI was subsequently revised, and a final version was piloted with approximately 15 teachers and their independent partner respondents. The average interrater agreement per variable improved to 95 percent.

Sections of the Curriculum Indicator Survey (CIS, Karvonen, et al. 2007) were also incorporated into the NSAA teacher survey to address the teachers' background, environment, and instructional influences, as well as information about their students' skills. The CIS was designed to measure, through teacher report, the enacted academic curriculum in reading/English language arts, mathematics, and science for students with significant cognitive disabilities eligible to take a state alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards. The CIS is based on the concepts in the Surveys of Enacted Curriculum (SEC; Council of Chief State School Officers 2003). The SECs are a set of web-based data collection tools that are used by teachers of mathematics, science, and English language arts (K–12) to collect and report data on current instructional practices and content being taught in classrooms. The resulting data can be used to analyze the degree of alignment between current instruction and state standards and assessments. The CIS adapted the SEC for use with teachers of students with significant cognitive disabilities. Adaptations include modifying items to be more relevant to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities and removing items that were irrelevant for this population. However, there is limited information on the technical adequacy of the CIS.

The NSAA team then created a draft survey instrument that consisted of questions from the LCI and CIS survey instrument and new items to address the set of research questions (see notation for each item on the NSAA teacher survey that indicates the source of the item, i.e., LCI, CIS, or NSAA in the appendix[1]). The survey was divided into two sections. For the first section, teachers were asked to answer questions about their experience in general. For the second section, teachers were asked to identify a target student in their classroom and answer the remaining questions in relation to that target student. The teachers were asked to report on only one student to reduce response burden. To avoid selection bias, teachers were provided instructions on how to randomly select a single "target" student on whom to base their responses.[2] Teachers were asked to indicate the primary and additional disabilities of their target student and to rate where a student would rank on a continuum from low to high, with high representing more complex abilities, in the following areas: expressive language, receptive language, vision, hearing, motor skills, engagement, health issues/attendance, reading, and mathematics. Teachers also responded to questions on the use of augmentative communication systems and whether their target student received speech and language services.

The team circulated the draft survey to members of the TWG as well as ED who reviewed the instrument and provided comments and suggestions for revisions to the individual items. The team then incorporated these review comments into a revised version of the survey used for the pilot test.

Pilot testing

A draft survey was administered to one teacher from each of six states (i.e., six teachers in total) as part of the piloting process. The pilot test was overseen by two individuals trained to

[1] The teacher survey included in the appendix has been altered to inform the reader of the source for each item.

[2] Instructions for random selection of the target student included the following steps: (1) Teachers were asked to make a list in any order of all students in their caseload who would take the alternate assessment. Once they did this, they were asked to number the students (1, 2, 3, etc.). (2) Teachers who had only one student who would take the alternate assessment were instructed to complete that section of the survey with that student in mind. (3) Teachers who had two or more students who would take the alternate assessment were provided with a list of random numbers and instructed to use the list to help them select the student. Once the student was identified randomly, the teacher was to fill out the survey with that student in mind.

follow a prescribed set of procedures to contact and interview the pilot participants. Pilot participants were identified by NSAA state contacts who had participated in the earlier phases of the NSAA. The individuals who took part in the pilot administration each had multiple years of experience teaching students with significant cognitive disabilities (6 years to more than 20 years) and were experienced in administering alternate assessments in their state. Each pilot participant was contacted through an e-mail message that provided a brief description of the study, a copy of the draft survey, and a pilot test participant agreement. Pilot participants were asked to take the survey as if they were a respondent and to note questions that lacked clarity and the amount of time it took to complete each section.

After completing the draft survey and submitting their written comments and notes, pilot participants were then interviewed by telephone. The interviews focused on overall impressions of the survey including clarity, bias, and relevance of individual items; the amount of time to complete each section; and any problems regarding specific questions. The interviews took on average 45 minutes.

In general, the respondents reported that the instrument was well organized and that it flowed well from one question to the next. None of the respondents found the survey difficult to complete. All of the respondents reported that they were able to follow the instructions for identifying a target student correctly. The few items about which pilot test participants had questions or comments were revised. Three of the pilot test participants reviewed the revised questions and indicated they felt the revised text was much clearer and easier to answer.

The respondents indicated that, on average, the survey took 2 hours to complete. To reduce response burden, the NSAA team worked with ED and the Office of Management and Budget to shorten the survey so that it took less than 1 hour to complete. To shorten the survey, items that constituted a section of the CIS were removed from the survey. These items were related to students' opportunity to learn. The NSAA team created a smaller set of items to address research questions related to this area.

Sample Design

State selection

States were invited to participate in the NSAA based on three criteria: (1) their assessment and accountability systems were approved by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education Standards and Assessment Peer Review Process as of August 2007, (2) their alternate assessment had remained stable since 2005–06, and (3) they had a state-level database of teachers of students with significant cognitive disabilities. First, states that were invited to participate in the NSAA teacher survey had to have received one of three levels of approval from ED's Peer Review Process. The Peer Review process is an ongoing process to evaluate whether states' assessment systems meet ESEA requirements. The three levels were Full Approval, Full Approval with Recommendations, and Approval Expected. To be fully approved, a state's assessment system has to meet all ESEA statutory and regulatory requirements for reading/language arts and mathematics assessment. To be fully approved with recommendations, a state's assessment system also has to meet all statutory and regulatory requirements for reading/language arts and mathematics assessment, but can be strengthened in some ways, such as developing more detailed student reports. The designation Approval Expected indicates that, although the evidence submitted by a state in the Peer Review Process

suggests that the system is fully compliant with the statutory and regulatory requirements regarding reading/language arts and mathematics assessment, certain elements of the system are not yet complete. States yet to be approved were not invited to participate because their alternate assessment systems were in flux and likely to undergo significant changes due to technical deficiencies. Potential changes to the assessment system would have changed how the alternate assessment was administered and what was assessed.

Second, eligible states had to have administered the same alternate assessment since 2005–06. This continuity indicated not only that the state assessment systems were stable but also that teachers had opportunities to attend training on their state's system and were likely to understand the alternate assessment administration procedures. Twelve states met these two criteria. State department of education personnel from the 12 states were contacted to ascertain whether they maintained and could provide access to a state level database of teachers of students with significant cognitive disabilities. The first three states that responded affirmatively were invited to participate in the NSAA teacher survey. Because the report presents responses from special education teachers from three states, the findings should not be generalized to special education teachers throughout the nation.

Teacher sample

Availability of teacher databases at the state level allowed for a consistent approach in the selection of the teachers to be surveyed in each of the three eligible states. The superintendents of education; directors of assessment, accountability, and special education; and alternate assessment specialists in each of the states received copies of the materials describing the study and requesting state agreement to participate. Information on the data collection procedures and a timeline for the teacher survey activities were also described.

The NSAA study director spoke with key personnel (e.g., the Superintendent of Education) in each state to gain approval for the study. Each state provided a roster of teachers who had worked with students with significant cognitive disabilities as of the end of the 2007–08 school year. In two of the three states, a random sample of 270 teachers was selected from the state roster. In the third state, the roster of teachers of students with significant cognitive disabilities contained fewer than 270 teachers. In this case, all of the 201 teachers on the roster were selected. Teacher attrition and mobility was estimated to be approximately 25 percent. According to Marvel et al. (2006), of the 3.3 million public school teachers who were teaching during the 2003–04 school year, 84 percent remained in the same school, 8 percent moved to a different school, and 8 percent left the profession after the 2003–04 school year. Research by Edgar and Pair (2005) found that mobility and attrition among special education teachers who taught students with severe or moderate disabilities was 26 percent. Based on this, we estimated that, in two states, 200 teachers would meet the eligibility criteria and, in the third state, approximately 150 teachers would meet the eligibility criteria described below.

Data collection

The teacher survey packet was mailed to the selected teachers in each state. If a survey was returned by the United States Postal Service as undeliverable, NSAA staff attempted to obtain a revised address for the teacher and mailed the survey again.

The teacher survey packet contained information about the study and letters of support from the state department of education and from the U.S. Department of Education encouraging

teachers to participate. The packet also included a hard copy of the survey with a postage-paid return envelope, along with instructions for completing the survey. A toll-free telephone number, an e-mail address, and the name of the NSAA contact person were provided to teachers in case they had questions.

A $5 bill was attached to each survey as an incentive for teachers to complete and return the screening portion of the survey and to proceed to the full survey if the teacher met the screening criteria. Teachers were informed that they would receive a check for $35 for completing and submitting the full survey.

Eligibility to complete the survey was determined primarily by the completion of three screening questions. To be eligible to complete the survey, a teacher had to respond "yes" to all three of the following screening questions: (1) Do you currently (2008–09 school year) teach students with significant cognitive disabilities? (2) Will any of your students with significant cognitive disabilities take your state's alternate assessment? and (3) Did you administer the alternate assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities in any of the past three school years?

Response rates

Data collection was conducted over two months in spring 2009. Multiple steps were taken to maximize response rates for the teacher survey. NSAA staff worked closely with states to engage them in encouraging participation of teachers as needed. NSAA staff followed up by mail to individuals who had not responded after the initial survey was sent with a reminder postcard a week later and a replacement survey 3 weeks after the first survey mailing. E-mail reminders were sent to individuals who had not responded 2 weeks and 4 weeks after the initial mailing. Five weeks after the initial mailing, NSAA staff members attempted to contact all individuals who had not responded by telephone to remind them to complete the screening questionnaire and survey. Each individual who had not responded received up to three telephone calls. Replacement survey packets were sent to teachers whenever they were requested.

A total of 740 teachers were sent a survey packet. Of those, 256 teachers were determined to be ineligible (table 1). Of those 256 teachers, 198 did not respond "yes" to all three screening questions, and 58 were determined to be ineligible to complete the survey because they reported that they were no longer teaching (i.e., moved out of the state, had retired, or were no longer teaching special education). A total of 484 teachers were determined to be eligible to complete the full survey. Of those, 422 were determined to be eligible to complete the full survey based on their responses to the three screening questions and 62 teachers were not located or did not return a screener survey. For the purpose of calculating response rates, these 62 teachers were assumed to have been eligible. The response rate for eligible teachers was 87 percent.

Table 1. Teacher survey response rate

Survey packets sent	**740**
Ineligible	256
Did not respond "yes" to all three screening questions	198
Reported to no longer be teaching	58
Eligible	484
Not locatable	62
Responded "yes" to all three screening questions and completed survey	422
Percent of eligible completing survey $\left(\frac{\text{number who completed survey}}{\text{total eligible}}\right)$	87.2

Analyses and Presentation of Survey Data

Conventional frequency distributions were calculated for each survey question. When the number of respondents in a response option fell below three teachers, data were suppressed. In these circumstances, the following statement is included in the notes of the figure and in the narrative findings: "Reporting standards were not met for this response option." This convention was used to avoid presenting estimates that were unreliable.

The presentation of the survey data was driven by the conceptual framework provided by the standards-based reform model underlying the survey instrument, as described earlier. The presentation of the data begins with a description of the background of the teachers who participated in the survey, including their training and experience. The report then presents data on teachers' classrooms or caseloads of students with significant cognitive disabilities in general and about specific target students. The sections that follow present findings organized according to the three aspects of the conceptual framework of the SBR model addressed in this study: clear expectations and motivation, professional capacity and resources, and student opportunity to learn academic content.

3. Background, Environment, and Demographics

In this chapter, background information is presented from three states on teacher respondents, the students they teach, and the classrooms in which they work. This chapter describes the day-to-day experiences of special educators who instruct and assess students with significant cognitive disabilities. In the initial two sections of the chapter, teacher respondents provide information about themselves and their classrooms. The following research questions are addressed in this section:

- What are the qualifications of teachers who teach and assess students with significant cognitive disabilities?
  - How many years have these teachers been in the teaching profession, been providing instruction to students with disabilities, and been providing instruction in the academic content areas?
  - What degrees, certifications, and concentrations do these teachers hold?
- What is the typical classroom environment of teachers who teach and assess students with significant cognitive disabilities?
- What are the characteristics of students who take the alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards?
  - What are their primary and secondary disability categories?
  - How old are these students and what is their assigned grade level?
  - At what levels do they function in terms of overall grade-level performance, communication skills; vision, hearing, and motor abilities; health and engagement; and reading and math abilities?
  - What is their typical instructional setting?

In the third and fourth sections, teacher respondents provide detailed information about a *target* student and that student's instructional setting and services. Teachers selected the target student according to specific criteria described in the Study Design section of the report. The selection procedure ensured that target students were selected at random from respondents' caseloads to avoid teacher selection bias. Because students who take alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards encompass a wide range of abilities, this sampling method was intended to capture the wide range of abilities of students who take alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards.

Teacher Background

Teachers from three states were asked to provide information on their educational backgrounds, including the number of years teaching and their teaching qualifications (i.e., degree, certifications, and licenses held). Teaching certification means a credential that allows a teacher to teach either a specific grade level or student population (e.g. special education students, elementary students). Teaching license means the disciplinary focus, subject, or content area of the teacher's credential (e.g., special education, mathematics, or English language arts).

Teaching experience

Teachers were asked a set of questions concerning the length of time they had been in the teaching profession, the number of years spent teaching students with significant cognitive disabilities, and the number of years spent teaching specific academic content (i.e., reading/English language arts, math, and science). Teachers were asked, "How many years have you been teaching?" "How many years have you been teaching students with significant cognitive disabilities?" and "How many years have you been teaching [reading/English language arts] [math] [science]?" The response options were "0–1," "2–4," "5–10," "11–20," or "21 or more" (figure 2).

Number of years teaching overall

The percentage of teachers reporting the number of years they had been in the teaching profession ranged from 4 percent who had taught for 1 year or less to 32 percent who had taught for 21 or more years.

- *0 to 1 year* – Four percent of teachers reported that they had taught for 1 year or less.
- *2 to 4 years* – Thirteen percent of teachers reported that they had taught for 2 to 4 years.
- *5 to 10 years* – Twenty-three percent of teachers reported that they had taught for 5 to 10 years.
- *11 to 20 years* – Twenty-eight percent of teachers reported that they had taught for 11 to 20 years.
- *21 or more years* – Thirty-two percent of teachers reported that they had taught for 21 or more years.

Number of years teaching students with significant cognitive disabilities

The percentage of teachers reporting the number of years they had taught students with significant cognitive disabilities ranged from 3 percent who had taught for 1 year or less to 27 percent who had taught for 5 to 10 years or 11 to 20 years.

- *0 to 1 year* – Three percent of teachers reported that they had taught students with significant cognitive disabilities for 1 year or less.
- *2 to 4 years* – Eighteen percent of teachers reported that they had taught students with significant cognitive disabilities for 2 to 4 years.
- *5 to 10 years* – Twenty-seven percent of teachers reported that they had taught students with significant cognitive disabilities for 5 to 10 years.
- *11 to 20 years* – Twenty-seven percent of teachers reported that they had taught students with significant cognitive disabilities for 11 to 20 years.
- *21 or more years* – Twenty-four percent of teachers reported that they had taught students with significant cognitive disabilities for 21 or more years.

Number of years teaching reading/English language arts

The percentage of teachers reporting the number of years they had taught reading/English language arts ranged from 15 percent who had taught for 2 to 4 years to 24 percent who had taught for 11 to 20 years.

- *0 to 1 year* – Twenty percent of teachers reported that they had taught reading/English language arts for 1 year or less.
- *2 to 4 years* – Fifteen percent of teachers reported that they had taught reading/English language arts for 2 to 4 years.
- *5 to 10 years* – Twenty-two percent of teachers reported that they had taught reading/English language arts for 5 to 10 years.
- *11 to 20 years* – Twenty-four percent of teachers reported that they had taught reading/English language arts for 11 to 20 years.
- *21 or more years* – Nineteen percent of teachers reported that they had taught reading/English language arts for 21 or more years.

Number of years teaching mathematics

The percentage of teachers reporting the number of years they had taught mathematics ranged from 14 percent who had taught for 2 to 4 years to 23 percent who had taught for 1 year or less or 11 to 20 years.

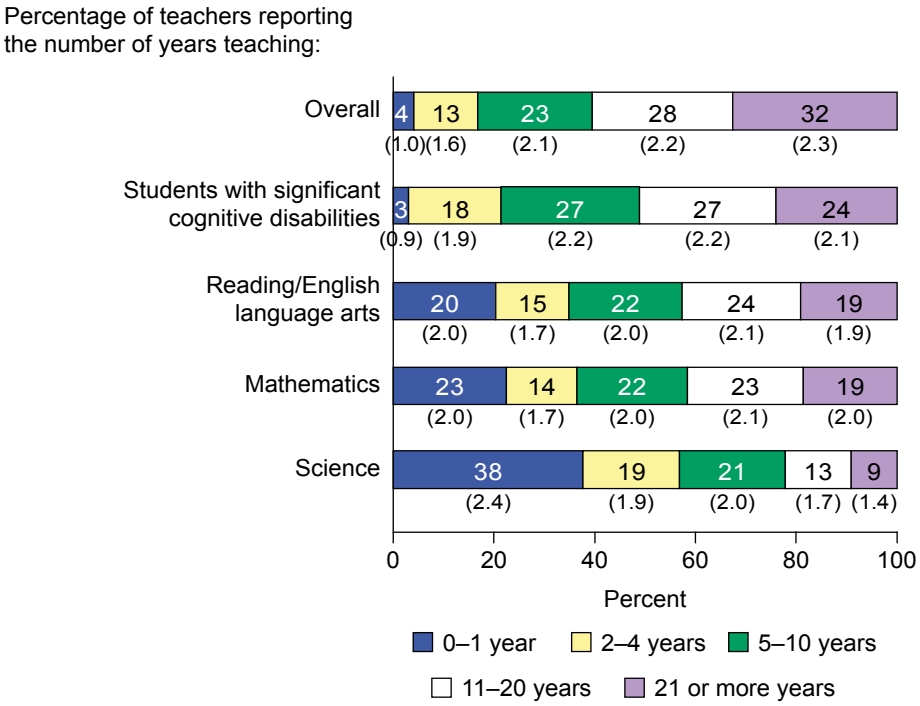
- *0 to 1 year* – Twenty-three percent of teachers reported that they had taught mathematics for 1 year or less.
- *2 to 4 years* – Fourteen percent of teachers reported that they had taught mathematics for 2 to 4 years.
- *5 to 10 years* – Twenty-two percent of teachers reported that they had taught mathematics for 5 to 10 years.
- *11 to 20 years* – Twenty-three percent of teachers reported that they had taught mathematics for 11 to 20 years.
- *21 or more years* – Nineteen percent of teachers reported that they had taught mathematics for 21 or more years.

Number of years teaching science

The percentage of teachers reporting the number of years they had taught science ranged from 9 percent who had taught for 21 or more years to 38 percent who had taught the subject for 1 year or less.

- *0 to 1 year* – Thirty-eight percent of teachers reported that they had taught science for 1 year or less.
- *2 to 4 years* – Nineteen percent of teachers reported that they had taught science for 2 to 4 years.
- *5 to 10 years* – Twenty-one percent of teachers reported that they had taught science for 5 to 10 years.
- *11 to 20 years* – Thirteen percent of teachers reported that they had taught science for 11 to 20 years.
- *21 or more years* – Nine percent of teachers reported that they had taught science for 21 or more years.

Figure 2. Number of years teaching overall, students with significant cognitive disabilities, and academic content areas



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 420 teachers.

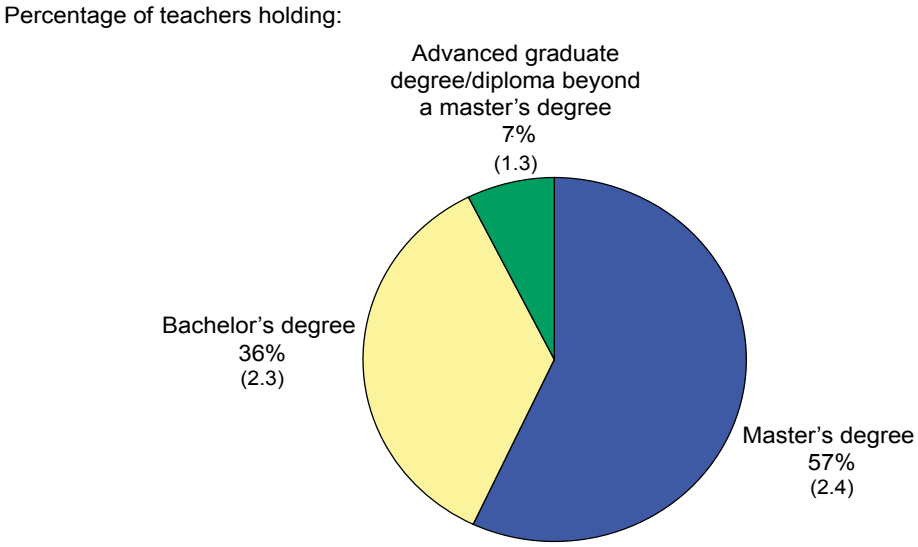
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Highest degree held

Teachers were asked, "What is the highest degree you hold?" The response options were "Bachelor's," "Master's," "Advanced graduate degree or diploma beyond a master's degree," "PhD or EdD," and "Other." Fifty-seven percent of teachers reported that the highest degree they held was a master's degree (figure 3).

- *Bachelor's degree* – Thirty-six percent of teachers reported that the highest degree they held was a bachelor's degree.
- *Master's degree* – Fifty-seven percent of teachers reported that the highest degree they held was a master's degree.
- *Advanced graduate degree or diploma beyond a master's degree* – Seven percent of teachers reported that the highest degree they held was an advanced graduate degree or diploma beyond a master's degree.

Figure 3. Highest degree held



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 420 teachers.

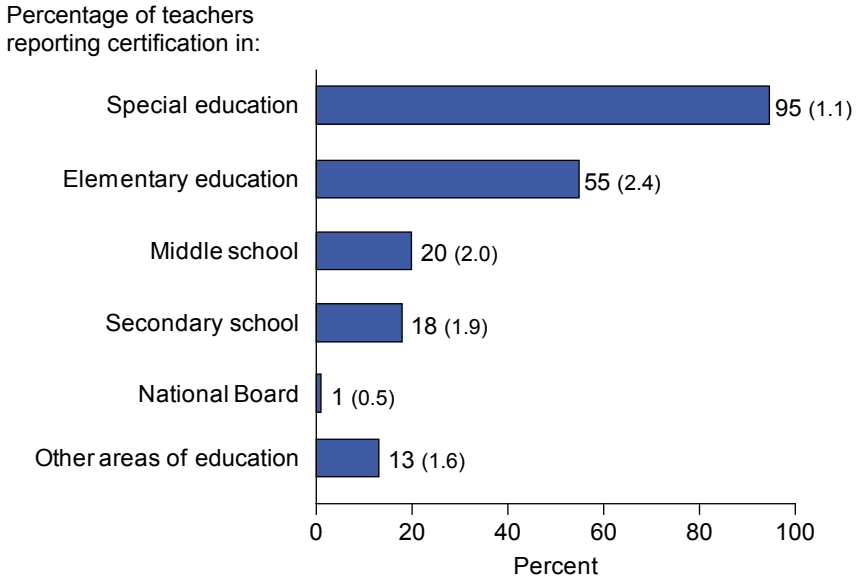
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Teaching certifications held

Teachers were asked, "What certifications do you possess?" Teachers were instructed to "mark all that apply." The response options were "Special education," "Elementary education," "Middle," "Secondary," "National Board," and "Other" certifications. Of those responding, 95 percent of teachers reported that they were certified in special education (figure 4).

- *Special education* – Ninety-five percent of teachers reported that they were certified in special education.
- *Elementary education* – Fifty-five percent of teachers reported that they were certified in elementary education.
- *Middle school* – Twenty percent of teachers reported that they were certified at the middle school level.
- *Secondary school* – Eighteen percent of teachers reported that they were certified at the secondary school level.
- *National Board* – One percent of teachers reported that they were certified at the National Board level.
- *Other areas of education* – Thirteen percent of teachers reported that they were certified in other areas of education.

Figure 4. Teaching certifications held



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because multiple responses were possible. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 420 teachers.

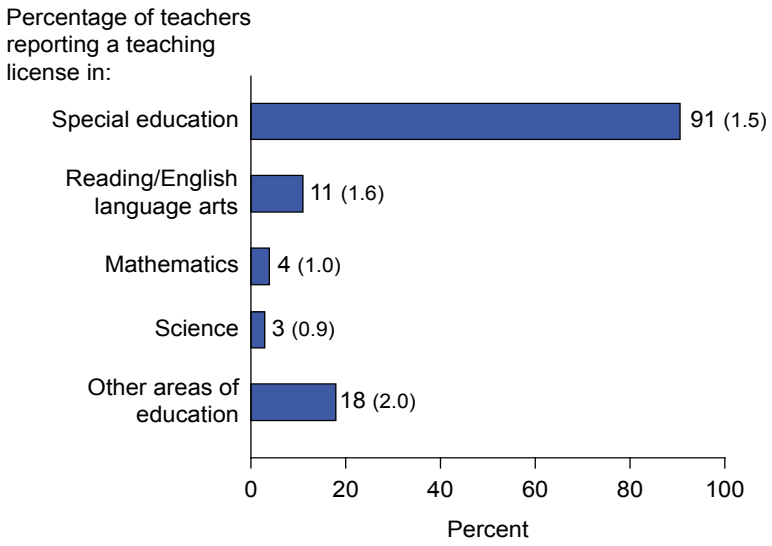
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Concentrations in teaching licenses held by teachers

Teachers were asked, "Do you hold any teaching license with a concentration in [Reading/English language arts] [Math] [Science] [Special education] [Other]?" Teachers were instructed to "mark all that apply." Of those responding, 91 percent of teachers responded that they held licenses in special education (figure 5).

- *Special education* – Ninety-one percent of teachers reported that they held a teaching license with a concentration in special education.
- *Reading/English language arts* – Eleven percent of teachers reported that they held a teaching license with a concentration in reading/English language arts.
- *Mathematics* – Four percent of teachers reported that they held a teaching license with a concentration in mathematics.
- *Science* – Three percent of teachers reported that they held a teaching license with a concentration in science.
- *Other areas of education* – Eighteen percent of teachers reported that they held a teaching license with a concentration in another area of education.

Figure 5. Concentration in teaching licenses held



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because multiple responses were possible. Percentages are based on samples of approximately 360 teachers.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Classroom Environment

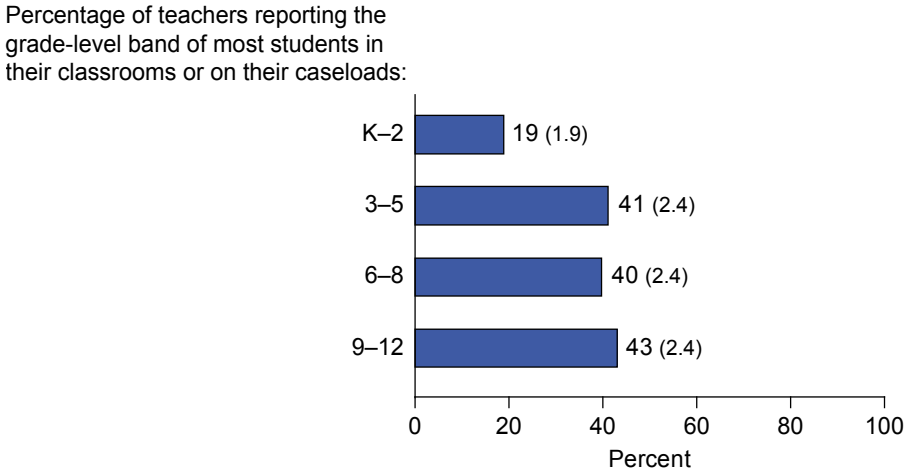
Teachers were asked questions about their classrooms and caseloads. Both categories were included in recognition that teachers of this population may work in a special education classroom setting or may have a caseload of students who are instructed in an alternative setting such a hospital, home, or inclusive classroom. Specifically, teachers provided information on the grade level and number of students in their classroom or on their caseload, as well as how many students took the alternate assessment during the 2008–09 school year.

Grade-level bands of most students in a teacher's classroom or on caseload

Teachers were asked, "What are the grade-level bands for most students in your classroom or on your caseload?" Teachers were instructed to "mark all that apply." Forty-three percent of teachers reported that most of the students in their classrooms or on their caseloads were in grades 9 to 12 (figure 6).

- *K to 2* – Nineteen percent of teachers reported that most of the students in their classrooms or on their caseloads were included in this grade band.
- *3 to 5* – Forty-one percent of teachers reported that most of the students in their classrooms or on their caseloads were included in this grade band.
- *6 to 8* – Forty percent of teachers reported that most of the students in their classrooms or on their caseloads were included in this grade band.
- *9 to 12* – Forty-three percent of teachers reported that most of the students in their classrooms or on their caseloads were included in this grade band.

Figure 6. Grade-level bands of most students in a teacher's classroom or on caseload



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because multiple responses were possible. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 420 teachers.

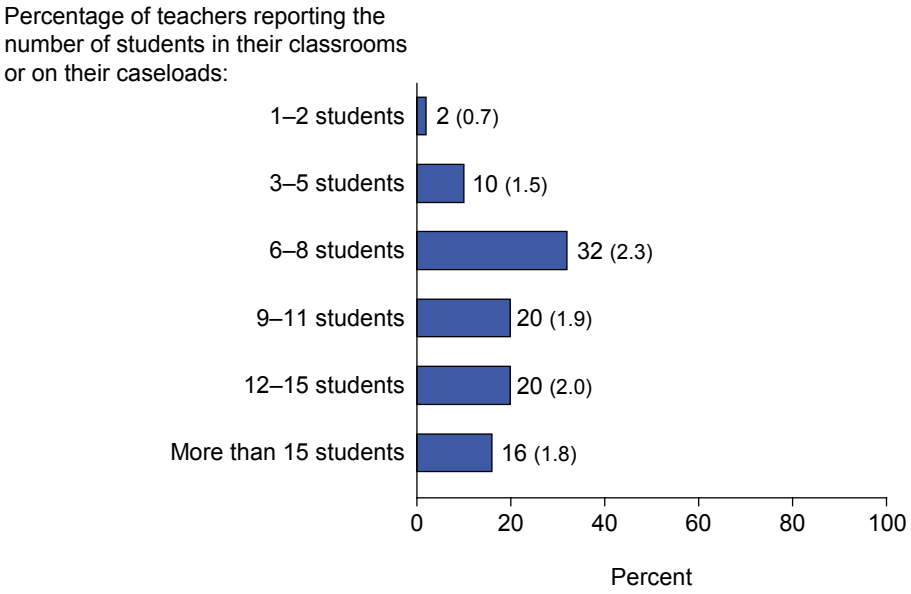
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Number of students in a teacher's classroom or on caseload

Teachers were asked, "How many students are in your classroom or on your caseload?" Thirty-two percent reported that they had 6 to 8 students in their classrooms or on their caseloads (figure 7).

- *1 or 2 students* – Two percent of teachers reported that they had 1 or 2 students in their classrooms or on their caseloads.
- *3 to 5 students* – Ten percent of teachers reported that they had 3 to 5 students in their classrooms or on their caseloads.
- *6 to 8 students* – Thirty-two percent of teachers reported that they had 6 to 8 students in their classrooms or on their caseloads.
- *9 to 11 students* – Twenty percent of teachers reported that they had 9 to 11 students in their classrooms or on their caseloads.
- *12 to 15 students* – Twenty percent of teachers reported that they had 12 to 15 students in their classrooms or on their caseloads.
- *More than 15 students* – Sixteen percent of teachers reported that they had more than 15 students in their classrooms or on their caseloads.

Figure 7. Number of students in a teacher's classroom or on caseload



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 420 teachers.

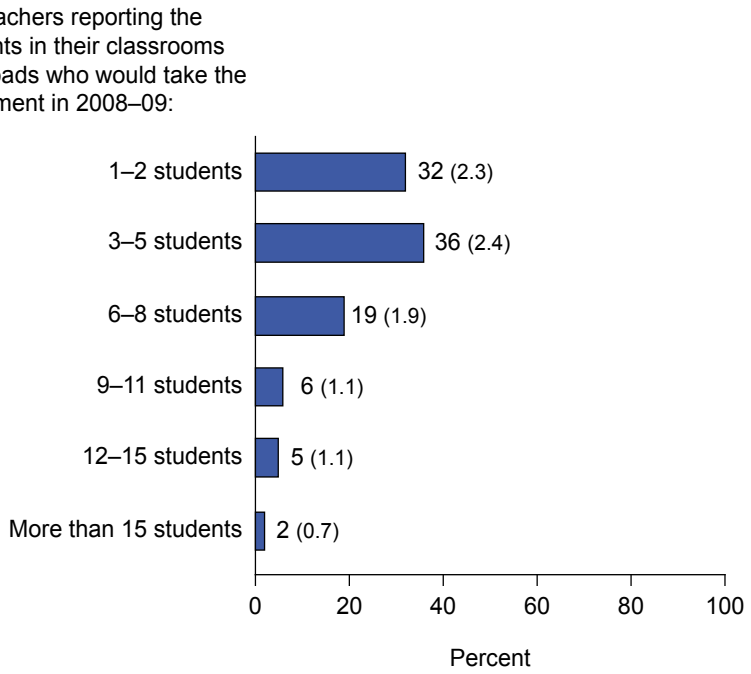
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Number of students in a teacher's classroom or on caseload who would take the alternate assessment in 2008–09

Teachers were asked, "How many of the students in your classroom or on your caseload will take the alternate assessment this school year (2008–09)?" Thirty-six percent of teachers reported that 3 to 5 students in their classrooms or on their caseloads would take the alternate assessment in 2008–09; 2 percent reported that more than 15 students in their classrooms or on their caseloads would take the alternate assessment (figure 8).

- *1 or 2 students* – Thirty-two percent of teachers reported that 1 or 2 students in their classrooms or on their caseloads would take the alternate assessment in 2008–09.
- *3 to 5 students* – Thirty-six percent of teachers reported that 3 to 5 students in their classrooms or on their caseloads would take the alternate assessment in 2008–09.
- *6 to 8 students* – Nineteen percent of teachers reported that 6 to 8 students in their classrooms or on their caseloads would take the alternate assessment in 2008–09.
- *9 to 11 students* – Six percent of teachers reported that 9 to 11 students in their classrooms or on their caseloads would take the alternate assessment in 2008–09.
- *12 to 15 students* – Five percent of teachers reported that 12 to 15 students in their classrooms or on their caseloads would take the alternate assessment in 2008–09.
- *More than 15 students* – Two percent of teachers reported that more than 15 students in their classrooms or on their caseloads would take the alternate assessment in 2008–09.

Figure 8. Number of students in a teacher's classroom or on caseload who would take the alternate assessment in 2008–09



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 420 teachers.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Student Information

Each teacher provided detailed information about a target student who took the alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards. Questions were related to the target student's primary and secondary disabilities, chronological age, assigned grade level, the age level at which the student was performing, and level of communication.

Primary disability category of target students

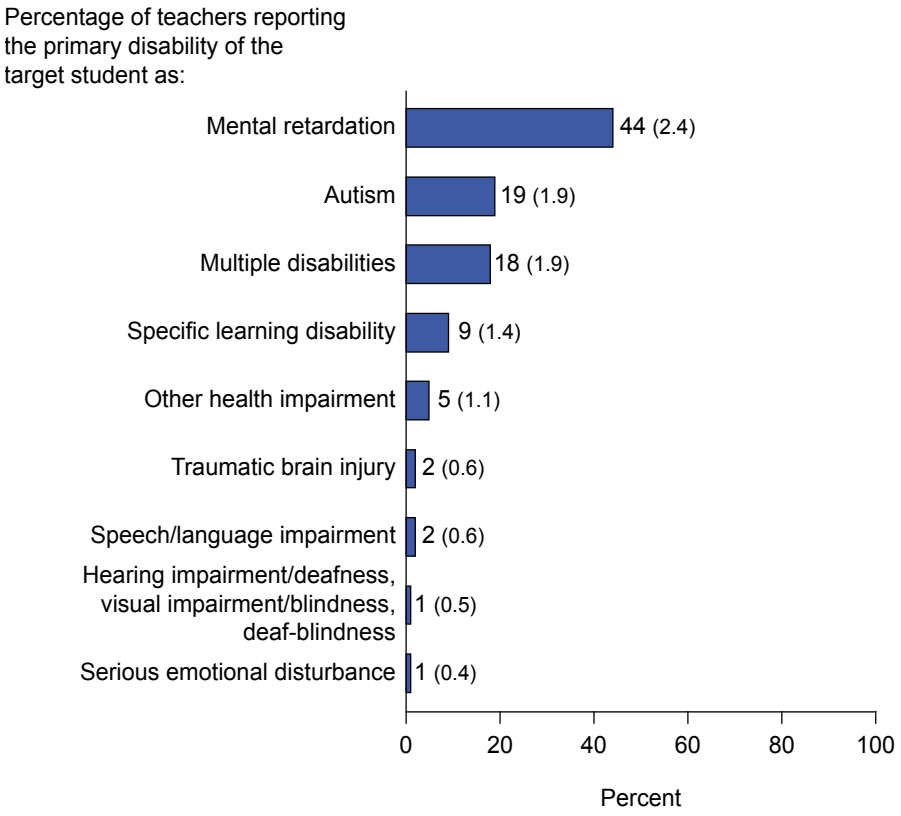
Teachers were asked to identify the disability category of their target student based on 12 of the 13 regulatory categories from the Individuals With Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA).[3] Teachers were asked first to provide their target student's primary disability category.[4] Teachers reported that target students' primary disabilities ranged across all disabilities except orthopedic impairment. Mental retardation was the most often reported disability category (figure 9). These findings are consistent with findings reported by Kearns (2007), which indicated that (a) mental retardation (48 percent), multiple disabilities (23 percent), and autism (15 percent) were the most frequently reported disabilities of students assessed on alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards and (b) all disability categories were represented in this population of students.

[3] The category *developmentally delayed* was not included because the use of this category is a state decision and the category is applied to students with IEPs ages 3 through 9.

[4] As determined for IDEA Child Count Reporting.

- *Mental retardation* – Forty-four percent of teachers reported that the primary disability category of their target student was mental retardation.
- *Autism* – Nineteen percent of teachers reported that the primary disability category of their target student was autism.
- *Multiple disabilities* – Eighteen percent of teachers reported that the primary disability category of their target student was multiple disabilities.
- *Specific learning disability* – Nine percent of teachers reported that the primary disability category of their target student was specific learning disability.
- *Other health impairment* – Five percent of teachers reported that the primary disability category of their target student was other health impairment.
- *Traumatic brain injury* – Two percent of teachers reported that the primary disability category of their target student was traumatic brain injury.
- *Speech/language impairment* – Two percent of teachers reported that the primary disability of their target student was speech/language impairment.
- *Hearing impairment/deafness, visual impairment/blindness, or deaf-blindness* – One percent of teachers reported that the primary disability of their target student was hearing impairment/deafness, visual impairment/blindness, or deaf-blindness.
- *Serious emotional disturbance* – One percent of teachers reported that the primary disability of their target student was serious emotional disturbance.

Figure 9. Primary disability category of target students



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 410 teachers.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

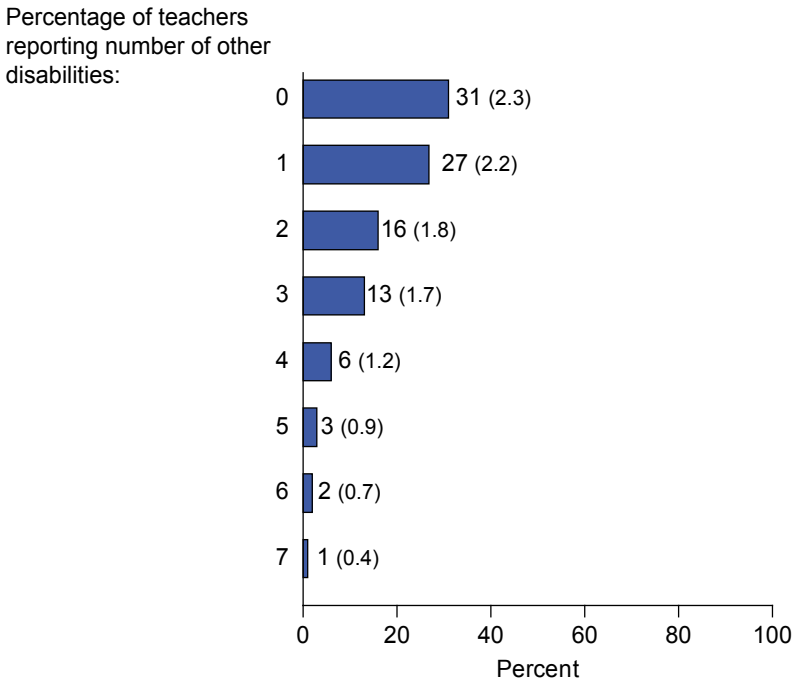
Number of additional disabilities of target students

Teachers were asked to identify any additional disabilities of their target student. Sixty-nine percent of teachers reported that their target student had one or more additional disabilities (figure 10). For students with additional disabilities, teachers reported the number of disabilities the student had.

- *No additional disabilities* – Thirty-one percent of teachers reported that their target student had no additional disabilities.
- *1 additional disability* – Twenty-seven percent of teachers reported that their target student had 1 additional disability.
- *2 additional disabilities* – Sixteen percent of teachers reported that their target student had 2 additional disabilities.
- *3 additional disabilities* – Thirteen percent of teachers reported that their target student had 3 additional disabilities.
- *4 additional disabilities* – Six percent of teachers reported that their target student had 4 additional disabilities.

- *5 additional disabilities* – Three percent of teachers reported that their target student had 5 additional disabilities.
- *6 additional disabilities* – Two percent of teachers reported that their target student had 6 additional disabilities.
- *7 additional disabilities* – One percent of teachers reported that their target student had 7 additional disabilities.

Figure 10. Number of additional disabilities of target students



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 410 teachers.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

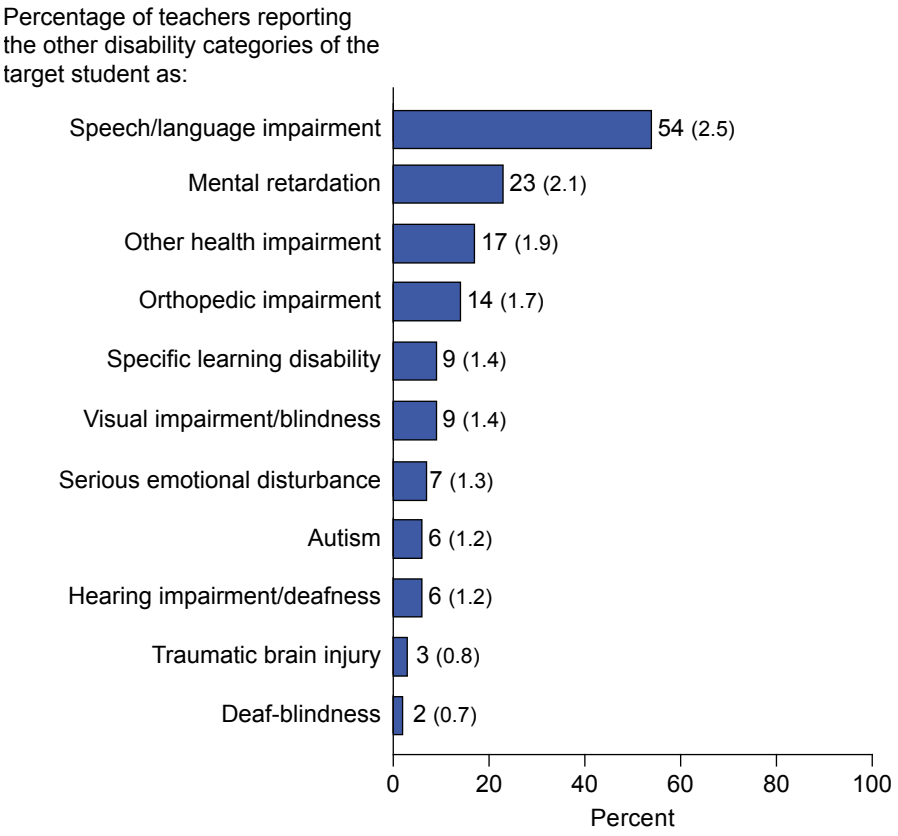
Additional disability categories of target students

Teachers were asked to identify all the disabilities of their target student. The percentage of teachers reporting each of the additional disabilities ranged from 54 percent for speech/language impairment to 2 percent for deaf-blindness (figure 11).

- *Speech/language impairment* – Fifty-four percent of teachers reported that speech/language impairment was another disability of their target student.
- *Mental retardation* – Twenty-three percent of teachers reported that mental retardation was another disability of their target student.
- *Other health impairment* – Seventeen percent of teachers reported that other health impairment was another disability of their target student.
- *Orthopedic impairment* – Fourteen percent of teachers reported that orthopedic impairment was another disability of their target student.

- *Specific learning disability* – Nine percent of teachers reported that specific learning disability was another disability of their target student.
- *Visual impairment/blindness* – Nine percent of teachers reported that visual impairment/blindness was another disability of their target student.
- *Serious emotional disturbance* – Seven percent of teachers reported that serious emotional disturbance was another disability of their target student.
- *Autism* – Six percent of teachers reported that autism was another disability of their target student.
- *Hearing impairment/deafness* – Six percent of teachers reported that hearing impairment/deafness was another disability of their target student.
- *Traumatic brain injury* – Three percent of teachers reported that traumatic brain injury was another disability of their target student.
- *Deaf-blindness* – Two percent of teachers reported that deaf-blindness was another disability of their target student.

Figure 11. Additional disability categories of target students



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because multiple responses were possible. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 410 teachers.

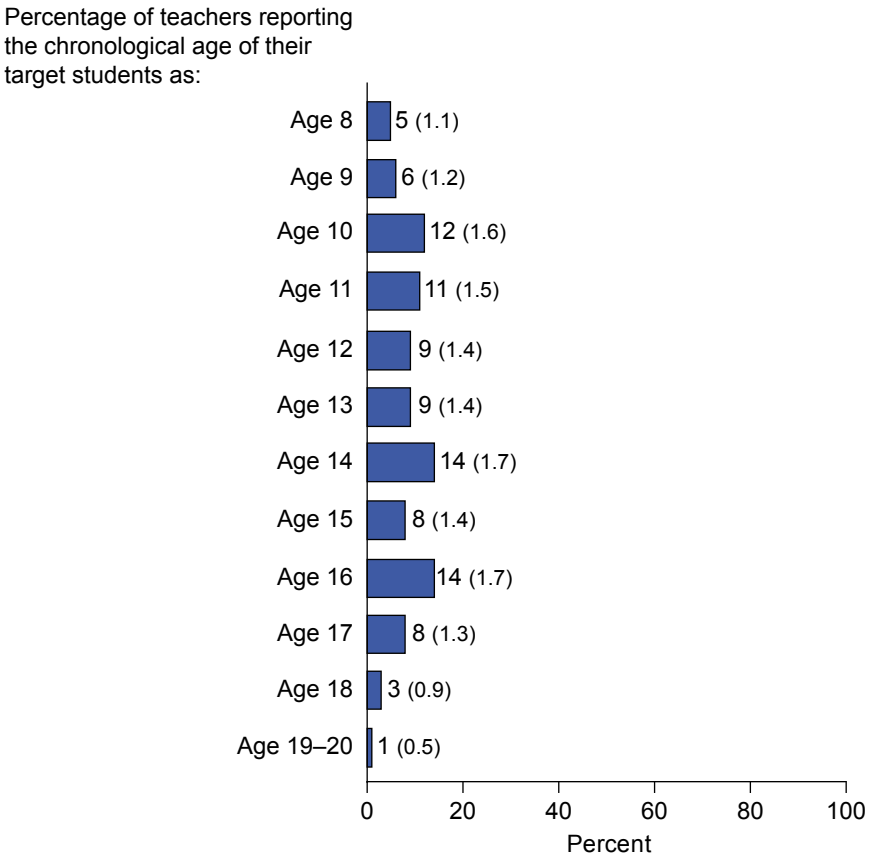
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Chronological age of target students

Teachers were asked, "What is your target student's chronological age?" Thirty-four percent of teachers reported that their target student was 8 to 11 years old (i.e., elementary school age), 32 percent reported that their target student was 12 to 14 years old (i.e., middle school age), and 34 percent reported that their target student was 15 to 20 years old (i.e., high school age) (figure 12).

- *8 to 11* – Five percent of teachers reported that their target student was age 8, 6 percent reported that their target student was age 9, 12 percent reported that their target student was age 10, and 11 percent reported that their target student was age 11.
- *12 to 14* – Nine percent of teachers reported that their target student was age 12, 9 percent reported that their target student was age 13, and 14 percent reported that their target student was age 14.
- *15 to 20* – Eight percent of teachers reported that their target student was age 15, 14 percent reported that their target student was age 16, 8 percent reported that their target student was age 17, 3 percent reported that their target student was age 18, and 1 percent reported that their target student was age 19 to 20.

Figure 12. Chronological age of target students



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 420 teachers.

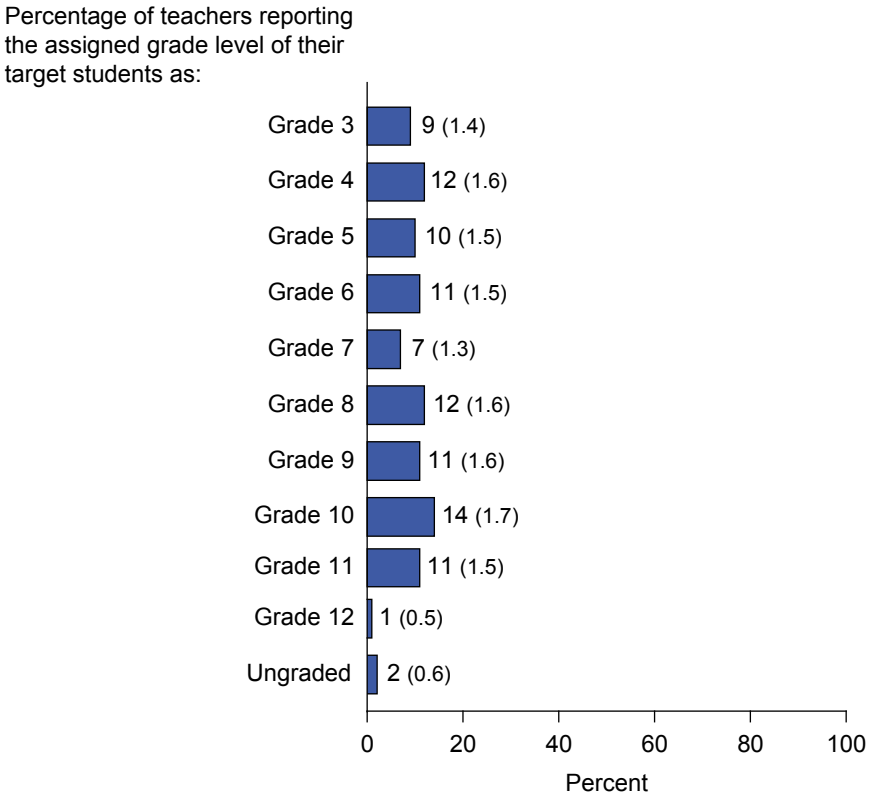
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Assigned grade level of target students

Teachers were asked, "What is your target student's assigned grade level?" Thirty-one percent of teachers reported that the target student was assigned to grades 3 to 5, 30 percent reported that the target student was assigned to grades 6 to 8, and 37 percent reported that the target student was assigned to grades 9 to 12 (figure 13).

- *3 to 5* – Nine percent of teachers reported that their target student was assigned to grade 3, 12 percent of teachers reported that their target student was assigned to grade 4, and 10 percent reported their target student was assigned to grade 5.
- *6 to 8* – Eleven percent of teachers reported that their target student was assigned to grade 6, 7 percent of teachers reported that their target student was assigned to grade 7, and 12 percent reported that their target student was assigned to grade 8.
- *9 to 12* – Eleven percent of teachers reported that their target student was assigned to grade 9, 14 percent of teachers reported that their target student was assigned to grade 10, 11 percent reported that their target student was assigned to grade 11, and 1 percent reported that their target student was assigned to grade 12.
- *Ungraded* – Two percent of teachers reported that their target student did not have an assigned grade level.

Figure 13. Assigned grade level of target students



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 420 teachers.

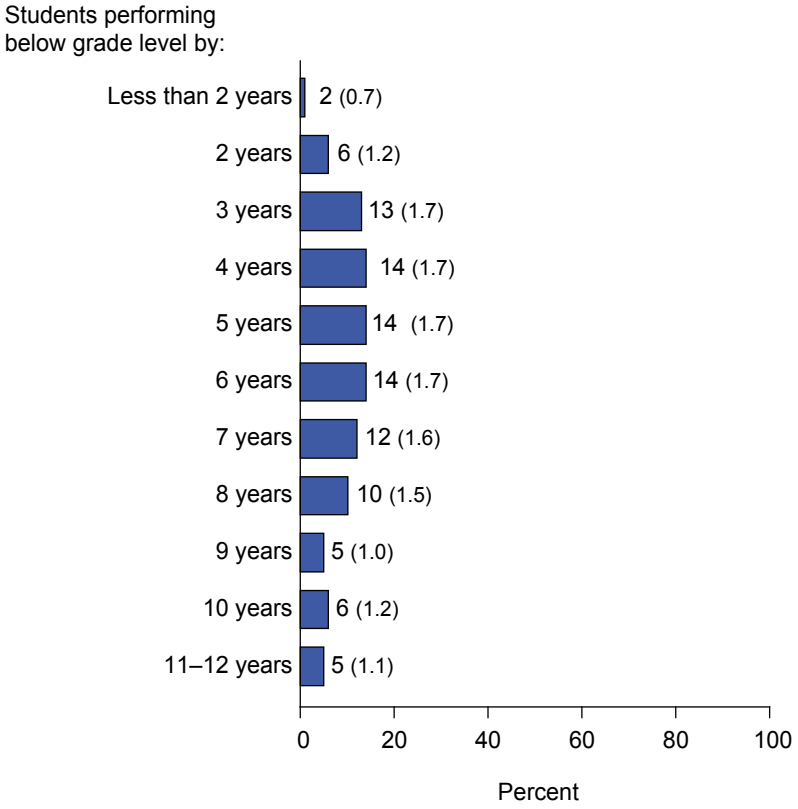
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Number of years below grade level at which target students were performing

The difference in number of years between grade-level assignment and grade-level performance was calculated for each target student and reported as the number of years below grade level. No students were performing at or above their assigned grade level. Forty-nine percent of teachers had a target student performing at least 5 years below grade level (figure 14).

- *Less than 2 years below grade level* – Two percent of teachers had target students performing less than 2 years below grade level.
- *2 years below grade level* – Six percent of teachers had target students performing 2 years below grade level.
- *3 years below grade level* – Thirteen percent of teachers had target students performing 3 years below grade level.
- *4 years below grade level* – Fourteen percent of teachers had target students performing 4 years below grade level.
- *5 years below grade level* – Fourteen percent of teachers had target students performing 5 years below grade level.
- *6 years below grade level* – Fourteen percent of teachers had target students performing 6 years below grade level.
- *7 years below grade level* – Twelve percent of teachers had target students performing 7 years below grade level.
- *8 years below grade level* – Ten percent of teachers had target students performing 8 years below grade level.
- *9 years below grade level* – Five percent of teachers had target students performing 9 years below grade level.
- *10 years below grade level* – Six percent of teachers had target students performing 10 years below grade level.
- *11 to 12 years below grade level* – Five percent of teachers had target students performing 11 to 12 years below grade level.

Figure 14. Number of years below grade level at which target students were performing



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 400 teachers.

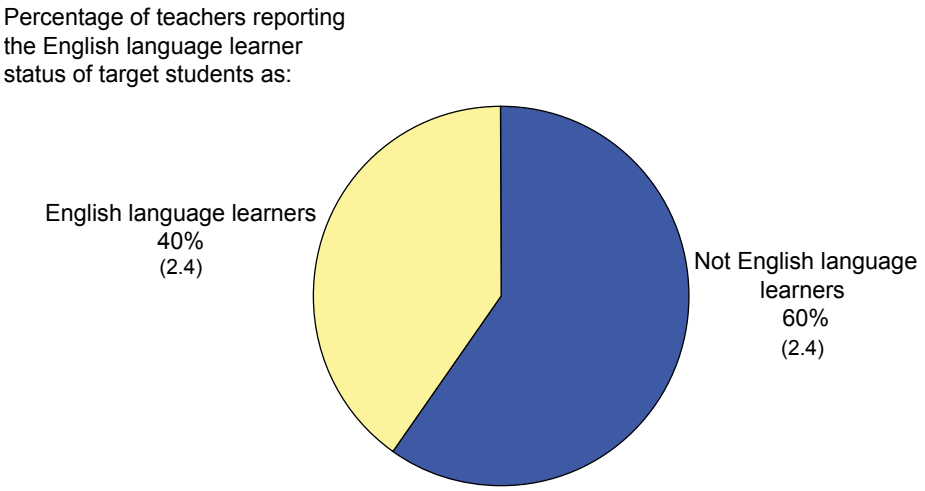
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

English language learner status of target students

Teachers were asked to report the English language learner status of their target student. Teachers were asked, "Is your target student an English language learner?" (figure 15).

- *No* – Sixty percent of teachers reported that their target student was not an English language learner.
- *Yes* – Forty percent of teachers reported that their target student was an English language learner.

Figure 15. English language learner status of target students



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 420 teachers.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Communication level of target students

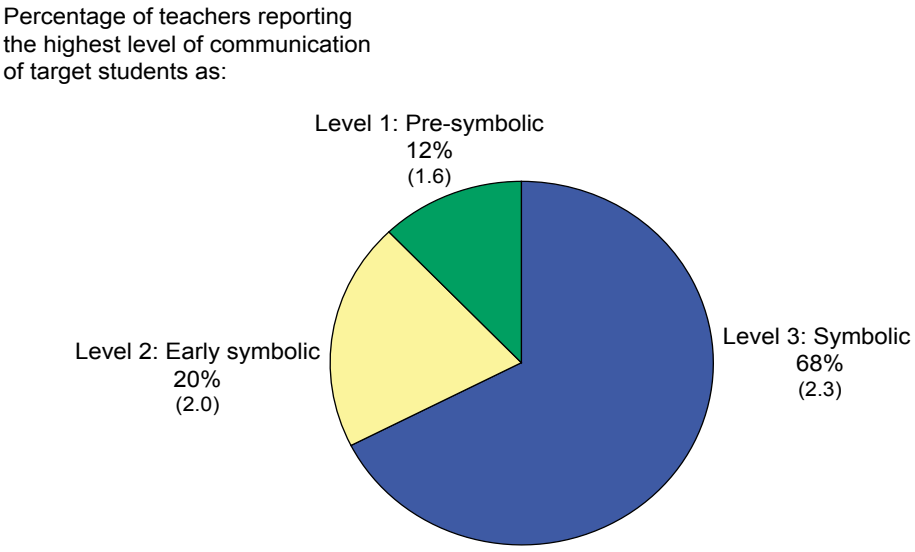
Teachers were asked to indicate which of three communication levels listed represented the highest level of communication exhibited by the target student. The three levels of communication provided to teachers were those described by Browder, Flowers, and Wakeman (2008). Teachers were asked, "Which of the communication levels listed best reflects the highest level at which your target student currently communicates?" The response options were "Level 1," "Level 2," and "Level 3."[5] Sixty-eight percent of teachers reported that the highest level at which their target student communicated was Level 3, or Symbolic (figure 16).

- *Level 3: Symbolic* – Sixty-eight percent of teachers reported that the target student's highest level of communication was symbolic.
- *Level 2: Early symbolic* – Twenty percent of teachers reported that the target student's highest level of communication was early symbolic.

[5] Communication levels were described as follows:
- Level 1: Pre-symbolic: Has not yet acquired the skills to discriminate between pictures or other symbols (and does not use symbols to communicate). May or may not use objects to communicate. May or may not use idiosyncratic gestures, sounds/vocalizations, and movements/touch to communicate with others. A direct and immediate relationship between a routine activity and the student's response may or may not be apparent. The student may have the capacity to sort very different objects, may be trial and error. Mouthing and manipulation of objects reads to knowledge of how objects are used. May combine objects (e.g., place one block on another).
- Level 2: Early symbolic: May use some symbols to communicate (e.g., pictures, logos, objects). Beginning to acquire symbols as part of a communication system. May have limited emerging functional academic skills. Representations probably need to be related to the student's immediate environment and needs.
- Level 3: Symbolic: Communicates with symbols (e.g., pictures) or words (e.g., spoken words, assistive technology, ASL, home signs). May have emerging or basic functional academic skills. Emerging writing or graphic representation for the purpose of conveying meaning through writing, drawing, or computer keying.

- *Level 1: Pre-symbolic* – Twelve percent of teachers reported that the target student's highest level of communication was pre-symbolic.

Figure 16. Communication level of target students



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 400 teachers.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Ability of target students in specific areas

Teachers were asked to choose the best description of their target student across several ability areas. The descriptions in the teacher survey were from the Learner Characteristics Inventory (LCI), which is described in detail in the Study Design section. These areas included communication and language; sensory and motor functioning; engagement, health and attendance; and target academics.

Communication and language

Teachers were asked to choose the best description of their target student for expressive communication[6] (figure 17) and receptive language[7] (figure 18). For expressive language, 70 percent of teachers reported that their target student used symbolic language. For receptive language, 46 percent of teachers indicated that their target student could follow 1- to 2-step directions independently.

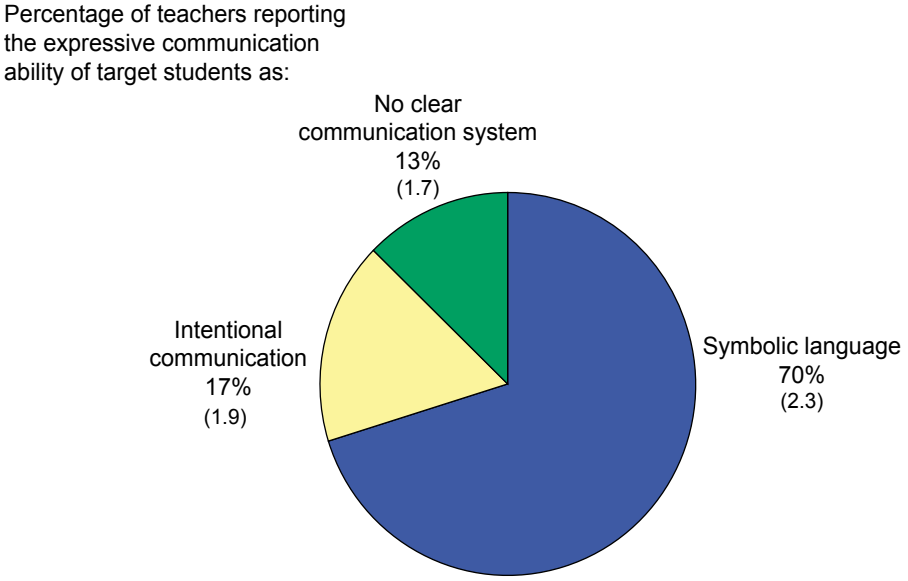
Expressive communication

- *Symbolic language* – Seventy percent of teachers reported that, in the area of expressive communication, their target student used symbolic language to communicate.
- *Intentional communication* – Seventeen percent of teachers reported that, in the area of expressive communication, their target student used intentional communication but not at the symbolic level.
- *No clear communication system* – Thirteen percent of teachers reported that, in the area of expressive communication, their target student communicated primarily through cries and facial expressions but had no clear use of objects/textures, regularized gestures, pictures, or signs to communicate.

[6] Expressive communication was described as follows:
- Uses symbolic language to communicate: Student uses verbal or written words, signs, Braille, or language-based augmentative systems to request, initiate, and respond to questions, describe things or events, and express refusal.
- Uses intentional communication, but not at a symbolic language level: Student uses understandable communication through such modes as gestures, pictures, objects/textures, points, etc., to clearly express a variety of intentions.
- Student communicates primarily through cries, facial expressions, change in muscle tone, etc., but no clear use of objects/textures, regularized gestures, pictures, signs, etc., to communicate.

[7] Receptive language was described as follows:
- Independently follows 1- to 2-step directions presented through words (e.g., words may be spoken, signed, printed, or any combination) and does not need additional cues.
- Requires additional cues (e.g., gestures, pictures, objects, or demonstration/models) to follow 1- to 2-step directions.
- Alerts to sensory input from another person (auditory, visual, touch, movement) but requires actual physical assistance to follow simple directions.
- Uncertain response to sensory stimuli (e.g., sound/voice, sight/gesture, touch, movement, smell).

Figure 17. Expressive communication ability of target students



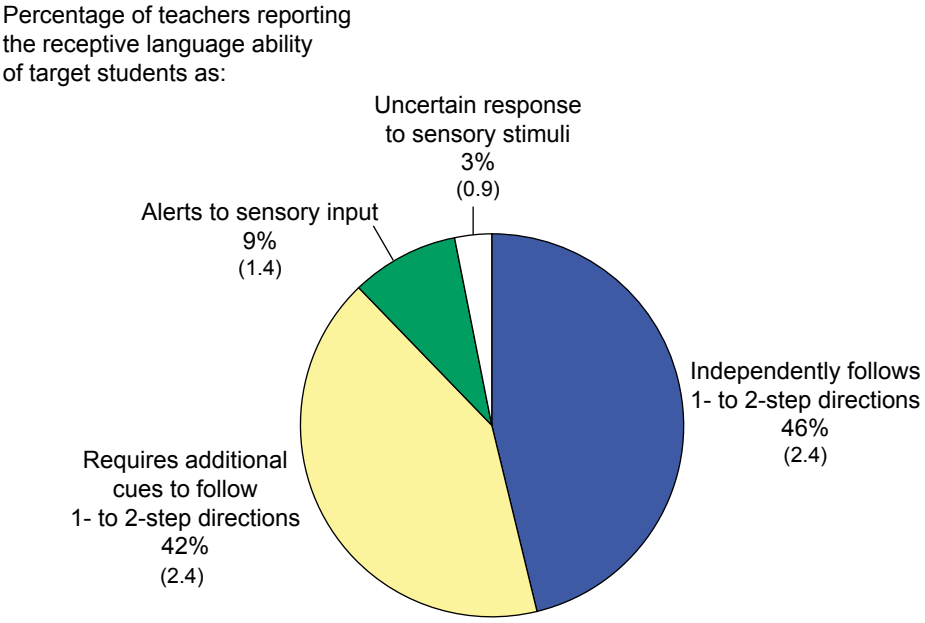
NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 410 teachers.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Receptive language

- *1- to 2-step directions* – Forty-six percent of teachers reported that, in the area of receptive language, their target student independently followed 1- to 2-step directions presented through words and did not need additional cues.
- *Additional cues to follow 1- to 2-step directions* – Forty-two percent of teachers reported that, in the area of receptive language, their target student required additional cues to follow 1- to 2-step directions.
- *Required physical assistance* – Twelve percent of teachers reported that, in the area of receptive language, their target student alerted to sensory input but required physical assistance to follow simple directions (9 percent) or had uncertain responses to sensory stimuli (3 percent).

Figure 18. Receptive language



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 420 teachers.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

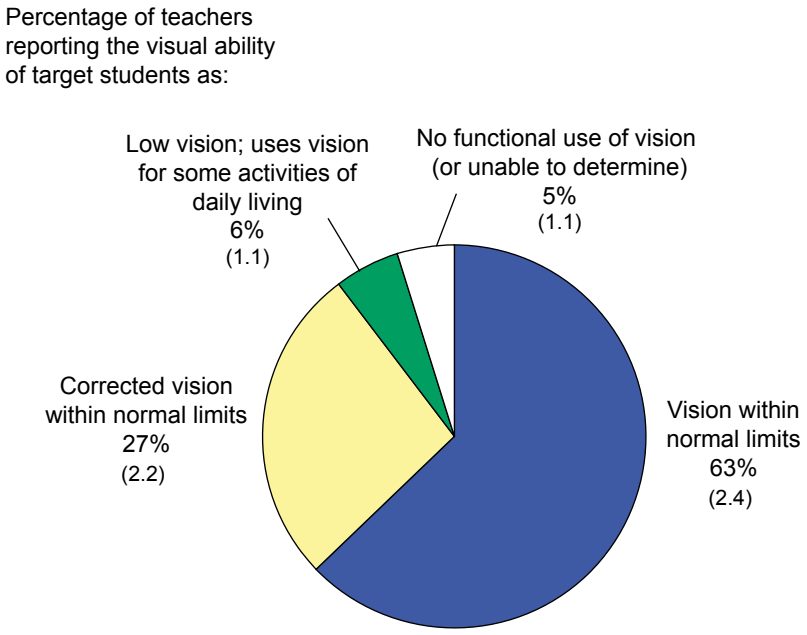
Vision, hearing, and motor functioning

Teachers were asked to choose the best description of their target student "for each ability area: vision, hearing, and motor" (figures 19 through 21). Ninety percent of teachers reported that their target student had normal vision with or without correction, and 93 percent of teachers reported that their target student had hearing within normal limits with or without the use of hearing aids. Seventy-nine percent of teachers indicated that their target student had no significant motor dysfunction.

Visual ability

- *Vision within normal limits* – Sixty-three percent of teachers reported that their target student had vision within normal limits.
- *Corrected vision within normal limits* – Twenty-seven percent of teachers reported that their target student had corrected vision within normal limits.
- *Low vision; uses vision for some activities of daily living* – Six percent of teachers reported that their target student had low vision.
- *No functional use of vision for activities of daily living, or unable to determine functional use of vision* – Five percent of teachers reported that their target student had no functional use of vision or that it was not possible to determine the functional use of vision.

Figure 19. Visual ability



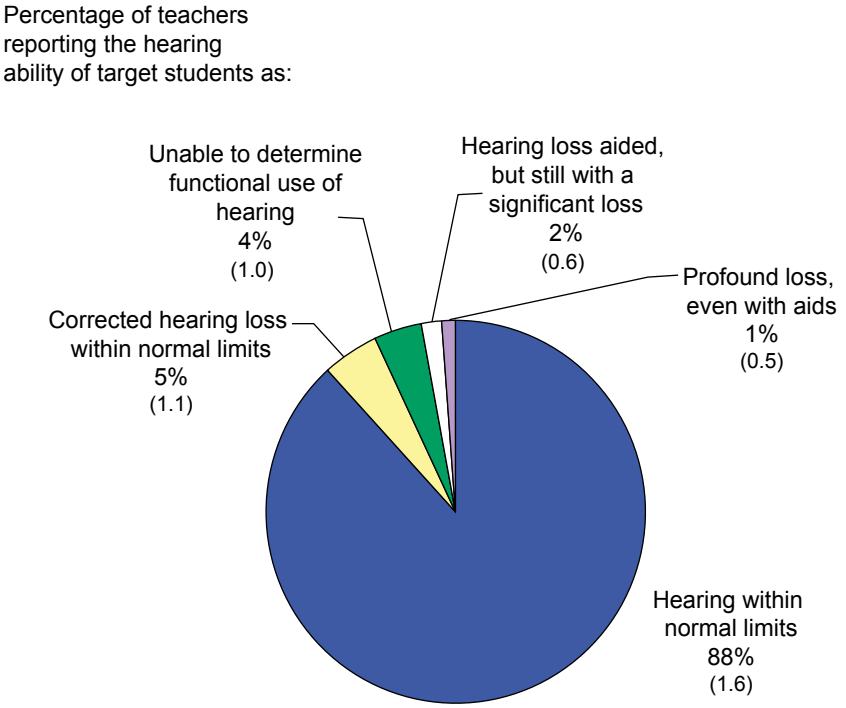
NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 420 teachers.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Hearing ability

- *Hearing within normal limits* – Eighty-eight percent of teachers reported that their target student had hearing within normal limits.
- *Corrected hearing loss within normal limits* – Five percent of teachers reported that their target student had corrected hearing within normal limits.
- *Hearing loss aided, but still with a significant loss* – Two percent of teachers reported that their target student had significant hearing loss.
- *Profound loss, even with aids* – One percent of teachers reported that their target student had profound loss, even with aids.
- *Unable to determine functional use of hearing* – Four percent of teachers reported that they were unable to determine their target student's functional use of hearing.

Figure 20. Hearing ability



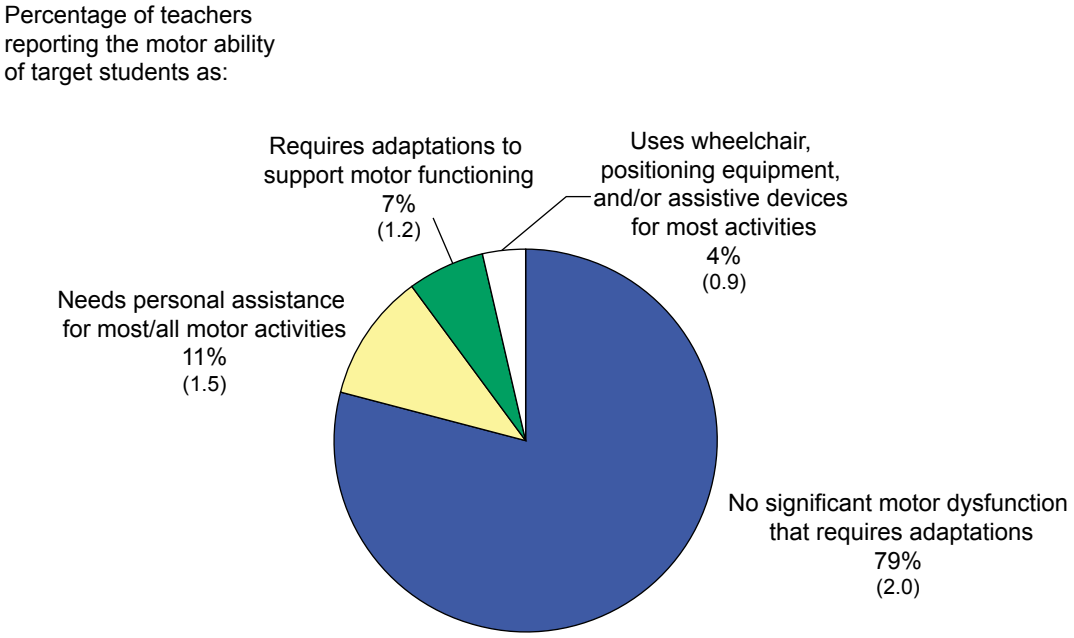
NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 420 teachers.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Motor ability

- *No significant motor dysfunction that requires adaptations* – Seventy-nine percent of teachers reported that their target student had no significant motor dysfunction.
- *Requires adaptations to support motor functioning (e.g., walker, adapted utensils, and/or keyboard)* – Seven percent of teachers responded that their target student required adaptations to support motor functioning.
- *Uses wheelchair, positioning equipment, and/or assistive devices for most activities* – Four percent of teachers reported that their target student used a wheelchair, positioning equipment, and/or assistive devices for most activities.
- *Needs personal assistance for most/all motor activities* – Eleven percent of teachers reported that their target student needed personal assistance for most/all motor activities.

Figure 21. Motor ability



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 420 teachers.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

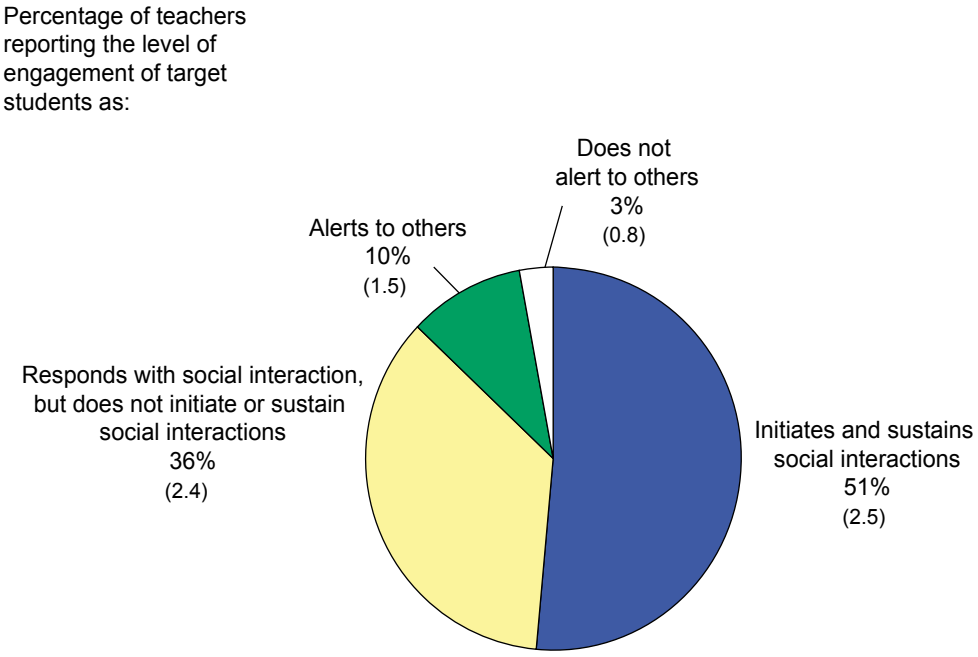
Engagement, health, and attendance of target students

Teachers were asked to choose the best description of their target student for engagement and for health issues and attendance (figures 22 and 23). Eighty-seven percent of teachers said that their target student either initiated and sustained social interactions or responded to social interactions. Eighty-seven percent of teachers said that their target student attended school at least 90 percent of school days.

Level of engagement

- *Initiates and sustains social interactions* – Fifty-one percent of teachers reported that their target student initiated and sustained social interactions.
- *Responds with social interaction, but does not initiate or sustain social interactions* – Thirty-six percent of teachers reported that their target student responded with social interaction but did not initiate or sustain it.
- *Alerts to others*– Ten percent of teachers reported that their target student's social interactions were limited to alerting to others.
- *Does not alert to others* – Three percent of teachers reported that their target student did not alert to others.

Figure 22. Level of engagement



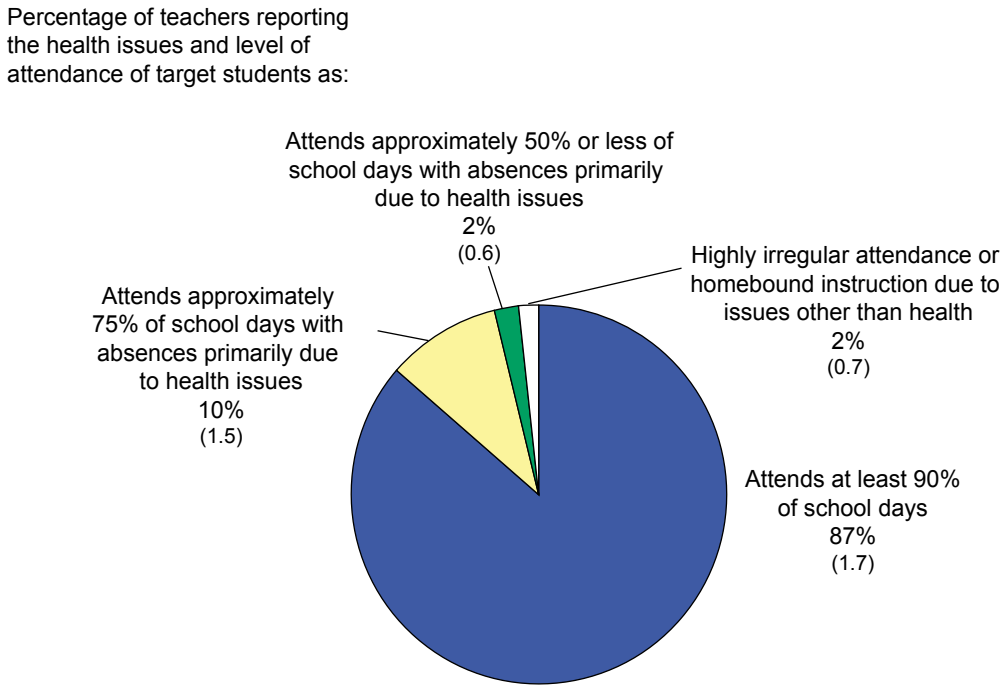
NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 420 teachers.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Health issues and school attendance

- *Attends at least 90 percent of school days* – Eighty-seven percent of teachers reported that their target student attended at least 90 percent of school days.
- *Attends approximately 75 percent of school days with absences primarily due to health issues* – Ten percent of teachers reported that their target student attended 75 percent of school days.
- *Attends approximately 50 percent or less of school days with absences primarily due to health issues* – Two percent of teachers reported that their target student attended approximately 50 percent or less of school days.
- *Highly irregular attendance or homebound instruction due to issues other than health* – Two percent of teachers reported that their target student had highly irregular attendance or received homebound instruction because of issues other than health.

Figure 23. Health issues and school attendance of target students



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 420 teachers.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Reading and mathematics

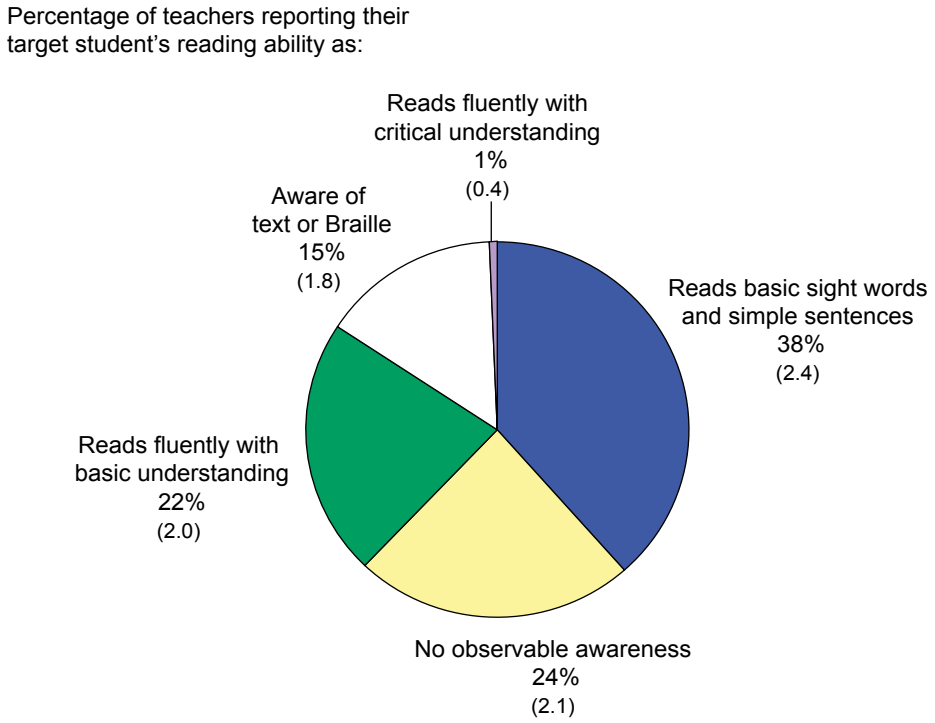
In the areas of reading and mathematics, teachers were asked to choose the best description of their target student's ability level (figures 24 and 25). Teachers reported that their target students' abilities in reading ranged from the ability to read basic sight words and simple sentences (38 percent) to reads fluently with critical understanding (1 percent). Teachers reported that target students varied in their mathematics skills from the ability to perform computational procedures with or without a calculator (47 percent) to the ability to apply computational procedures to solve problems from a variety of contexts (5 percent).

Reading ability

- *Reads fluently with critical understanding* – One percent of teachers reported that their target student read fluently with critical understanding in print or Braille to differentiate fact from opinion, point of view, or emotional response.
- *Reads fluently with basic understanding* – Twenty-two percent of teachers reported that their target student read fluently with basic understanding from paragraphs and short passages with narrative and informational texts in print or Braille.
- *Reads basic sight words and simple sentences* – Thirty-eight percent of teachers reported that their target student read basic sight words, simple sentences, directions, bullets, or lists in print or Braille.

- *Aware of text or Braille* – Fifteen percent of teachers reported that their target student was aware of text or Braille, followed directionality, made letter distinctions, or told a story from pictures that were not linked to the text.
- *No observable awareness* – Twenty-four percent of teachers reported that their target student had no observable awareness of print or Braille.

Figure 24. Reading ability



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 420 teachers.

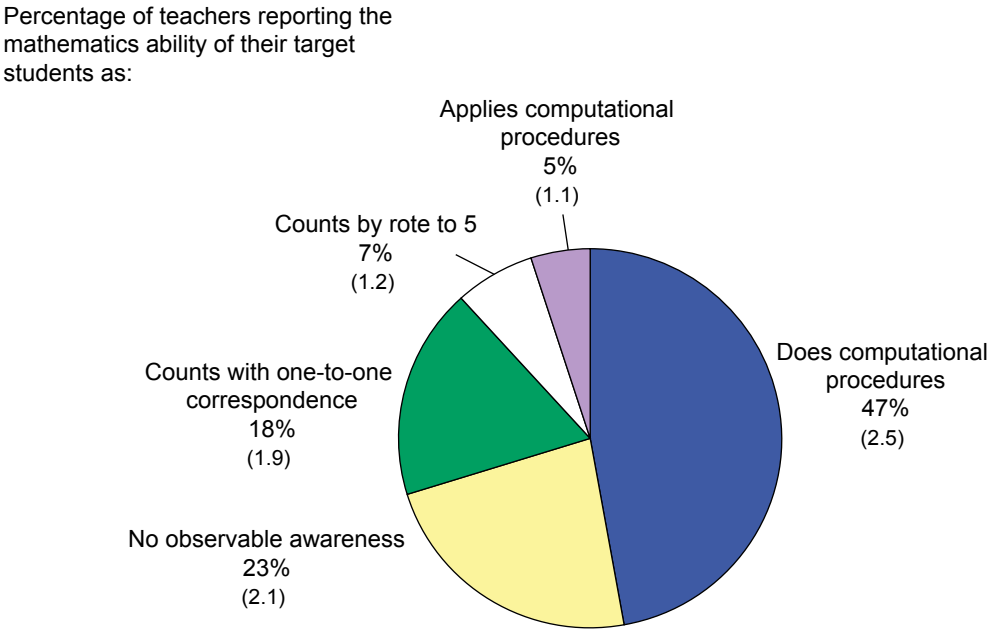
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Mathematics ability

- *Applies computational procedures* – Five percent of teachers reported that their target student applied computational procedures to solve real-life or routine word problems from a variety of contexts.
- *Does computational procedures* – Forty-seven percent of teachers reported that their target student performed computational procedures with or without a calculator.
- *Counts with one-to-one correspondence* – Eighteen percent of teachers reported that their target student counted with one-to-one correspondence to at least 10 and/or made numbered sets of items.
- *Counts by rote to 5* – Seven percent of teachers reported that their target student counted by rote to 5.

- *No observable awareness* – Twenty-three percent of teachers reported that their target student had no observable awareness or use of numbers.

Figure 25. Mathematics ability



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 420 teachers.

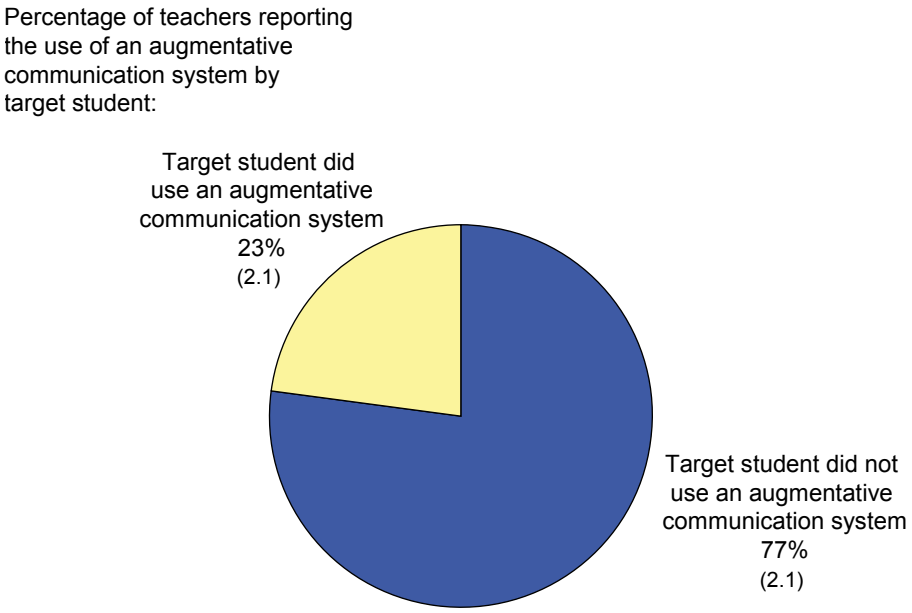
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Use of an augmentative communication system

Teachers were asked, "Does your target student use an augmentative communication system in addition to or in place of oral speech?" (figure 26). Seventy-seven percent of teachers reported that their target student did not use an augmentative communication system.

- *No* – Seventy-seven percent of teachers reported that their target student did not use an augmentative communication system in addition to or in place of oral speech.
- *Yes* – Twenty-three percent of teachers reported that their target student used an augmentative communication system in addition to or in place of oral speech.

Figure 26. Use of an augmentative communication system by target students



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SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009

Description of augmentative communication systems used

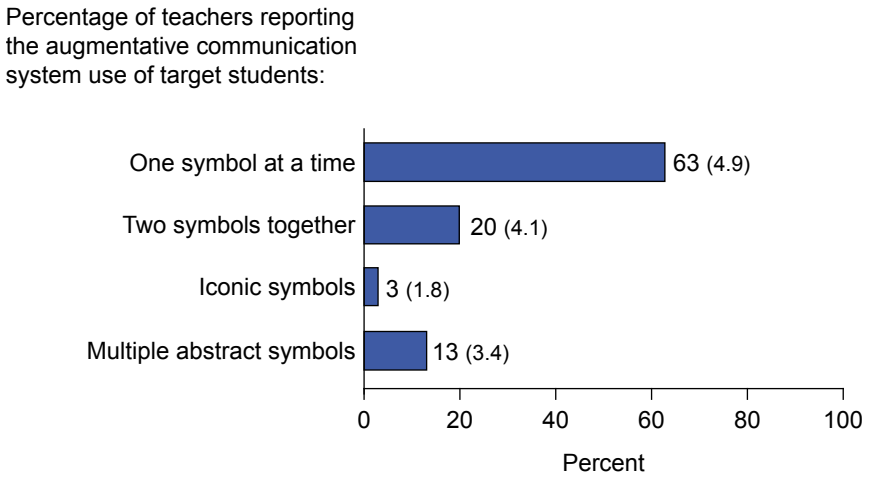
Teachers who had indicated that their target student used an augmentative communication system in addition to or in place of oral speech were then asked to "check the best description of your target student's use of the augmentative communication system."[8] Sixty-three percent of teachers who reported that their target student used an augmentative communication system reported that the student used one symbol at a time; 13 percent of teachers reported that their target student used multiple abstract symbols (figure 27).

- *One symbol at a time* – Sixty-three percent of teachers who had indicated that their target student used an augmentative communication system reported that the student used only one symbol at a time to express simple or early intents.
- *Two symbols together* – Twenty percent of teachers who had indicated that their target student used an augmentative communication system reported that the student combined two symbols together to express broader intents.

[8] Augmentative communication systems of students were described as follows:
- Uses only one symbol or sign at a time and is able to use only a few symbols in total to express simple or early intents (e.g., drink, eat, toilet, greeting, preferred activity, refusal).
- Can combine two symbols together to express broader intents such as social content, answer simple questions, etc. (e.g., expresses greetings, peer names, social exchanges, personal interests).
- Uses mostly iconic symbols (clear representations) or signs together in sequence to express functional intents, extensive social interactions, academic content, and to respond consistently to answer questions.
- Uses multiple abstract symbols, signs, or print in sentences or phrases on the augmentative communication system to express a variety of academic, social, and self-initiated interactions.

- *Iconic symbols* – Three percent of teachers who had indicated that their target students used an augmented communication system reported that the student used mostly iconic symbols or signs together in sequence to answer questions and express functional intents, extensive social interactions, and academic content.
- *Multiple abstract symbols* – Thirteen percent of teachers who had indicated that their target student used an augmentative communication system reported that the student used multiple abstract symbols, signs, or print in sentences or phrases to express a variety of academic, social, and self-initiated interactions.

Figure 27. Description of augmentative communication systems used by target students



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 100 teachers.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Instructional Settings of Target Students

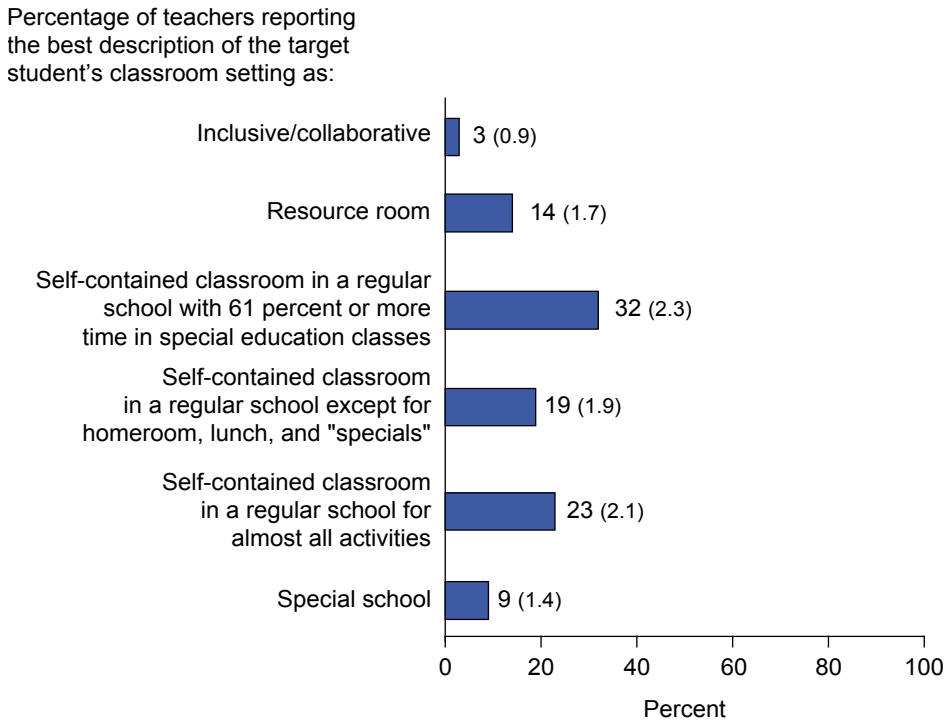
Classroom setting

Teachers were asked to indicate from five descriptions[9] of classroom settings the one that best described the environment where the target student received instruction. Teachers were asked, "What best describes the classroom setting for your target student?" Thirty-two percent of teachers reported that their target student's classroom setting was self-contained in a regular school with sixty-one percent or more time in special education classes. Three percent of teachers reported that their target student's classroom setting was inclusive/collaborative (figure 28).

- *Inclusive/collaborative* – Three percent of teachers reported that an inclusive or collaborative classroom best described their target student's instructional setting.
- *Resource room* – Fourteen percent of teachers reported that a resource room best described their target student's instructional setting.
- *Self-contained classroom in a regular school with 61 percent or more of time in special education classes* – Thirty-two percent of teachers reported that a self-contained classroom with some academic classes in the general education setting best described their target student's instructional setting.
- *Self-contained classroom in a regular school except for homeroom, lunch, and "specials"* – Nineteen percent of teachers reported that a self-contained setting with homeroom, lunch, and "specials" in general education best described their target student's instructional setting.
- *Self-contained classroom in a regular school for almost all activities* – Twenty-three percent of teachers reported that a self-contained classroom in a regular school best described their target student's instructional setting.
- *Special school* – Nine percent of teachers reported that a special school best described their target student's instructional setting.

[9] Classroom settings were described as follows:
- Inclusive/collaborative - students based in general education classes, special education services delivered in the general education class (at least 80 percent of the school day in general education classes).
- Resource room - e.g., children come for services and then go back to their general education classroom (at least 40 percent of the school day in general education classes).
- Self-contained, children go to some general education academic classes but return to special education (61 percent or more of the school day in special education classes).
- Regular school, self-contained classroom except for homeroom, lunch, and "specials."
- Regular school, self-contained classroom for almost all activities.
- Special school.

Figure 28. Classroom setting of target students



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 420 teachers.

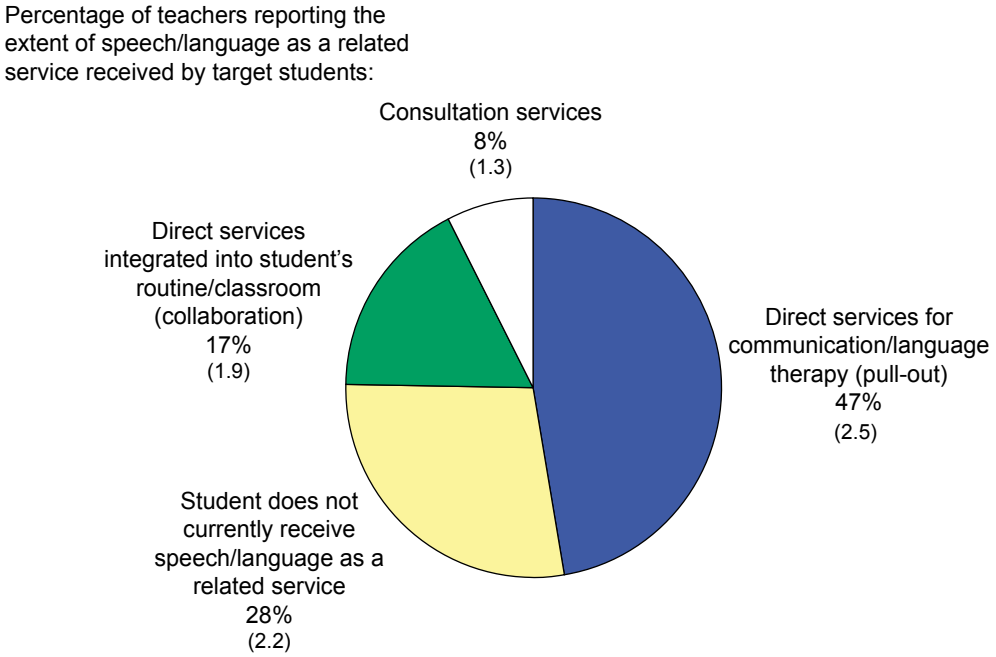
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Receipt of speech/language as a related service

Teachers were asked to describe the extent to which their target student received speech and language services. Teachers were asked to "check the best description of the extent to which your target student is receiving speech/language as a related service." Seventy-two percent of teachers reported that their target student received speech and language as a related service. According to 47 percent of teachers, their target student received direct speech and language services in a pull-out setting (figure 29).

- *Direct services for communication/language therapy (pull-out)* – Forty-seven percent of teachers reported that their target student received speech/language services as a direct service outside the classroom.
- *Direct services integrated into student's routine/classroom (collaboration)* – Seventeen percent of teachers reported that their target student received speech/language services integrated into the student's routine/classroom.
- *Consultation services* – Eight percent of teachers reported that their target student's speech/language services were provided as a consultation service to the teacher.
- *Student does not currently receive speech/language as a related service* – Twenty-eight percent of teachers reported that their target student did not receive speech/language as a related service.

Figure 29. Receipt of speech/language as a related service by target students



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 410 teachers.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Selected Findings

Selected findings for chapter 3 include:

- Seventy-eight percent of teachers reported that they have been teaching students with significant cognitive disabilities for at least 5 years, 65 percent of teachers taught reading/English language arts and mathematics and 62 percent of teachers taught science.
- Eighty-seven percent of teachers reported that they had between one to eight students in their classroom or on their caseload who took the alternate assessment.
- Forty-four percent of teachers reported that the primary disability category of their target student was mental retardation, 19 percent of teachers reported that the primary disability category of their target student was autism, and 18 percent of teachers reported that the primary disability category of their target student was multiple disabilities.
- Ninety-two percent of teachers reported that their target student was performing at least 3 years below grade level.

4. Clear Expectations and Motivation

Items in this section are linked to box 2 of the SBR model (described in the Study Design) and address the extent of potential instructional influences, teacher perceptions and use of alternate assessment results, teacher understanding of the alternate assessment system, and teacher perceptions of individual and local accountability systems. The specific research questions addressed in this section are as follows:

- To what extent is instruction influenced by alternate assessment requirements and results, state content standards and curriculum materials, instructional materials used in general education, local priorities or initiatives, and administrator expectations?
- What are teachers' perceptions of how the school or district uses alternate assessment results to allocate resources; evaluate, reward, or punish teachers; and develop school improvement plans?
- What are teachers' perceptions of whether parents and students understand the alternate assessment process and results?
- What are teachers' beliefs about the alternate assessment requirements and outcomes?
  - Do teachers support academic content instruction and accountability for students with significant cognitive disabilities?
  - Do teachers believe that alternate assessments reflect student skills, knowledge, and performance accurately?
  - Do teachers believe that students with significant cognitive disabilities can meet state academic content standards?
- What challenges or conflicts do teachers encounter in providing instruction to students with significant cognitive disabilities?

The results are presented in three sections: instructional influences, understanding of the system and stakeholders, and teacher expectations and beliefs.

Instructional Influences

Assessments serve a number of functions, such as guiding instructional decisions, monitoring progress, and holding schools and districts accountable for student performance (Elmore and Rothman, 1999). When an assessment is well aligned, covering the length and breadth of the state's academic content standards, it can provide valuable programmatic information at the district and school level and can also be used in conjunction with classroom assessments to provide information about individual student strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, results from state alternate assessments may provide useful information regarding the quality of instruction in academic content and help identify and target resources towards providing professional development, instructional materials, and teaching resources (Agran, Alper, and Weymeyer 2002; Flowers et al. 2005; Elliott, Braden, and White 2001; Greene-Bryant 2002, Hager and Slocum 2005; Karvonen et al. 2006).

The NSAA teacher survey gathered information on the extent of possible influences on instruction in reading/English language arts, mathematics, and science classes. For each academic content area, teachers were asked, "How much does each of the following influence

what you teach in [reading/English language arts] [math] [science] classes?" The response options were "Strong influence," "Moderate influence," "Minimal influence," and "No influence." Figures 30 and 31 depict teachers' responses for each influence and content area.

State alternate assessment requirements

Teachers were asked how much state alternate assessment requirements influenced what they taught in reading/English language arts, mathematics, and science classes. The percentage of teachers who reported that these requirements had a strong or moderate influence on their instruction ranged from 84 percent for science and 88 percent for reading/English language arts and mathematics (figure 30).

Reading/English language arts

- *Strong influence* – Fifty-eight percent of teachers reported that state alternate assessment requirements had a strong influence on their reading/English language arts instruction.
- *Moderate influence* – Thirty percent of teachers reported that state alternate assessment requirements had a moderate influence on their reading/English language arts instruction.
- *Minimal influence* – Nine percent of teachers reported that state alternate assessment requirements had minimal influence on their reading/English language arts instruction.
- *No influence* – Three percent of teachers reported that state alternate assessment requirements had no influence on their reading/English language arts instruction.

Mathematics

- *Strong influence* – Fifty-nine percent of teachers reported that state alternate assessment requirements had a strong influence on their mathematics instruction.
- *Moderate influence* – Twenty-nine percent of teachers reported that state alternate assessment requirements had a moderate influence on their mathematics instruction.
- *Minimal influence* – Nine percent of teachers reported that state alternate assessment requirements had minimal influence on their mathematics instruction.
- *No influence* – Two percent of teachers reported that state alternate assessment requirements had no influence on their mathematics instruction.

Science

- *Strong influence* – Fifty-nine percent of teachers reported that state alternate assessment requirements had a strong influence on their science instruction.
- *Moderate influence* – Twenty-five percent of teachers reported that state alternate assessment requirements had a moderate influence on their science instruction.
- *Minimal influence* – Ten percent of teachers reported that state alternate assessment requirements had minimal influence on their science instruction.
- *No influence* – Six percent of teachers reported that state alternate assessment requirements had no influence on their science instruction.

State alternate assessments results from previous years

Teachers were asked how much state alternate assessment results from previous years influenced what they taught in reading/English language arts, mathematics, and science classes. The percentage of teachers who reported that these results had a strong or moderate influence on their instruction ranged from 58 percent for science to 62 percent for mathematics (figure 30).

Reading/English language arts

- *Strong influence* – Thirty percent of teachers reported that state alternate assessment results from previous years had a strong influence on their reading/English language arts instruction.
- *Moderate influence* – Thirty percent of teachers reported that state alternate assessment results from previous years had a moderate influence on their reading/English language arts instruction.
- *Minimal influence* – Twenty-seven percent of teachers reported that state alternate assessment results from previous years had minimal influence on their reading/English language arts instruction.
- *No influence* – Thirteen percent of teachers reported that state alternate assessment results from previous years had no influence on their reading/English language arts instruction.

Mathematics

- *Strong influence* – Thirty-three percent of teachers reported that state alternate assessment results from previous years had a strong influence on their mathematics instruction.
- *Moderate influence* – Twenty-nine percent of teachers reported that state alternate assessment results from previous years had moderate influence on their mathematics instruction.
- *Minimal influence* – Twenty-seven percent of teachers reported that state alternate assessment results from previous years had minimal influence on their mathematics instruction.
- *No influence* – Eleven percent of teachers reported that state alternate assessment results from previous years had no influence on their mathematics instruction.

Science

- *Strong influence* – Twenty-eight percent of teachers reported that state alternate assessment results from previous years had a strong influence on their science instruction.
- *Moderate influence* – Thirty percent of teachers reported that state alternate assessment results from previous years had a moderate influence on their science instruction.
- *Minimal influence* –Twenty-four percent of teachers reported that state alternate assessment results from previous years had minimal influence on their science instruction.

- *No influence* – Eighteen percent of teachers reported that state alternate assessment results from previous years had no influence on their science instruction.

Student's needs as documented on Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)

Teachers were asked how much students' needs as documented on IEPs influenced what they taught in reading/English language arts, mathematics, and science classes. The percentage of teachers who reported that students' needs as documented on IEPs had a strong or moderate influence on their instruction ranged from 87 percent for science to 97 percent each for reading/English language arts and mathematics (figure 30).

Reading/English language arts

- *Strong influence* – Eighty-three percent of teachers reported that students' needs as documented on IEPs had a strong influence on their reading/English language arts instruction.
- *Moderate influence* – Fourteen percent of teachers reported that students' needs as documented on IEPs had a moderate influence on their reading/English language arts instruction.
- *Minimal influence* – Two percent of teachers reported that students' needs as documented on IEPs had minimal influence on their reading/English language arts instruction.
- *No influence* – One percent of teachers reported that students' needs as documented on IEPs had no influence on their reading/English language arts instruction.

Mathematics

- *Strong influence* – Eighty percent of teachers reported that students' needs as documented on IEPs had a strong influence on their mathematics instruction.
- *Moderate influence* – Seventeen percent of teachers reported that students' needs as documented on IEPs had a moderate influence on their mathematics instruction.
- *Minimal influence* – Two percent of teachers reported that students' needs as documented on IEPs had minimal influence on their mathematics instruction.
- *No influence* – One percent of teachers reported that students' needs as documented on IEPs had no influence on their mathematics instruction.

Science

- *Strong influence* – Sixty-nine percent of teachers reported that students' needs as documented on IEPs had a strong influence on their science instruction.
- *Moderate influence* – Eighteen percent of teachers reported that students' needs as documented on IEPs had a moderate influence on their science instruction.
- *Minimal influence* – Seven percent of teachers reported that students' needs as documented on IEPs had minimal influence on their science instruction.
- *No influence* – Five percent of teachers reported that students' needs as documented on IEPs had no influence on their science instruction.

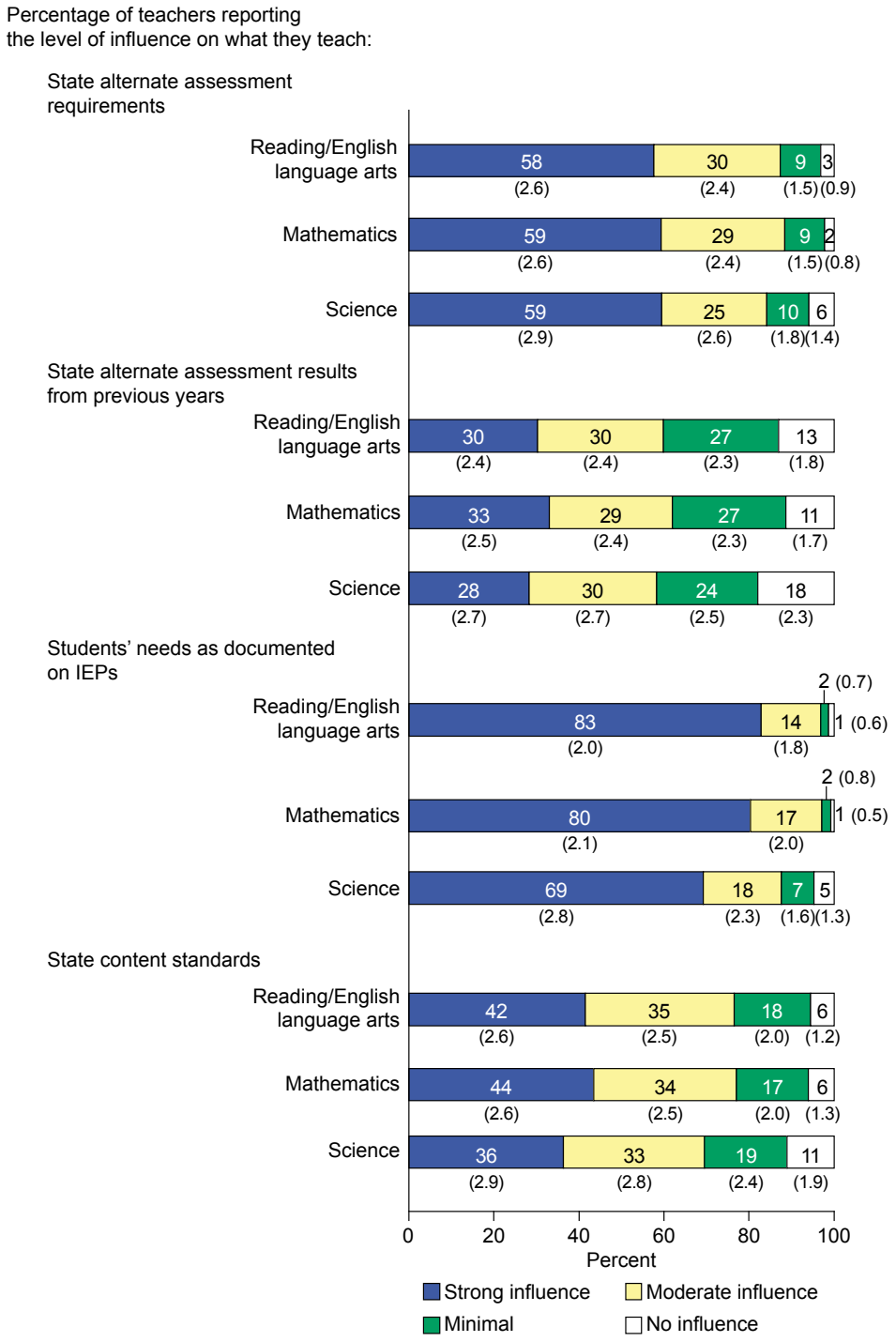
State content standards

Teachers were asked how much state content standards influenced what they taught in reading/English language arts, mathematics, and science classes. The percentage of teachers who reported that these standards had a strong or moderate influence on their instruction ranged from 69 percent for science to 77 percent for mathematics (figure 30).

Reading/English language arts

- *Strong influence* – Forty-two percent of teachers reported that state reading/English language arts content standards had a strong influence on their reading/English language arts instruction.
- *Moderate influence* – Thirty-five percent of teachers reported that state reading/English language arts content standards had a moderate influence on their reading/English language arts instruction.
- *Minimal influence* – Eighteen percent of teachers reported that state reading/English language arts content standards had minimal influence on their reading/English language arts instruction.
- *No influence* – Six percent of teachers reported that state reading/English language arts content standards had no influence on their reading/English language arts instruction.

Figure 30. Influences of state standards, alternate assessment requirements and results, and IEPs on instruction in reading/English language arts, mathematics, and science



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 370 teachers who provide instruction in reading/English language arts, 360 teachers who provide instruction in mathematics, and 280 teachers who provide instruction in science. Total numbers vary because teachers who did not teach a certain subject were instructed not to answer questions in that section.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Mathematics

- *Strong influence* – Forty-four percent of teachers reported that state mathematics content standards had a strong influence on their mathematics instruction.
- *Moderate influence* – Thirty-four percent of teachers reported that state mathematics content standards had a moderate influence on their mathematics instruction.
- *Minimal influence* – Seventeen percent of teachers reported that state mathematics content standards had minimal influence on their mathematics instruction.
- *No influence* – Six percent of teachers reported that state mathematics content standards had no influence on their mathematics instruction.

Science

- *Strong influence* – Thirty-six percent of teachers reported that state science content standards had a strong influence on their science instruction.
- *Moderate influence* – Thirty-three percent of teachers reported that state science content standards had a moderate influence on their science instruction.
- *Minimal influence* – Nineteen percent of teachers reported that state science content standards had minimal influence on their science instruction.
- *No influence* – Eleven percent of teachers reported that state science content standards had no influence on their science instruction.

State curriculum frameworks or guidance documents for curriculum scope and sequence

Teachers were asked how much state curriculum frameworks or guidance documents for curriculum scope and sequence influenced what they taught in reading/English language arts, mathematics, and science classes. The percentage of teachers who reported that these frameworks or guidance documents had a strong or moderate influence on their instruction ranged from 61 percent for science to 70 percent for reading/English language arts (figure 31).

Reading/English language arts

- *Strong influence* – Thirty-four percent of teachers reported that state reading/English language arts curriculum frameworks or guidance documents for curriculum scope and sequence had a strong influence on their reading/English language arts instruction.
- *Moderate influence* – Thirty-six percent of teachers reported that state reading/English language arts curriculum frameworks or guidance documents for curriculum scope and sequence had a moderate influence on their reading/English language arts instruction.
- *Minimal influence* – Twenty percent of teachers reported that state reading/English language arts curriculum frameworks or guidance documents for curriculum scope and sequence had minimal influence on their reading/English language arts instruction.
- *No influence* – Ten percent of teachers reported that state reading/English language arts curriculum frameworks or guidance documents for curriculum scope and sequence had no influence on their reading/English language arts instruction.

Mathematics

- *Strong influence* – Thirty-five percent of teachers reported that state mathematics curriculum frameworks or guidance documents for curriculum scope and sequence had a strong influence on their mathematics instruction.
- *Moderate influence* – Thirty-four percent of teachers reported that state mathematics curriculum frameworks or guidance documents for curriculum scope and sequence had a moderate influence on their mathematics instruction.
- *Minimal influence* – Twenty percent of teachers reported that state mathematics curriculum frameworks or guidance documents for curriculum scope and sequence had minimal influence on their mathematics instruction.
- *No influence* – Eleven percent of teachers reported that state mathematics curriculum frameworks or guidance documents for curriculum scope and sequence had no influence on their mathematics instruction.

Science

- *Strong influence* – Thirty-two percent of teachers reported that state science curriculum frameworks or guidance documents for curriculum scope and sequence had a strong influence on their science instruction.
- *Moderate influence* – Twenty-nine percent of teachers reported that state science curriculum frameworks or guidance documents for curriculum scope and sequence had a moderate influence on their science instruction.
- *Minimal influence* – Twenty-five percent of teachers reported that state science curriculum frameworks or guidance documents for curriculum scope and sequence had minimal influence on their science instruction.
- *No influence* – Fourteen percent of teachers reported that state science curriculum frameworks or guidance documents for curriculum scope and sequence had no influence on their science instruction.

Textbooks and instructional materials used in general education

Teachers were asked how much textbooks and instructional materials used in general education influenced what they taught in reading/English language arts, mathematics, and science classes. The percentage of teachers who reported that these materials had a strong or moderate influence on their instruction ranged from 34 percent for mathematics to 37 percent for science (figure 31).

Reading/English language arts

- *Strong influence* – Eight percent of teachers reported that textbooks and instructional materials used in general education had a strong influence on their reading/English language arts instruction.
- *Moderate influence* – Twenty-eight percent of teachers reported that textbooks and instructional materials used in general education had a moderate influence on their reading/English language arts instruction.

- *Minimal influence* – Thirty-seven percent of teachers reported that textbooks and instructional materials used in general education had minimal influence on their reading/English language arts instruction.
- *No influence* – Twenty-seven percent of teachers reported that textbooks and instructional materials used in general education had no influence on their reading/English language arts instruction.

Mathematics

- *Strong influence* – Eleven percent of teachers reported that textbooks and instructional materials used in general education had a strong influence on their mathematics instruction.
- *Moderate influence* – Twenty-three percent of teachers reported that textbooks and instructional materials used in general education had a moderate influence on their mathematics instruction.
- *Minimal influence* – Thirty-nine percent of teachers reported that textbooks and instructional materials used in general education had minimal influence on their mathematics instruction.
- *No influence* – Twenty-eight percent of teachers reported that textbooks and instructional materials used in general education had no influence on their mathematics instruction.

Science

- *Strong influence* – Ten percent of teachers reported that textbooks and instructional materials used in general education had a strong influence on their science instruction.
- *Moderate influence* – Twenty-seven percent of teachers reported that textbooks and instructional materials used in general education had a moderate influence on their science instruction.
- *Minimal influence* – Thirty-three percent of teachers reported that textbooks and instructional materials used in general education had minimal influence on their science instruction.
- *No influence* – Thirty percent of teachers reported that textbooks and instructional materials used in general education had no influence on their science instruction.

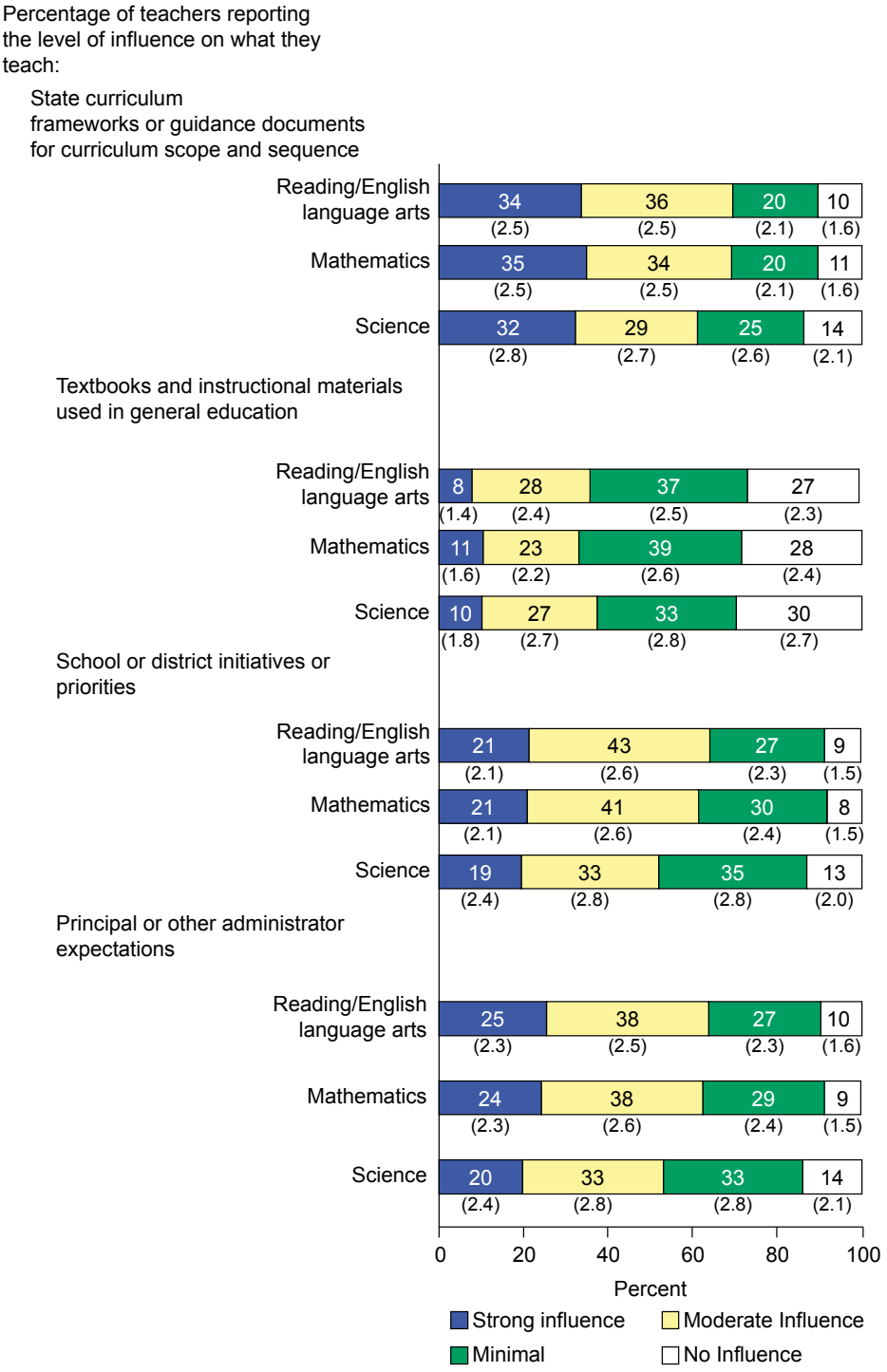
School or district initiatives or priorities

Teachers were asked how much school or district initiatives or priorities influenced what they taught in reading/English language arts, mathematics, and science classes. The percentage of teachers who reported that these initiatives had a strong or moderate influence on their instruction ranged from 52 percent for science to 64 percent for reading/English language arts (figure 31).

Reading/English language arts

- *Strong influence* – Twenty-one percent of teachers reported that school or district initiatives or priorities had a strong influence on their reading/English language arts instruction.

Figure 31. Influences of curriculum, materials, and local initiatives and expectations on instruction in reading/English language arts, mathematics, and science



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 370 teachers who provide instruction in reading/English language arts, 360 teachers who provide instruction in mathematics, and 280 teachers who provide instruction in science. Total numbers vary because teachers who did not teach a certain subject were instructed not to answer questions in that section.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

- *Moderate influence* – Forty-three percent of teachers reported that school or district initiatives or priorities had a moderate influence on their reading/English language arts instruction.
- *Minimal influence* – Twenty-seven percent of teachers reported that school or district initiatives or priorities had minimal influence on their reading/English language arts instruction.
- *No influence* – Nine percent of teachers reported that school or district initiatives or priorities had no influence on their reading/English language arts instruction.

Mathematics

- *Strong influence* – Twenty-one percent of teachers reported that school or district initiatives or priorities had a strong influence on their mathematics instruction.
- *Moderate influence* – Forty-one percent of teachers reported that school or district initiatives or priorities had a moderate influence on their mathematics instruction.
- *Minimal influence* – Thirty percent of teachers reported that school or district initiatives or priorities had minimal influence on their mathematics instruction.
- *No influence* – Eight percent of teachers reported that school or district initiatives or priorities had no influence on their mathematics instruction.

Science

- *Strong influence* – Nineteen percent of teachers reported that school or district initiatives or priorities had a strong influence on their science instruction.
- *Moderate influence* – Thirty-three percent of teachers reported that school or district initiatives or priorities had a moderate influence on their science instruction.
- *Minimal influence* – Thirty-five percent of teachers reported that school or district initiatives or priorities had minimal influence on their science instruction.
- *No influence* – Thirteen percent of teachers reported that school or district initiatives or priorities had no influence on their science instruction.

Principal or other administrator expectations

Teachers were asked how much principal or other administrator expectations influenced what they taught in reading/English language arts, mathematics, and science classes. The percentage of teachers who reported that these expectations had a strong or moderate influence on their instruction ranged from 53 percent for science to 63 percent for reading/English language arts (figure 31).

Reading/English language arts

- *Strong influence* – Twenty-five percent of teachers reported that principal or other administrator expectations had a strong influence on their reading/English language arts instruction.
- *Moderate influence* – Thirty-eight percent of teachers reported that principal or other administrator expectations had a moderate influence on their reading/English language arts instruction.

- *Minimal influence* – Twenty-seven percent of teachers reported that principal or other administrator expectations had minimal influence on their reading/English language arts instruction.
- *No influence* – Ten percent of teachers reported that principal or other administrator expectations had no influence on their reading/English language arts instruction.

Mathematics

- *Strong influence* – Twenty-four percent of teachers reported that principal or other administrator expectations had a strong influence on their mathematics instruction.
- *Moderate influence* – Thirty-eight percent of teachers reported that principal or other administrator expectations had a moderate influence on their mathematics instruction.
- *Minimal influence* – Twenty-nine percent of teachers reported that principal or other administrator expectations had minimal influence on their mathematics instruction.
- *No influence* – Nine percent of teachers reported that principal or other administrator expectations had no influence on their mathematics instruction.

Science

- *Strong influence* – Twenty percent of teachers reported that principal or other administrator expectations had a strong influence on their science instruction.
- *Moderate influence* – Thirty-three percent of teachers reported that principal or other administrator expectations had a moderate influence on their science instruction.
- *Minimal influence* – Thirty-three percent of teachers reported that principal or other administrator expectations had minimal influence on their science instruction.
- *No influence* – Fourteen percent of teachers reported that principal or other administrator expectations had no influence on their science instruction.

Understanding of the System and Stakeholders

The SBR model emphasizes that if it is to have positive effects on students and teachers then all stakeholders, especially district and school leaders must respond in supportive and constructive ways to its requirements. District and school leaders demonstrate support and commitment in the provision of time and resources to teachers—financial, instructional, and human, so that teachers can provide students with significant cognitive disabilities with an opportunity to learn academic content (Karvonen et al. 2006; McLaughlin and Nolet 2003). Little is known about the extent of understanding and support of school principals for alternate assessments and alternate achievement standards (Lasky and Karge 2006).

The NSAA teacher survey gathered information from teachers on their perceptions of how their school or district used the alternate assessment to evaluate student, teacher, and school performance. This section of the survey focused on teachers' beliefs about the following specific areas: how schools and districts used alternate assessment results, the inclusion of alternate assessment results in teacher performance evaluations and school improvement plans, consequences of alternate assessment outcomes in the school or district, and state expectations for students through the alternate assessment process. Additionally, teachers were asked to what extent they believed parents understood how to interpret the alternate assessment results and students were aware of their role in the alternate assessment process.

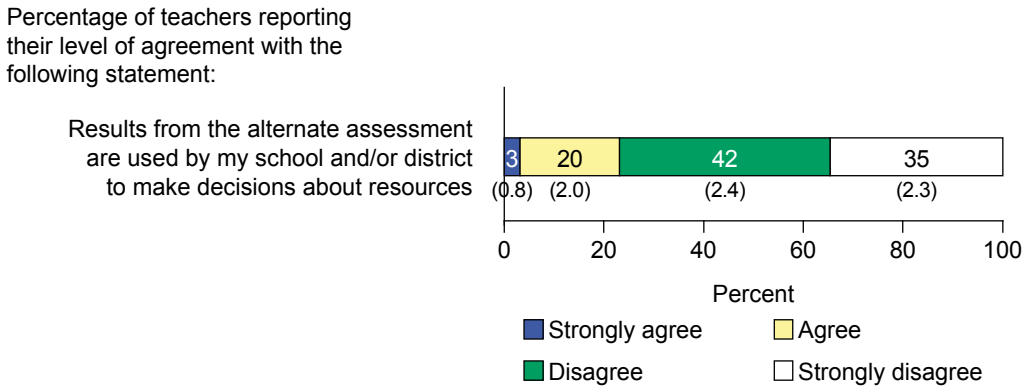
Use of alternate assessment results

Decisions about resources

Teachers were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement, "Results from the alternate assessment are used by my school and/or district to make decisions about resources (e.g., funds, staff, curricular materials, assistive technologies)." The response options were "Strongly agree," "Agree," "Disagree," and "Strongly disagree." Overall, 23 percent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that results from the alternate assessment are used by their school or district to make decisions about resources (figure 32).

- *Strongly agree* – Three percent of teachers strongly agreed that results from the alternate assessment are used by their school and/or district to make decisions about resources.
- *Agree* – Twenty percent of teachers agreed that results from the alternate assessment are used by their school and/or district to make decisions about resources.
- *Disagree* – Forty-two percent of teachers disagreed that results from the alternate assessment are used by their school and/or district to make decisions about resources.
- *Strongly disagree* – Thirty-five percent of teachers strongly disagreed that results from the alternate assessment are used by their school and/or district to make decisions about resources.

Figure 32. Use of alternate assessment results to make decisions about resources



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 410 teachers.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Teacher performance evaluations and school improvement plans

Teachers were asked, "In your school, are alternate assessment results included in the following: teacher performance evaluations, school improvement plans?" The response options were "Yes," "No," and "I don't know" (figure 33).

Teacher performance evaluations

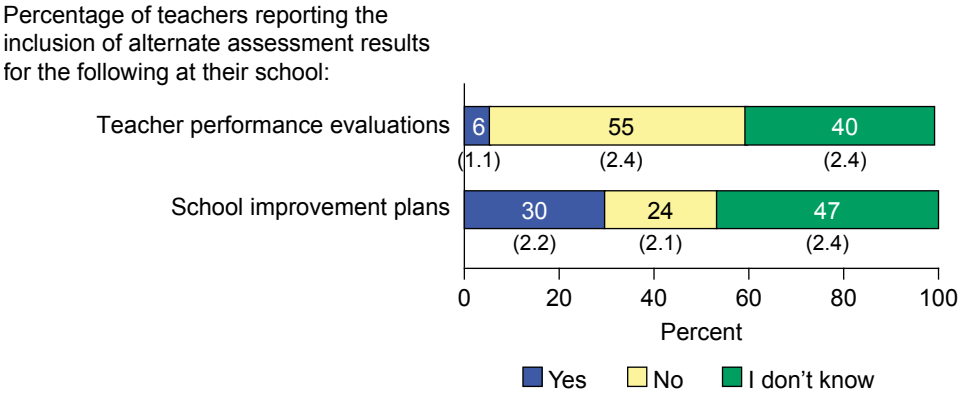
- *Yes* – Six percent of teachers reported that alternate assessment results were included in teacher performance evaluations.

- *No* – Fifty-five percent of teachers reported that alternate assessment results were not included in teacher performance evaluations.
- *I don't know* – Forty percent of teachers did not know whether alternate assessment results were included in teacher performance evaluations.

School improvement plans

- *Yes* – Thirty percent of teachers reported that alternate assessment results were included in school improvement plans.
- *No* – Twenty-four percent of teachers reported that alternate assessment results were not included in school improvement plans.
- *I don't know* – Forty-seven percent of teachers did not know whether alternate assessment results were included in school improvement plans.

Figure 33. Inclusion of alternate assessment results for teacher performance evaluations and school improvement plans



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 420 teachers.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

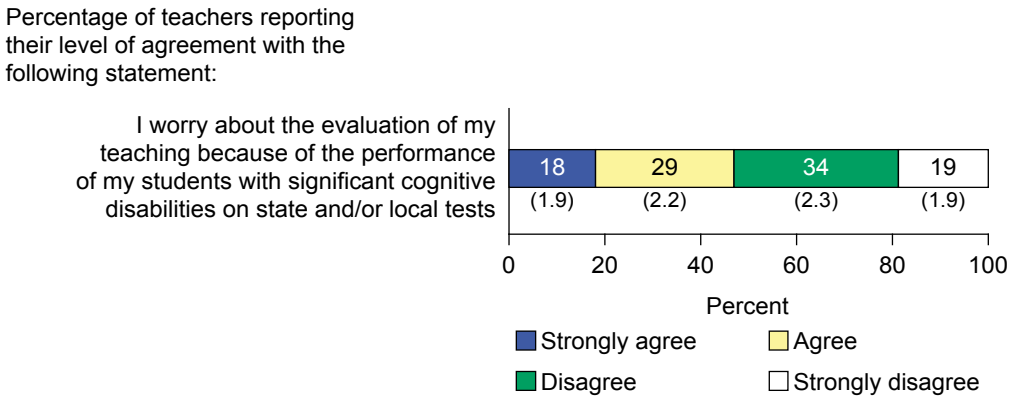
Teacher concerns about the use of assessment results for evaluation of teaching

Teachers were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement, "I worry about the evaluation of my teaching because of the performance of my students with significant cognitive disabilities on state and/or local tests." The response options were "Strongly agree," "Agree," "Disagree," and "Strongly disagree." Forty-seven percent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that they worry about the evaluation of their teaching because of the performance of their students with significant cognitive disabilities in state and local tests (figure 34).

- *Strongly agree* – Eighteen percent of teachers strongly agreed that they worry about the evaluation of their teaching because of the performance of their students with significant cognitive disabilities on state and local tests.
- *Agree* – Twenty-nine percent of teachers agreed that they worry about the evaluation of their teaching because of the performance of their students with significant cognitive disabilities on state and local tests.

- *Disagree* – Thirty-four percent of teachers disagreed that they worry about the evaluation of their teaching because of the performance of their students with significant cognitive disabilities on state and local tests.
- *Strongly disagree* – Nineteen percent of teachers strongly disagreed that they worry about the evaluation of their teaching because of the performance of their students with significant cognitive disabilities on state and local tests.

Figure 34. Teacher concerns about the use of alternate assessment results for evaluation of teaching



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 420 teachers.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

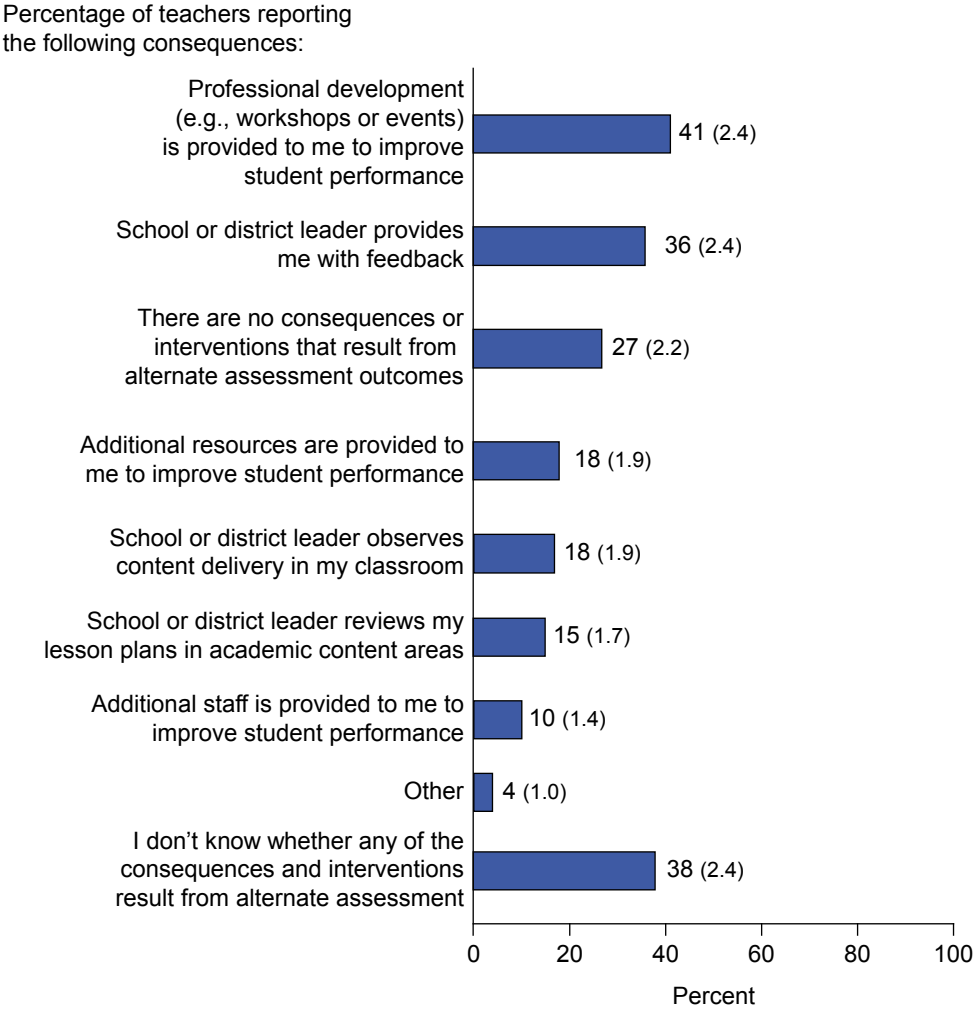
School or district consequences resulting from alternate assessment outcomes

Teachers were asked, "Which of the following can happen in your school or district as a result of alternate assessment outcomes of students in your classroom?" Teachers were instructed to "mark all that apply." Of those responding, the percentage of teachers who reported the consequences that can result from alternate assessment outcomes of students in their classroom ranged from 10 percent reporting additional staff was provided to improve student performance to 41 percent reporting that professional development was provided (figure 35).

- *Professional development (e.g., workshops or events) is provided to me to improve student performance* – Forty-one percent of teachers reported that professional development was provided.
- *A school or district leader*[10] *provides me with feedback* – Thirty-six percent of teachers reported that a school or district leader provided feedback.
- *There are no consequences or interventions in my school that result from alternate assessment outcomes* – Twenty-seven percent of teachers reported that there were no consequences or interventions associated with alternate assessment outcomes.

[10] School or district leaders may be school principals, school or district administrators, or teacher leaders.

Figure 35. School or district consequences resulting from students' alternate assessment outcomes



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because multiple responses were possible. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 420 teachers.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

- *Additional resources are provided to me to improve student performance* – Eighteen percent of teachers reported that additional resources were provided.
- *A school or district leader observes content delivery in my classroom* – Eighteen percent of teachers reported that a school or district leader observed content delivery.
- *A school or district leader reviews my lesson plans in academic content areas* – Fifteen percent of teachers reported that a school or district leader reviewed lesson plans in academic content areas.
- *Additional staff is provided to me to improve student performance* – Ten percent of teachers reported that additional staff was provided.
- *Other* – Four percent of teachers reported other consequences.

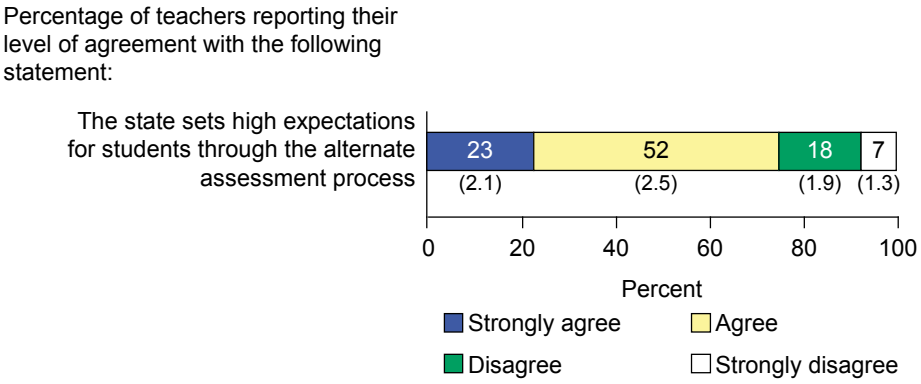
- *I don't know whether any of the consequences and interventions relate to alternate assessment outcomes* – Thirty-eight percent of teachers reported that they did not know whether any of the consequences and interventions were related to alternate assessment outcomes.

State expectations for students with significant cognitive disabilities

Teachers were asked the extent to which they agreed with the statement, "The state sets high expectations for students through the alternate assessment process." The response options were "Strongly agree," "Agree," "Disagree," and "Strongly disagree." Overall, 75 percent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that the state sets high expectations for students through the alternate assessment process (figure 36).

- *Strongly agree* – Twenty-three percent of teachers strongly agreed that their state sets high expectations for students through the alternate assessment process.
- *Agree* – Fifty-two percent of teachers agreed that their state sets high expectations for students through the alternate assessment process.
- *Disagree* – Eighteen percent of teachers disagreed that their state sets high expectations for students through the alternate assessment process.
- *Strongly disagree* – Seven percent of teachers strongly disagreed that their state sets high expectations for students through the alternate assessment process.

Figure 36. State expectations for students with significant cognitive disabilities



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 420 teachers.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Parent understanding and student awareness

The NSAA teacher survey gathered information from teachers regarding the extent to which they believed parents understood how to interpret the alternate assessment results and students were aware of their role in the alternate assessment process and understood the meaning of alternate assessment scores.

Parent understanding of results from the alternate assessment

Teachers were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement, "Parents of my students understand the results from the alternate assessment." The response options were "Strongly agree," "Agree," "Disagree," "Strongly disagree," and "I don't know." Overall, 33 percent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that parents of their students understand the results from the alternate assessment (figure 37).

- *Strongly agree* – Three percent of teachers strongly agreed that parents understand the results from the alternate assessment.
- *Agree* – Thirty percent of teachers agreed that parents understand the results from the alternate assessment.
- *Disagree* – Forty-two percent of teachers disagreed that parents understand the results from the alternate assessment.
- *Strongly disagree* – Seventeen percent of teachers strongly disagreed that parents understand the results from the alternate assessment.
- *I don't know* – Eight percent of teachers did not know whether parents understand the results from the alternate assessment.

Student awareness of the alternate assessment process

Teachers were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement, "Most of my students are aware of the alternate assessment process." The response options were "Strongly agree," "Agree," "Disagree," "Strongly disagree," and "I don't know." Overall, 48 percent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that most of their students are aware of the alternate assessment process (figure 37).

- *Strongly agree* – Twelve percent of teachers strongly agreed that most of their students are aware of the alternate assessment process.
- *Agree* – Thirty-six percent of teachers agreed that most of their students are aware of the alternate assessment process.
- *Disagree* – Twenty-six percent of teachers disagreed that most of their students are aware of the alternate assessment process.
- *Strongly disagree* – Twenty-six percent of teachers strongly disagreed that most of their students are aware of the alternate assessment process.

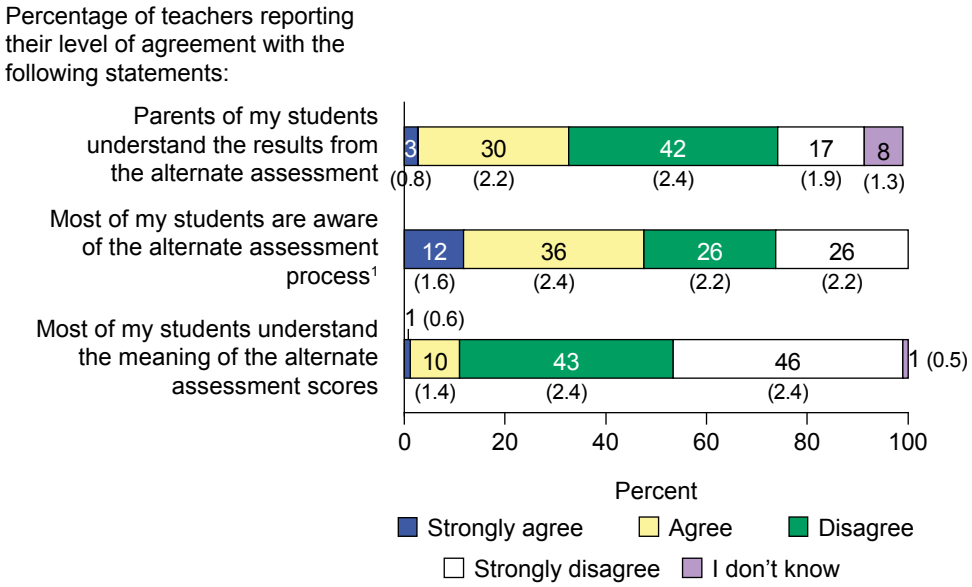
Student understanding of the meaning of alternate assessment scores

Teachers were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement, "Most of my students understand the meaning of the alternate assessment scores." The response options were "Strongly agree," "Agree," "Disagree," "Strongly disagree," and "I don't know." Overall, 11 percent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that most of their students understand the meaning of the alternate assessment scores (figure 37).

- *Strongly agree* – One percent of teachers strongly agreed that most of their students understand the meaning of the alternate assessment scores.
- *Agree* – Ten percent of teachers agreed that most of their students understand the meaning of the alternate assessment scores.

- *Disagree* – Forty-three percent of teachers disagreed that most of their students understand the meaning of the alternate assessment scores.
- *Strongly disagree* – Forty-six percent of teachers strongly disagreed that most of their students understand the meaning of the alternate assessment scores.
- *I don't know* – One percent of teachers did not know whether students understand the meaning of the alternate assessment scores.

Figure 37. Student and parent understanding of the alternate assessment system



[1] The data for "I don't know" did not meet reporting standards.

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 420 teachers.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Teacher Expectations and Beliefs

Based on existing research, it is still an open question about the extent to which teachers of students with significant cognitive disabilities support high stakes accountability testing. Karvonen, et al. (2006) and Flowers, et al. (2005) reported that teachers in states that included alternate assessment scores in their accountability systems (before required by ESEA) compared with states that did not were more invested in the process and identified more benefits for students in terms of progress and access to the curriculum. The NSAA teacher survey gathered information on the degree of instructional challenges teachers faced when considering assessment requirements and expectations. It also gathered information on teachers' perceptions of the purposes and outcomes of the alternate assessment.

Benefit of including students in the accountability system

Teachers were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement, "Students with significant cognitive disabilities benefit from inclusion in the accountability system." The response options were "Strongly agree," "Agree," "Disagree," and "Strongly disagree." Overall,

46 percent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that students with significant cognitive disabilities benefit from inclusion in the accountability system (figure 38).

- *Strongly agree* – Nine percent of teachers strongly agreed that students with significant cognitive disabilities benefit from inclusion in the accountability system.
- *Agree* – Thirty-seven percent of teachers agreed that students with significant cognitive disabilities benefit from inclusion in the accountability system.
- *Disagree* – Thirty percent of teachers disagreed that students with significant cognitive disabilities benefit from inclusion in the accountability system.
- *Strongly disagree* – Twenty-four percent of teachers strongly disagreed that students with significant cognitive disabilities benefit from inclusion in the accountability system.

Measurement of skills and knowledge

Teachers were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement, "The alternate assessment measures the skills and knowledge that are specific to the instructional needs of students with significant cognitive disabilities." The response options were "Strongly agree," "Agree," "Disagree," and "Strongly disagree." Overall, 43 percent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that the alternate assessment measures the skills and knowledge specific to the instructional needs of students with significant cognitive disabilities (figure 38).

- *Strongly agree* – Thirteen percent of teachers strongly agreed that the alternate assessment measures the skills and knowledge specific to the instructional needs of students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- *Agree* – Thirty percent of teachers agreed that the alternate assessment measures the skills and knowledge specific to the instructional needs of students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- *Disagree* – Twenty-nine percent of teachers disagreed that the alternate assessment measures the skills and knowledge specific to the instructional needs of students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- *Strongly disagree* – Twenty-nine percent of teachers strongly disagreed that the alternate assessment measures the skills and knowledge specific to the instructional needs of students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Alternate assessments reflecting student performance

Teachers were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement, "Results from the alternate assessment accurately reflect the performance of my students at their various ability levels." The response options were "Strongly agree," "Agree," "Disagree," and "Strongly disagree." Overall, 41 percent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that results from the alternate assessment accurately reflect the performance of their students at their various ability levels (figure 38).

- *Strongly agree* – Seven percent of teachers strongly agreed that results from the alternate assessment accurately reflect the performance of their students at their various ability levels.

- *Agree* – Thirty-four percent of teachers agreed that results from the alternate assessment accurately reflect the performance of their students at their various ability levels.
- *Disagree* – Thirty percent of teachers disagreed that results from the alternate assessment accurately reflect the performance of their students at their various ability levels.
- *Strongly disagree* – Twenty-nine percent of teachers strongly disagreed that results from the alternate assessment accurately reflect the performance of their students at their various ability levels.

Alternate assessment scores reflecting actual student achievement

Teachers were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement, "Alternate assessment scores reflect the actual achievement of the students." The response options were "Strongly agree," "Agree," "Disagree," and "Strongly disagree." Overall, 31 percent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that alternate assessment scores reflect the actual achievement of students (figure 38).

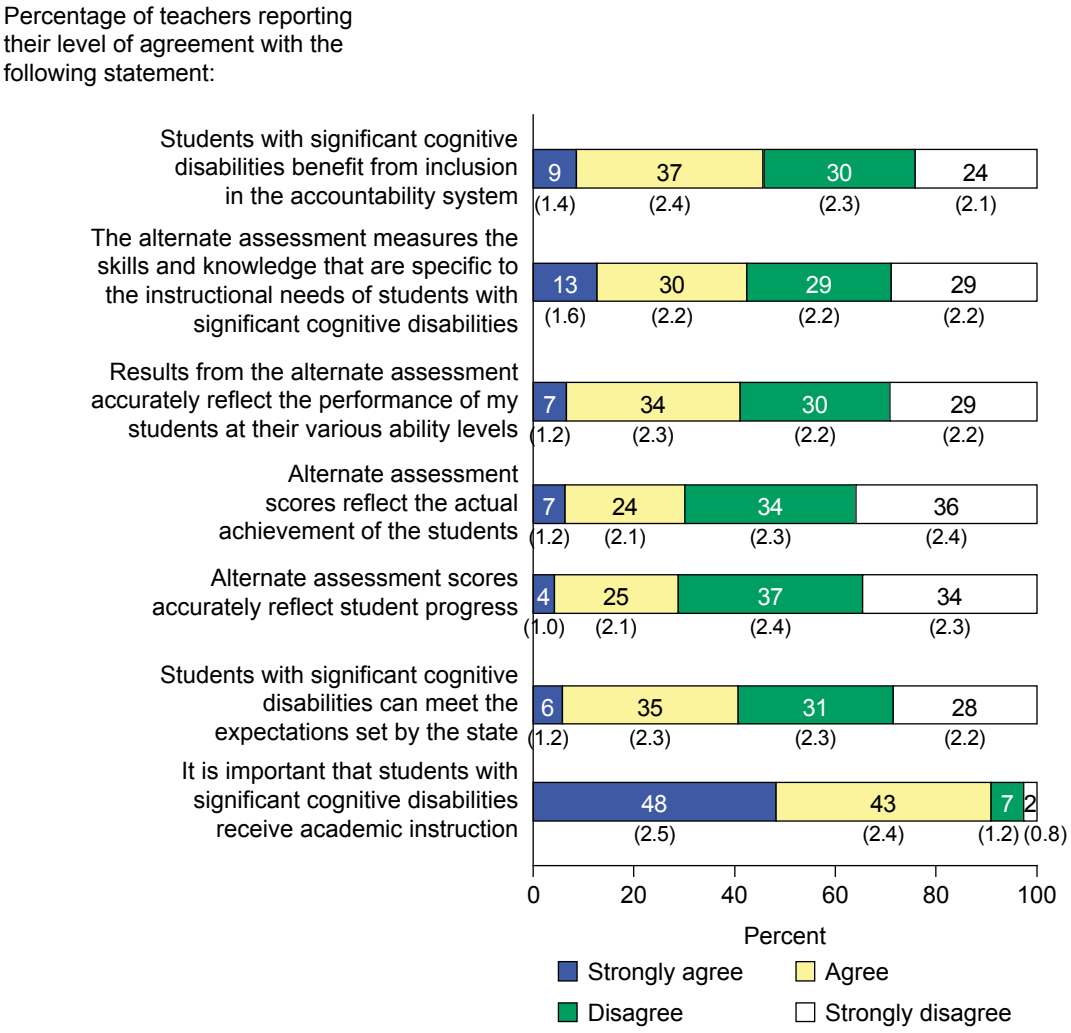
- *Strongly agree* – Seven percent of teachers strongly agreed that alternate assessment scores reflect the actual achievement of students.
- *Agree* – Twenty-four percent of teachers agreed that alternate assessment scores reflect the actual achievement of students.
- *Disagree* – Thirty-four percent of teachers disagreed that alternate assessment scores reflect the actual achievement of students.
- *Strongly disagree* – Thirty-six percent of teachers strongly disagreed that alternate assessment scores reflect the actual achievement of students.

Alternate assessment scores reflecting student progress

Teachers were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement, "Alternate assessment scores accurately reflect student progress." The response options were "Strongly agree," "Agree," "Disagree," and "Strongly disagree." Overall, 29 percent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that alternate assessment scores accurately reflect student progress (figure 38).

- *Strongly agree* – Four percent of teachers strongly agreed that alternate assessment scores accurately reflect student progress.
- *Agree* – Twenty-five percent of teachers agreed that alternate assessment scores accurately reflect student progress.
- *Disagree* – Thirty-seven percent of teachers disagreed that alternate assessment scores accurately reflect student progress.
- *Strongly disagree* – Thirty-four percent of teachers strongly disagreed that alternate assessment scores accurately reflect student progress.

Figure 38. Benefits, results, and expectations of the alternate assessment system



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on samples that ranged from 410 to 420 teachers.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Ability of students with significant cognitive disabilities to meet state expectations

Teachers were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement, "Students with significant cognitive disabilities can meet the expectations set by the state." The response options were "Strongly agree," "Agree," "Disagree," and "Strongly disagree." Overall, 41 percent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that students with significant cognitive disabilities can meet the expectations set by the state (figure 38).

- *Strongly agree* – Six percent of teachers strongly agreed that students with significant cognitive disabilities can meet the expectations set by the state.

- *Agree* – Thirty-five percent of teachers agreed that students with significant cognitive disabilities can meet the expectations set by the state.
- *Disagree* – Thirty-one percent of teachers disagreed that students with significant cognitive disabilities can meet the expectations set by the state.
- *Strongly disagree* – Twenty-eight percent of teachers strongly disagreed that students with significant cognitive disabilities can meet the expectations set by the state.

Importance of academic instruction for students with significant cognitive disabilities

Teachers were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement, "It is important that students with significant cognitive disabilities receive academic instruction." The response options were "Strongly agree," "Agree," "Disagree," and "Strongly disagree." Overall, 91 percent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that it is important that students with significant cognitive disabilities receive academic instruction (figure 38).

- *Strongly agree* – Forty-eight percent of teachers strongly agreed that it is important that students with significant cognitive disabilities receive academic instruction.
- *Agree* – Forty-three percent of teachers agreed that it is important that students with significant cognitive disabilities receive academic instruction.
- *Disagree* – Seven percent of teachers disagreed that it is important that students with significant cognitive disabilities receive academic instruction.
- *Strongly disagree* – Two percent of teachers strongly disagreed that it is important that students with significant cognitive disabilities receive academic instruction.

Potential academic and instructional conflicts

Teachers were presented with a list of potential conflicts that they might experience in providing instruction to students with significant cognitive disabilities who take the alternate assessment. They were asked, "How great a challenge is each of these conflicts for you?" The response options were "Large challenge," "Moderate challenge," and "No challenge." The percentage of teachers who reported that these potential conflicts were large or moderate challenges ranged from 49 percent for parental preferences versus requirements of the alternate assessment to 96 percent for routine duties and paperwork versus time with students (figure 39).

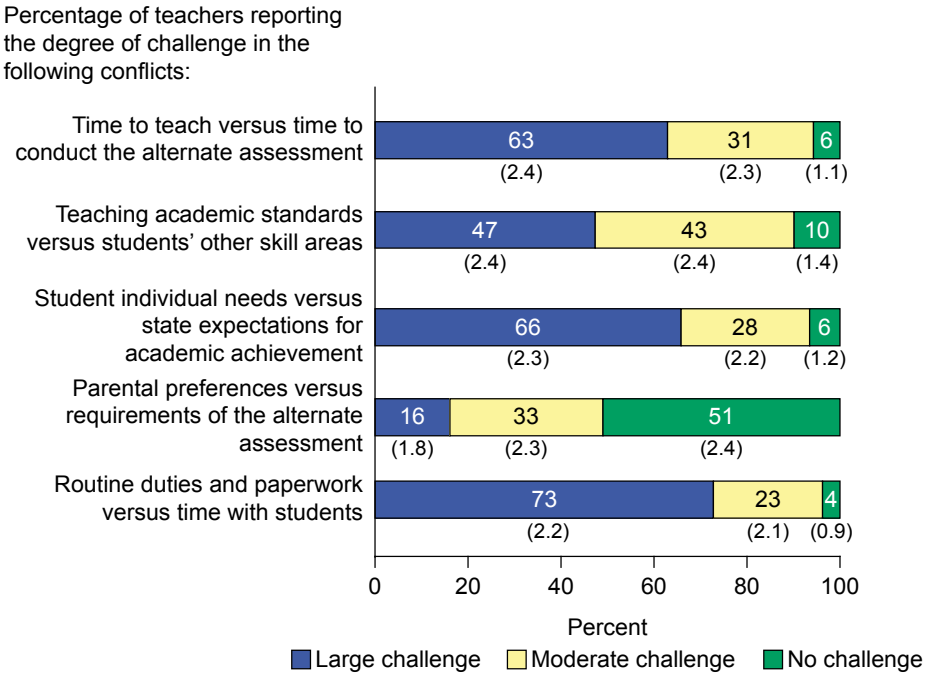
Time to teach versus time to conduct the alternate assessment

- *Large challenge* – Sixty-three percent of teachers reported that time to teach versus time to conduct the alternate assessment was a large challenge.
- *Moderate challenge* – Thirty-one percent of teachers reported that time to teach versus time to conduct the alternate assessment was a moderate challenge.
- *No challenge* – Six percent of teachers reported that time to teach versus time to conduct the alternate assessment was no challenge.

Teaching academic standards versus students' other skill areas

- *Large challenge* – Forty-seven percent of teachers reported that teaching academic standards versus students' other skill areas was a large challenge.

Figure 39. Conflicts experienced by teachers providing instruction to students with significant cognitive disabilities



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 420 teachers.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

- *Moderate challenge* – Forty-three percent of teachers reported that teaching academic standards versus students' other skill areas was a moderate challenge.
- *No challenge* – Ten percent of teachers reported that teaching academic standards versus students' other skill areas was no challenge.

Student individual needs versus state expectations for academic achievement

- *Large challenge* – Sixty-six percent of teachers reported that student individual needs versus state expectations for academic achievement was a large challenge.
- *Moderate challenge* – Twenty-eight percent of teachers reported that student individual needs versus state expectations for academic achievement was a moderate challenge.
- *No challenge* – Six percent of teachers reported that student individual needs versus state expectations for academic achievement was no challenge.

Parental preferences versus requirements of the alternate assessment

- *Large challenge* – Sixteen percent of teachers reported that parental preferences versus requirements of the alternate assessment was a large challenge.
- *Moderate challenge* – Thirty-three percent of teachers reported that parental preferences versus requirements of the alternate assessment was a moderate challenge.
- *No challenge* – Fifty-one percent of teachers reported that parental preferences versus requirements of the alternate assessment was no challenge.

Routine duties and paperwork versus time with students

- *Large challenge* – Seventy-three percent of teachers reported that routine duties and paperwork versus time with students was a large challenge.
- *Moderate challenge* – Twenty-three percent of teachers reported that routine duties and paperwork versus time with students was a moderate challenge.
- *No challenge* – Four percent of teachers reported that routine duties and paperwork versus time with students was no challenge.

Selected Findings

Selected findings for chapter 4 include:

- The percentage of teachers who reported that state alternate assessment requirements had a strong or moderate influence on their instruction was 88 percent for reading/English language arts and mathematics and 84 percent for science.
- The percentage of teachers who reported that results of the state alternate assessment had a strong or moderate influence on their instruction was 60 percent for reading/English language arts, 62 percent for mathematics, and 58 percent for science.
- Ninety-one percent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that it is important that students with significant cognitive disabilities receive academic instruction, 41 percent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that the alternate assessment measures the skills and knowledge that are specific to the instructional needs of students with significant cognitive disabilities, and 43 percent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that students with significant cognitive disabilities can meet the expectations set by the state.
- Ninety percent of teachers reported that teaching academic standards versus students' other skill areas was a large or moderate challenge.
- Teachers reported a variety of possible consequences that could be linked to the results of the alternate assessment. Possible consequences included: additional professional development (41 percent of teachers), provision of individual feedback (36 percent), classroom observations (18 percent), additional resources (18 percent), lesson plan reviews (15 percent), and additional staff (10 percent). Twenty-seven percent of teachers reported that no consequences or interventions would occur based on results of the alternate assessment.

5. Professional Capacity and Resources

The items in this section link to box 3 of the SBR model (described in the Study Design) and describe the professional capacity of teachers and the resources that are available to them and that they have used. The specific research questions addressed in this section are as follows:

- What are teachers' self-perceptions of their understanding of the alternate assessment process and their ability to provide instruction to students with significant cognitive disabilities?
- Do teachers perceive that they have adequate resources for administering alternate assessments and providing instruction to students with significant cognitive disabilities? How do teachers utilize these resources?

Professional Capacity

The Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education (Elmore and Rothman 1999) expressed concerns over the premise that holding schools accountable for results alone would provide the motivation to improve results. The Commission questioned the premise that the field of education understands how to educate all children to meet high academic standards and whether teachers had access to high-quality professional development focused on enhancing their capability to teach the state's academic content standards. In recognition of these concerns, the Commission developed an expanded theory that placed the focus on teaching and learning and highlighted, in particular, the need to build the capacity of teachers to deliver high-quality instruction in the state's academic content standards. This section describes teachers' survey responses related to their professional capacity.

Administering the alternate assessment and interpreting results

Teachers were asked their level of agreement with the following three statements about their understanding of and preparation for the alternate assessment process: "I understand the alternate assessment process," "I am well prepared to administer the alternate assessment," and "I am able to interpret the results of the alternate assessment for parents." The response options were "Strongly agree," "Agree," "Disagree," and "Strongly disagree." Overall, 95 percent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that they understand the alternate assessment process. In addition, 93 percent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that they are well prepared to administer the alternate assessment. Eighty-five percent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that they are able to interpret the results of the alternate assessment for parents (figure 40).

Understanding of the alternate assessment process

- *Strongly agree* – Thirty-seven percent of teachers strongly agreed that they understand the alternate assessment process.
- *Agree* – Fifty-eight percent of teachers agreed that they understand the alternate assessment process.
- *Disagree* – Four percent of teachers disagreed that they understand the alternate assessment process.

- *Strongly disagree* – One percent of teachers strongly disagreed that they understand the alternate assessment process.

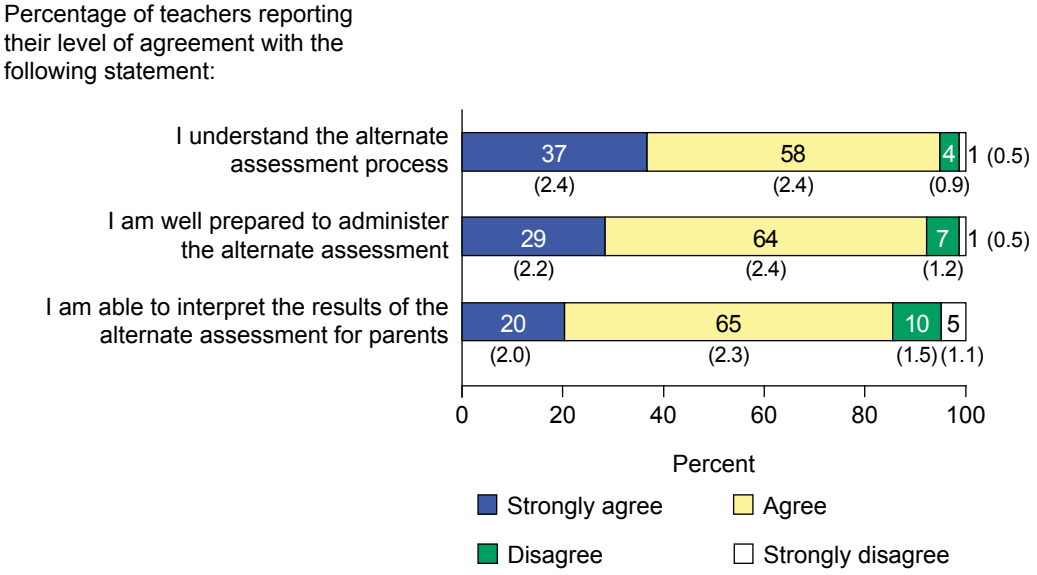
Preparedness to administer the alternate assessment

- *Strongly agree* – Twenty-nine percent of teachers strongly agreed that they are well prepared to administer the alternate assessment.
- *Agree* – Sixty-four percent of teachers agreed that they are well prepared to administer the alternate assessment.
- *Disagree* – Seven percent of teachers disagreed that they are well prepared to administer the alternate assessment.
- *Strongly disagree* – One percent of teachers strongly disagreed that they are well prepared to administer the alternate assessment.

Interpreting alternate assessment results for parents

- *Strongly agree* – Twenty percent of teachers strongly agreed that they are able to interpret the results of the alternate assessment for parents.
- *Agree* – Sixty-five percent of teachers agreed that they are able to interpret the results of the alternate assessment for parents.
- *Disagree* – Ten percent of teachers disagreed that they are able to interpret the results of the alternate assessment for parents.
- *Strongly disagree* – Five percent of teachers strongly disagreed that they are able to interpret the results of the alternate assessment for parents.

Figure 40. Teachers' understanding of and preparation to administer and interpret the alternate assessment system



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 420 teachers.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Identifying learning characteristics and instructional strategies

Teachers were asked their level of agreement with the following two statements: "I understand the learning characteristics of each of my students" and "I am prepared to identify the most effective instructional strategies for each student." The response options were "Strongly agree," "Agree," "Disagree," and "Strongly disagree." Ninety-seven percent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that they understand the learning characteristics of each of their students, and 96 percent strongly agreed or agreed that they are prepared to identify the most effective instructional strategies for each of their students (figure 41).

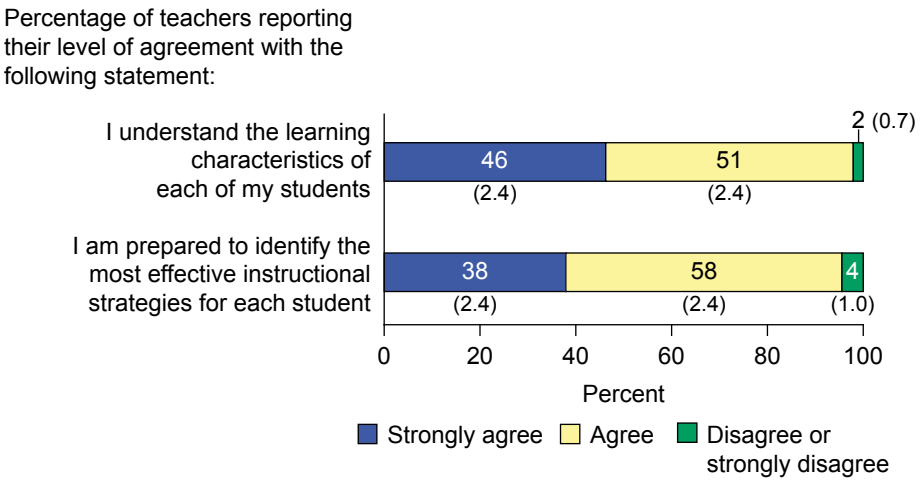
Understanding of the learning characteristics of each student

- *Strongly agree* – Forty-six percent of teachers strongly agreed that they understand the learning characteristics of each of their students.
- *Agree* – Fifty-one percent of teachers agreed that they understand the learning characteristics of each of their students.
- *Disagree or strongly disagree* – Two percent of teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed that they understand the learning characteristics of each of their students.

Preparedness to identify instructional strategies

- *Strongly agree* – Thirty-eight percent of teachers strongly agreed that they are prepared to identify the most effective instructional strategies for each of their students.
- *Agree* – Fifty-eight percent of teachers agreed that they are prepared to identify the most effective instructional strategies for each of their students.
- *Disagree* or *strongly disagree* – Four percent of teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed that they are prepared to identify the most effective instructional strategies for each of their students.

Figure 41. Teachers' understanding of the learning characteristics and their preparedness to identify effective instructional strategies for their students



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 420 teachers.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Capabilities for providing academic instruction to students with significant cognitive disabilities

Teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with statement, "I feel capable of providing academic instruction to students with significant cognitive disabilities in [Reading/English language arts] [Mathematics] [Science]." The response options were "Strongly agree," "Agree," "Disagree," and "Strongly disagree." Ninety-five percent and 93 percent of teachers, respectively, strongly agreed or agreed that they felt capable of providing academic instruction in reading/English language arts and mathematics to students with significant cognitive disabilities. Eighty percent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that they felt capable of providing academic instruction in science (figure 42).

Reading/English language arts

- *Strongly agree* – Forty-two percent of teachers strongly agreed that they are capable of providing academic instruction in reading/English language arts for students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- *Agree* – Fifty-three percent of teachers agreed that they are capable of providing academic instruction in reading/English language arts for students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- *Disagree* – Four percent of teachers disagreed that they are capable of providing academic instruction in reading/English language arts for students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- *Strongly disagree* – One percent of teachers strongly disagreed that they are capable of providing academic instruction in reading/English language arts for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Mathematics

- *Strongly agree* – Thirty-nine percent of teachers strongly agreed that they are capable of providing academic instruction in mathematics for students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- *Agree* – Fifty-four percent of teachers agreed that they are capable of providing academic instruction in mathematics for students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- *Disagree* – Six percent of teachers disagreed that they are capable of providing academic instruction in mathematics for students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- *Strongly disagree* – Two percent of teachers strongly disagreed that they are capable of providing academic instruction in mathematics for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Science

- *Strongly agree* – Twenty-four percent of teachers strongly agreed that they are capable of providing academic instruction in science for students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- *Agree* – Fifty-six percent of teachers agreed that they are capable of providing academic instruction in science for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

- *Disagree* – Seventeen percent of teachers disagreed that they are capable of providing academic instruction in science for students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- *Strongly disagree* – Four percent of teachers strongly disagreed that they are capable of providing academic instruction in science for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Understanding of content standards

Teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the statement, "I have a clear understanding of the content standards in my state in [Reading/English language arts] [Mathematics] [Science]." The response options were "Strongly agree," "Agree," "Disagree," and "Strongly disagree." For reading/English language arts, 88 percent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that they clearly understand their state's content standards. For mathematics, 84 percent strongly agreed or agreed with the statement; for science, 68 percent strongly agreed or agreed (figure 42).

Reading/English language arts

- *Strongly agree* – Twenty-seven percent of teachers strongly agreed that they have a clear understanding of their state's content standards in reading/English language arts.
- *Agree* – Sixty-one percent of teachers agreed that they have a clear understanding of their state's content standards in reading/English language arts.
- *Disagree* – Ten percent of teachers disagreed that they have a clear understanding of their state's content standards in reading/English language arts.
- *Strongly disagree* – Three percent of teachers strongly disagreed that they have a clear understanding of their state's content standards in reading/English language arts.

Mathematics

- *Strongly agree* – Twenty-three percent of teachers strongly agreed that they have a clear understanding of their state's content standards in mathematics.
- *Agree* – Sixty-one percent of teachers agreed that they have a clear understanding of their state's content standards in mathematics.
- *Disagree* – Twelve percent of teachers disagreed that they have a clear understanding of their state's content standards in mathematics.
- *Strongly disagree* – Three percent of teachers strongly disagreed that they have a clear understanding of their state's content standards in mathematics.

Science

- *Strongly agree* – Thirteen percent of teachers strongly agreed that they have a clear understanding of their state's content standards in science.
- *Agree* – Fifty-five percent of teachers agreed that they have a clear understanding of their state's content standards in science.
- *Disagree* – Twenty-six percent of teachers disagreed that they have a clear understanding of their state's content standards in science.

- *Strongly disagree* – Six percent of teachers strongly disagreed that they have a clear understanding of their state's content standards in science.

Adapting academic curriculum for students with significant cognitive disabilities

Teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the statement, "I am prepared to adapt academic curriculum for students with significant cognitive disabilities in [Reading/English language arts] [Mathematics] [Science]." The response options were "Strongly agree," "Agree," "Disagree," and "Strongly disagree." Overall, for reading/English language arts and mathematics, 90 percent and 89 percent, respectively, strongly agreed or agreed that they are prepared to adapt academic curriculum for students with significant cognitive disabilities. For science, 74 percent strongly agreed or agreed with the statement (figure 42).

Reading/English language arts

- *Strongly agree* – Thirty-three percent of teachers strongly agreed that they are prepared to adapt academic curriculum in reading/English language arts for students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- *Agree* – Fifty-seven percent of teachers agreed that they are prepared to adapt academic curriculum in reading/English language arts for students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- *Disagree* – Eight percent of teachers disagreed that they are prepared to adapt academic curriculum in reading/English language arts for students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- *Strongly disagree* – Two percent of teachers strongly disagreed that they are prepared to adapt academic curriculum in reading/English language arts for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Mathematics

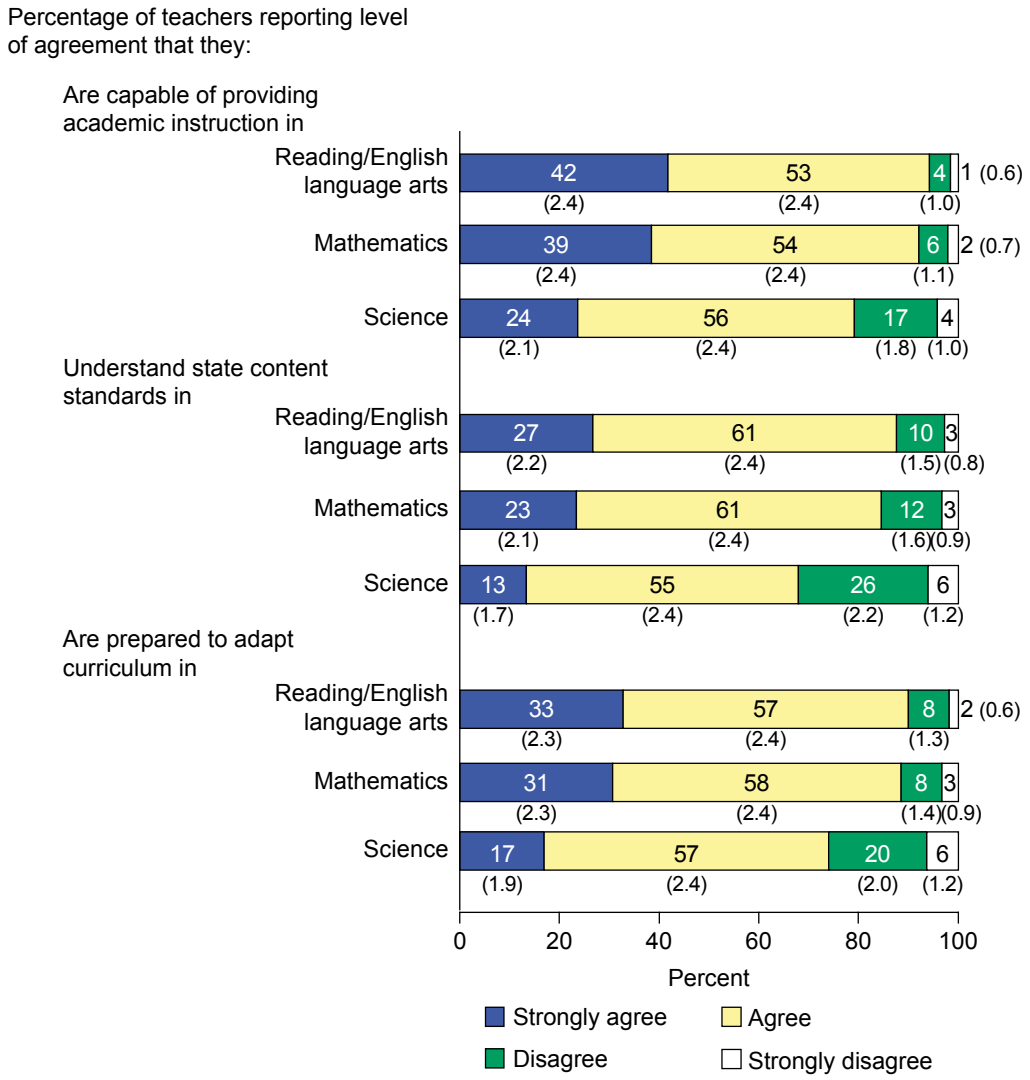
- *Strongly agree* – Thirty-one percent of teachers strongly agreed that they are prepared to adapt academic curriculum in mathematics for students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- *Agree* – Fifty-eight percent of teachers agreed that they are prepared to adapt academic curriculum in mathematics for students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- *Disagree* – Eight percent of teachers disagreed that they are prepared to adapt academic curriculum in mathematics for students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- *Strongly disagree* – Three percent of teachers strongly disagreed that they are prepared to adapt academic curriculum in mathematics for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Science

- *Strongly agree* – Seventeen percent of teachers strongly agreed that they are prepared to adapt academic curriculum in science for students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- *Agree* – Fifty-seven percent of teachers agreed that they are prepared to adapt academic curriculum in science for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

- *Disagree*– Twenty percent of teachers disagreed that they are prepared to adapt academic curriculum in science for students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- *Strongly disagree* – Six percent of teachers strongly disagreed that they are prepared to adapt academic curriculum in science for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Figure 42. Teachers' familiarity with providing instruction, understanding state content standards, and adapting curriculum in reading/English language arts, mathematics, and science



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 420 teachers.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

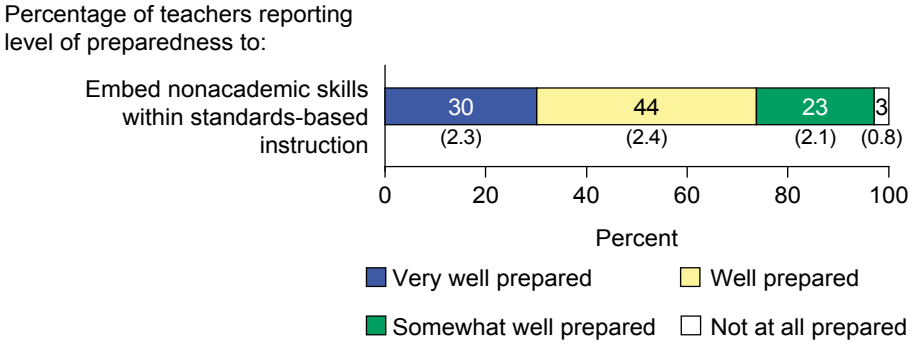
Embedding nonacademic skills within standards-based instruction

Teachers were asked how well prepared they felt to "embed nonacademic skills within standards-based instruction." The response options were "Very well prepared," "Well prepared,"

"Somewhat well prepared," and "Not at all prepared." Seventy-four percent of teachers reported that they felt very well prepared or well prepared to embed nonacademic skills within standards-based instruction (figure 43).

- *Very well prepared* – Thirty percent of teachers reported that they felt very well prepared to embed nonacademic skills within standards-based instruction.
- *Well prepared* – Forty-four percent of teachers reported that they felt well prepared to embed nonacademic skills within standards-based instruction.
- *Somewhat well prepared* – Twenty-three percent of teachers reported that they felt somewhat well prepared to embed nonacademic skills within standards-based instruction.
- *Not at all prepared* – Three percent of teachers reported that they felt not at all prepared to embed nonacademic skills within standards-based instruction.

Figure 43. Preparedness to embed nonacademic skills within standards-based instruction



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 420 teachers.

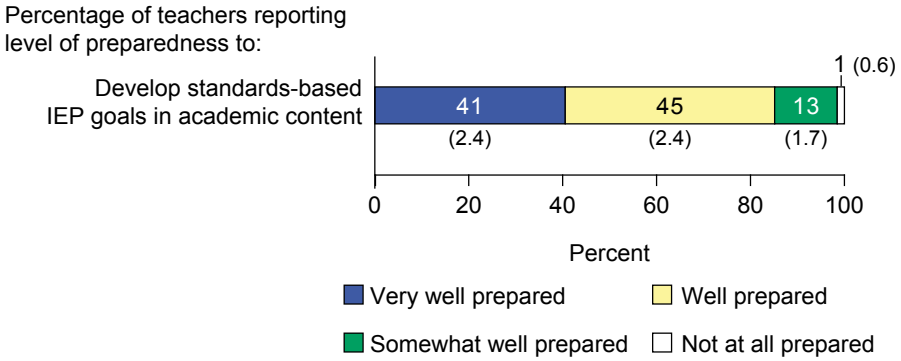
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Developing standards-based IEP goals in academic content

Teachers were asked how well prepared they felt to "develop standards-based IEP goals in academic content." The response options were "Very well prepared," "Well prepared," "Somewhat well prepared," and "Not at all prepared." Eighty-six percent of teachers reported that they felt very well prepared or well prepared to develop standards-based IEP goals in academic content (figure 44).

- *Very well prepared* – Forty-one percent of teachers reported that they felt very well prepared to develop standards-based IEP goals in academic content.
- *Well prepared* – Forty-five percent of teachers reported that they felt well prepared to develop standards-based IEP goals in academic content.
- *Somewhat well prepared* – Thirteen percent of teachers reported that they felt somewhat well prepared to develop standards-based IEP goals in academic content.
- *Not at all prepared* – One percent of teachers reported that they felt not at all prepared to develop standards-based IEP goals in academic content.

Figure 44. Preparedness to develop standards-based IEP goals in academic content



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 420 teachers.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Resources

It is important for teachers of students with significant cognitive disabilities to have access to instructional materials, textbooks, equipment, and other resources related to the academic content specified in the standards and to know how to use these resources appropriately (Browder et al. 2003).

This section is divided into two parts summarizing the responses of teachers. The first part describes resource availability in a broad sense. The second part summarizes teacher responses indicating the extent to which they have used such resources as professional development activities or training they received as part of a degree program.

Resource availability

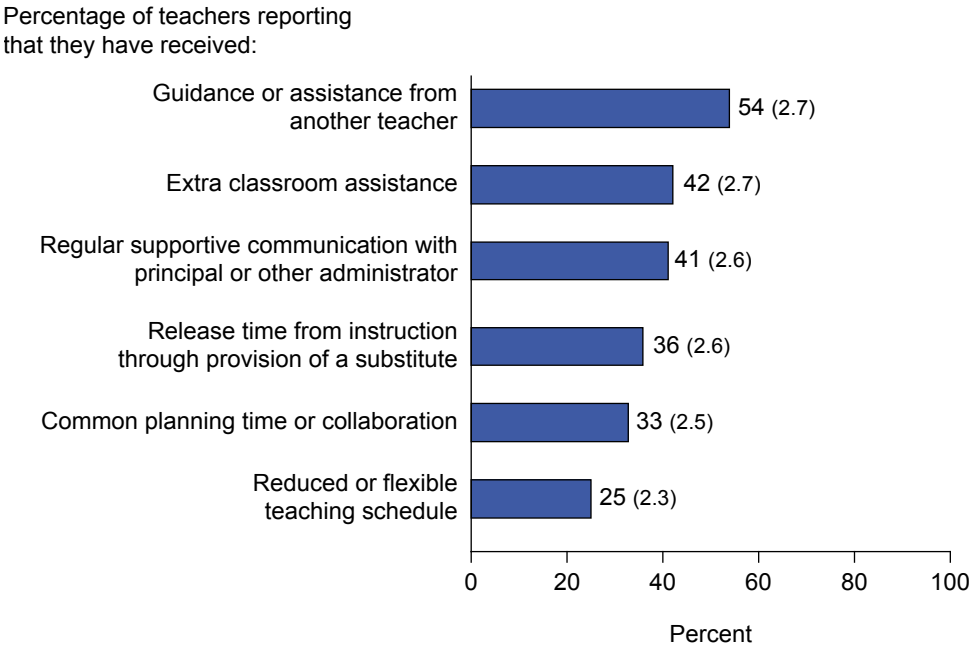
Support for alternate assessment administration and assembly

Teachers were asked to describe the types of support they had received to help administer or assemble the alternate assessment. They could select any of the following six response options that applied: "Reduced or flexible teaching schedule," "Common planning time or collaboration with other teachers administering/assembling the alternate assessment," "Extra classroom assistance (e.g., teacher aides)," "Regular supportive communication with your principal, other administrators, or department chair," "Guidance or assistance from another teacher," and "Release time from instruction through the provision of a substitute." Of those responding, the percentage of teachers who reported having received different types of support ranged from 54 percent for guidance or assistance from another teacher to 25 percent for reduced or flexible teaching schedule (figure 45).

- *Guidance or assistance from another teacher* – Fifty-four percent of teachers reported that they had received guidance or assistance from another teacher.
- *Extra classroom assistance* – Forty-two percent of teachers reported that they had received extra assistance in their classroom.

- *Regular supportive communication with principal or other administrator* – Forty-one percent of teachers reported that they had regular supportive communication with their principal or another administrator.
- *Release time from instruction through provision of a substitute*– Thirty-six percent of teachers reported that they had received release time from instruction through the provision of a substitute as a type of support.
- *Common planning time or collaboration* – Thirty-three percent of teachers reported that they had common planning time or collaboration as a support as they assembled or administered the alternate assessment.
- *Reduced or flexible teaching schedule* – Twenty-five percent of teachers reported that they had a reduced or flexible teaching schedule in order to assemble or administer the alternate assessment for their students.

Figure 45. Types of support to help with alternate assessment administration and assembly



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because multiple responses were possible. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 350 teachers.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

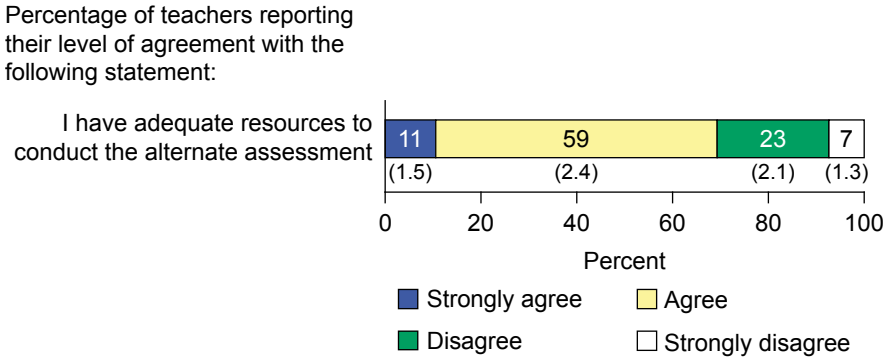
Adequacy of resources to conduct the alternate assessment

Alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards are not like the general assessments and are rarely paper and pencil tests. States have adopted different approaches for conducting their alternate assessments (Quenemoen 2008; Cameto et al. 2009a; Cameto et al. 2009b). Teachers may be required to administer a set of state-developed tasks, often over several time periods, or collect evidence of student performance, such as work sample, pictures, or videos, throughout the year and submit the portfolio for scoring. Teachers were asked to indicate

the extent to which they agreed with the statement, "I have adequate resources to conduct the alternate assessment." The response options were "Strongly agree," "Agree," "Disagree," and "Strongly disagree." Overall, 70 percent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that they have adequate resources to conduct the alternate assessment (figure 46).

- *Strongly agree* – Eleven percent of teachers strongly agreed that they have adequate resources to conduct the alternate assessment.
- *Agree* – Fifty-nine percent of teachers agreed that they have adequate resources to conduct the alternate assessment.
- *Disagree* – Twenty-three percent of teachers disagreed that they have adequate resources to conduct the alternate assessment.
- *Strongly disagree* – Seven percent of teachers strongly disagreed that they have adequate resources to conduct the alternate assessment.

Figure 46. Adequacy of resources to conduct the alternate assessment



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 420 teachers.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Availability of alternate assessment results

Teachers were asked the extent to which they agreed with the following two statements: "I receive results from the alternate assessment in time for IEP development" and "I receive results from the alternate assessment in time for instructional planning for the following year." The response options were "Strongly agree," "Agree," "Disagree," and "Strongly disagree." Thirty-three percent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that they receive the results from the alternate assessment in time for IEP development. Fifty percent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that they receive results from the alternate assessment in time for instructional planning for the next year (figure 47).

IEP development

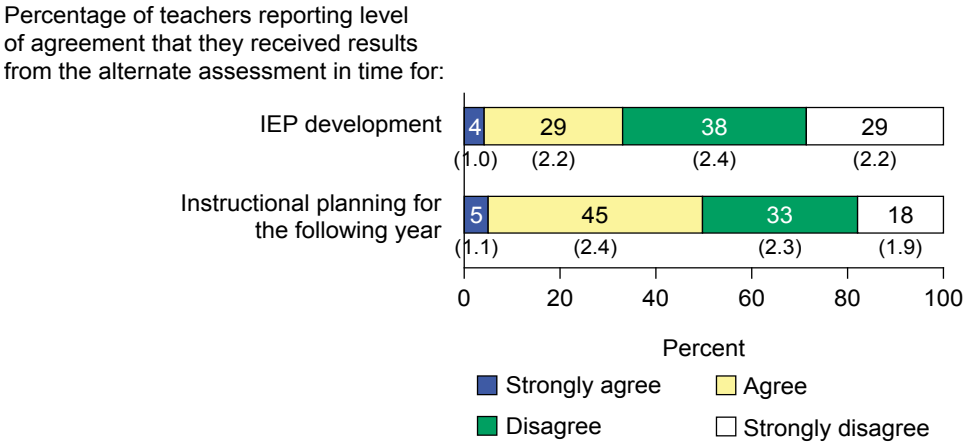
- *Strongly agree* – Four percent of teachers strongly agreed that they receive results from the alternate assessment in time for IEP development.
- *Agree* – Twenty-nine percent of teachers agreed that they receive results from the alternate assessment in time for IEP development.

- *Disagree* – Thirty-eight percent of teachers disagreed that they receive results from the alternate assessment in time for IEP development.
- *Strongly disagree* – Twenty-nine percent of teachers strongly disagreed that they receive results from the alternate assessment in time for IEP development.

Instructional planning

- *Strongly agree* – Five percent of teachers strongly agreed that they receive results from the alternate assessment in time for instructional planning for the next year.
- *Agree* – Forty-five percent of teachers agreed that they receive the results from the alternate assessment in time for instructional planning for the next year.
- *Disagree* – Thirty-three percent of teachers disagreed that they receive the results from the alternate assessment in time for instructional planning for the next year.
- *Strongly disagree* – Eighteen percent of teachers strongly disagreed that they receive the results from the alternate assessment in time for instructional planning for the next year.

Figure 47. Availability of alternate assessment results



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 420 teachers.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Resources for academic instruction

Teachers were asked the extent to which they agreed with the statement, "I have the resources I need to provide academic instruction to students with significant cognitive disabilities in [Reading/English language arts] [Mathematics] [Science]." For each question, there were five response options: "Strongly agree," "Agree," "Disagree," "Strongly disagree," and "Not applicable." "Not applicable" was used by teachers who did not provide academic instruction in that subject area; therefore, the percentages were calculated on teachers who did not select "Not applicable." For reading/English language arts and mathematics, 80 percent and 78 percent of teachers, respectively, strongly agreed or agreed that they have the resources they need to provide academic instruction. For science, 56 percent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed with the statement (figure 48).

Reading/English language arts

- *Strongly agree* – Twenty-nine percent of teachers strongly agreed that they have the resources they need to provide academic instruction in reading/English language arts to students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- *Agree* – Fifty-one percent of teachers agreed that they have the resources they need to provide academic instruction in reading/English language arts to students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- *Disagree* – Fifteen percent of teachers disagreed that they have the resources they need to provide academic instruction in reading/English language arts to students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- *Strongly disagree* – Five percent of teachers strongly disagreed that they have the resources they need to provide academic instruction in reading/English language arts to students with significant cognitive disabilities.

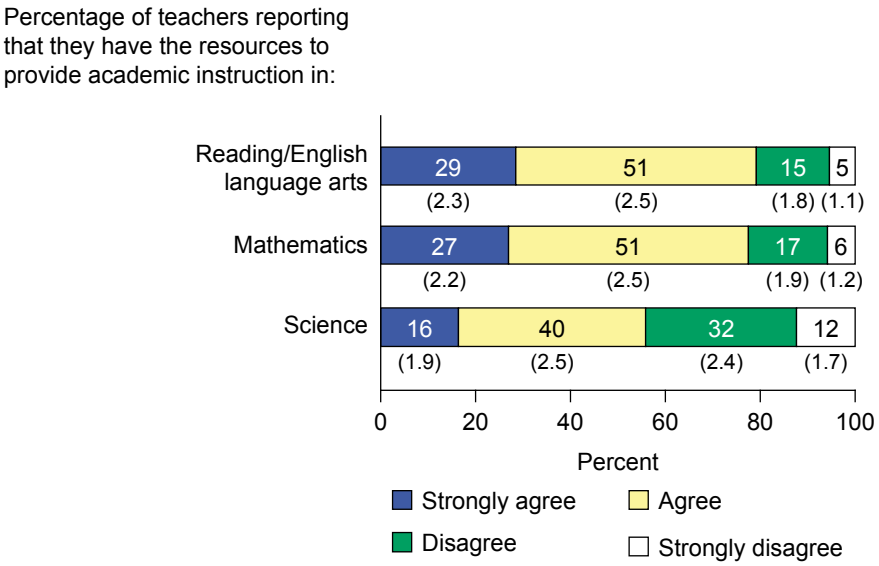
Mathematics

- *Strongly agree* – Twenty-seven percent of teachers strongly agreed that they have the resources they need to provide academic instruction in mathematics to students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- *Agree* – Fifty-one percent of teachers agreed that they have the resources they need to provide academic instruction in mathematics to students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- *Disagree* – Seventeen percent of teachers disagreed that they have the resources they need to provide academic instruction in mathematics to students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- *Strongly disagree* – Six percent of teachers strongly disagreed that they have the resources they need to provide academic instruction in mathematics to students with significant cognitive disabilities

Science

- *Strongly agree* – Sixteen percent of teachers strongly agreed that they have the resources they need to provide academic instruction in science to students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- *Agree* – Forty percent of teachers agreed that they have the resources they need to provide academic instruction in science to students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- *Disagree* – Thirty-two percent of teachers disagreed that they have the resources they need to provide academic instruction in science to students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- *Strongly disagree* – Twelve percent of teachers strongly disagreed that they have the resources they need to provide academic instruction in science to students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Figure 48. Resources for academic instruction



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 400 teachers who provide instruction in reading/English language arts, 410 for teachers who provide instruction in mathematics, and 380 teachers who provide instruction in science. Total numbers vary because teachers who did not teach a certain subject were instructed not to answer questions in that section.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Teacher use of resources

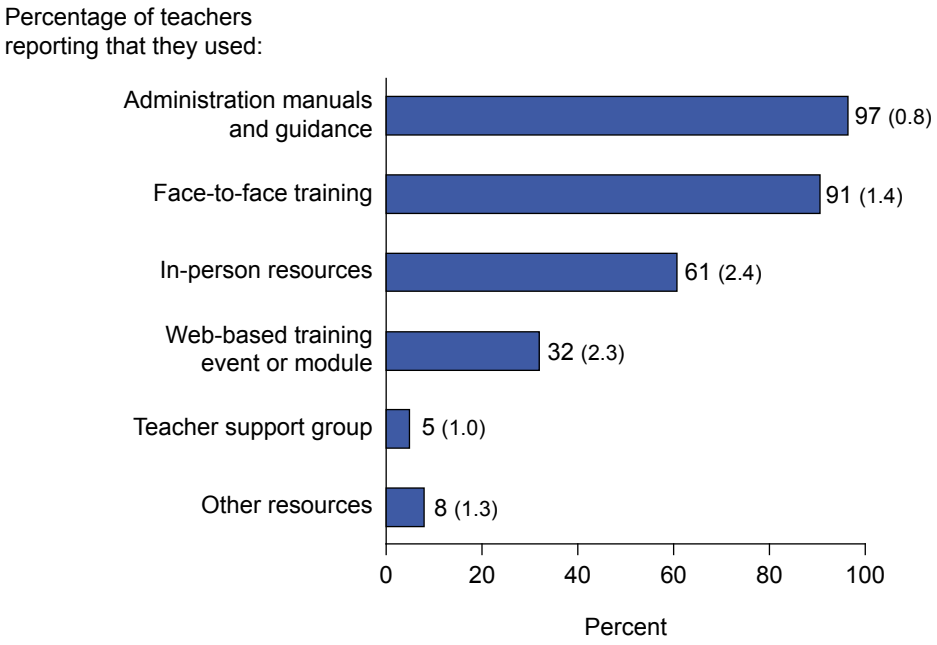
Resources used in preparation for administering or assembling the alternate assessment

Teachers were asked to identify the resources they had used in preparation for administering or assembling the alternate assessment for their students. Teachers were asked to indicate whether they had or had not used each of the following four specific resources: "Administration manuals and guidance (e.g., web-based or hardcopy materials)," "Web-based training event or module," "Face-to-face training (provided by the state, a regional agency, or the district)," or "In-person resources (such as a school or district alternate assessment coordinator or other technical assistance)." They also were offered the opportunity to list any additional resources they had used as a fifth option under "Other." The percentage of teachers who reported having used various resources ranged from 97 percent for use of administration manuals and guidance to 5 percent for teacher support groups (figure 49).

- *Administration manuals and guidance* – Ninety-seven percent of teachers reported that they had used administration manuals and guidance in preparation for administering and assembling the alternate assessment.
- *Face-to-face training* – Ninety-one percent of teachers reported that they had participated in some type of face-to-face training in preparation for administering and assembling the alternate assessment.

- *In-person resources* – Sixty-one percent of teachers reported that they had used an in-person coordinator or other technical assistance in preparation for administering and assembling the alternate assessment.
- *Web-based training event or module* – Thirty-two percent of teachers reported that they had used a web-based training event or module in preparation for administering and assembling the alternate assessment.
- *Teacher support group* – Five percent of teachers specified having a teacher support group as a resource in preparation for administering and assembling the alternate assessment.
- *Other resources* – Eight percent of teachers reported that they had used some other resource in preparation for administering and assembling the alternate assessment.

Figure 49. Resources used in preparation for administering and assembling the alternate assessment



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because multiple responses were possible. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 420 teachers.

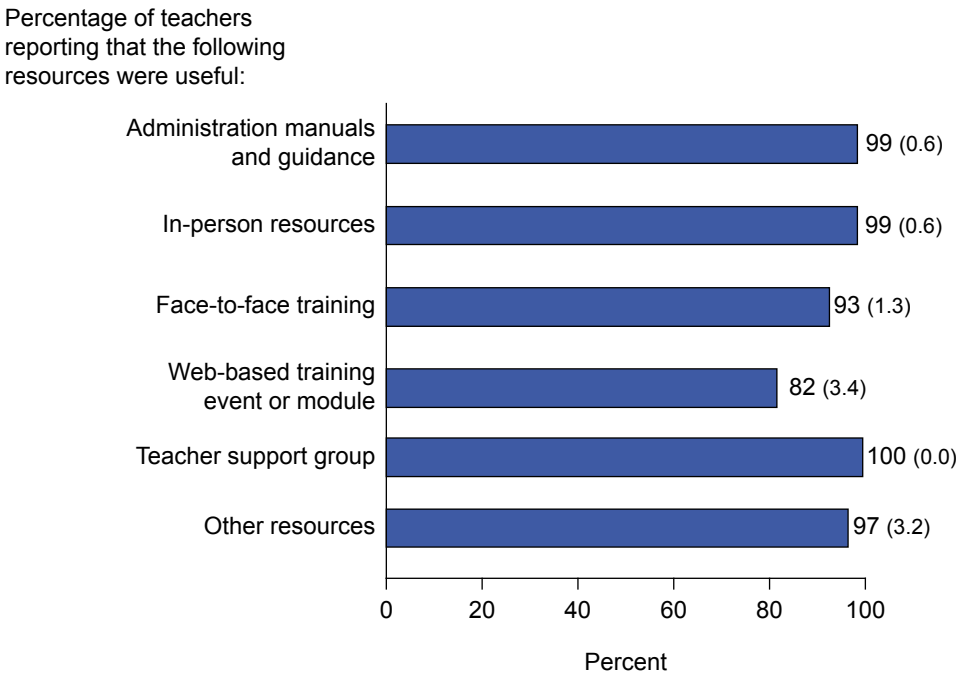
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Usefulness of the resources used in preparation for administering and assembling the alternate assessment

For each resource that teachers indicated they had used, they were asked to report whether or not that resource had been useful to them in their efforts to prepare to administer or assemble the alternate assessment. The percentage of teachers reporting that the resources they used were useful ranged from 100 percent who indicated that teacher support groups were useful to 82 percent who indicated that web-based training events were useful (figure 50).

- *Administration manuals and guidance* – Ninety-nine percent of teachers who had used administration manuals and guidance reported that these resources had been useful as they prepared to administer or assemble the alternate assessment.
- *In-person resources* – Ninety-nine percent of teachers who had used in-person resources reported that these resources had been useful as they prepared to administer or assemble the alternate assessment.
- *Face-to-face training* – Ninety-three percent of teachers who had taken advantage of face-to-face training reported that this resource had been useful as they prepared to administer or assemble the alternate assessment.
- *Web-based training event or module* – Eighty-two percent of teachers who had used a web-based training module reported that this resource had been useful as they prepared to administer or assemble the alternate assessment.
- *Teacher support group* – One hundred percent of teachers who had specified having a teacher support group reported that this resource had been useful as they prepared to administer or assembling the alternate assessment.
- *Other resources* – Ninety-seven percent teachers who had used some other resource reported that the other resource had been useful as they prepared to administer or assemble the alternate assessment.

Figure 50. Usefulness of resources used in preparation for administering and assembling the alternate assessment



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because multiple responses were possible. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 20 to 410 teachers.

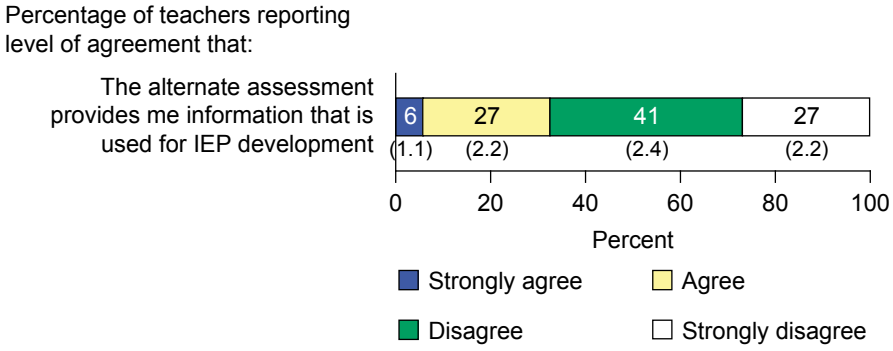
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Utility of alternate assessment results in IEP development

Teachers were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement, "The alternate assessment provides me information that is used for IEP development." The response options were "Strongly agree," "Agree," "Disagree," and "Strongly disagree." Thirty-three percent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that the alternate assessment provides information that is used for IEP development. Sixty-eight percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement (figure 51).

- *Strongly agree* – Six percent of teachers strongly agreed that the alternate assessment provides them information that is used for IEP development.
- *Agree* – Twenty-seven percent of teachers agreed that the alternate assessment provides them information that is used for IEP development.
- *Disagree* – Forty-one percent of teachers disagreed that the alternate assessment provides them information that is used for IEP development.
- *Strongly disagree* – Twenty-seven percent of teachers strongly disagreed that the alternate assessment provides them information that is used for IEP development.

Figure 51. Usefulness of the alternate assessment results in IEP development



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 420 teachers.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Professional development in instructional strategies

Teachers were asked how much time during the past 12 months they had spent engaged in professional development in "instructional strategies in teaching reading/English language arts," "instructional strategies in teaching math," and "instructional strategies in teaching science." The response options were "> 15 hours," "11–15 hours," "6–10 hours," "1–5 hours," and "None" (figure 52).

Reading/English language arts

- *More than 15 hours* – Sixteen percent of teachers reported receiving more than 15 hours of professional development in instructional strategies in teaching reading/English language arts during the past 12 months.

- *11 to 15 hours* – Nine percent of teachers reported receiving 11 to 15 hours of professional development in instructional strategies in teaching reading/English language arts during the past 12 months.
- *6 to 10 hours* – Twenty-one percent of teachers reported receiving 6 to 10 hours of professional development in instructional strategies in teaching reading/English language arts during the past 12 months.
- *1 to 5 hours* – Thirty-seven percent of teachers reported receiving 1 to 5 hours of professional development in instructional strategies in teaching reading/English language arts during the past 12 months.
- *None* – Sixteen percent of teachers reported that they had received no professional development in teaching reading/English language arts during the past 12 months.

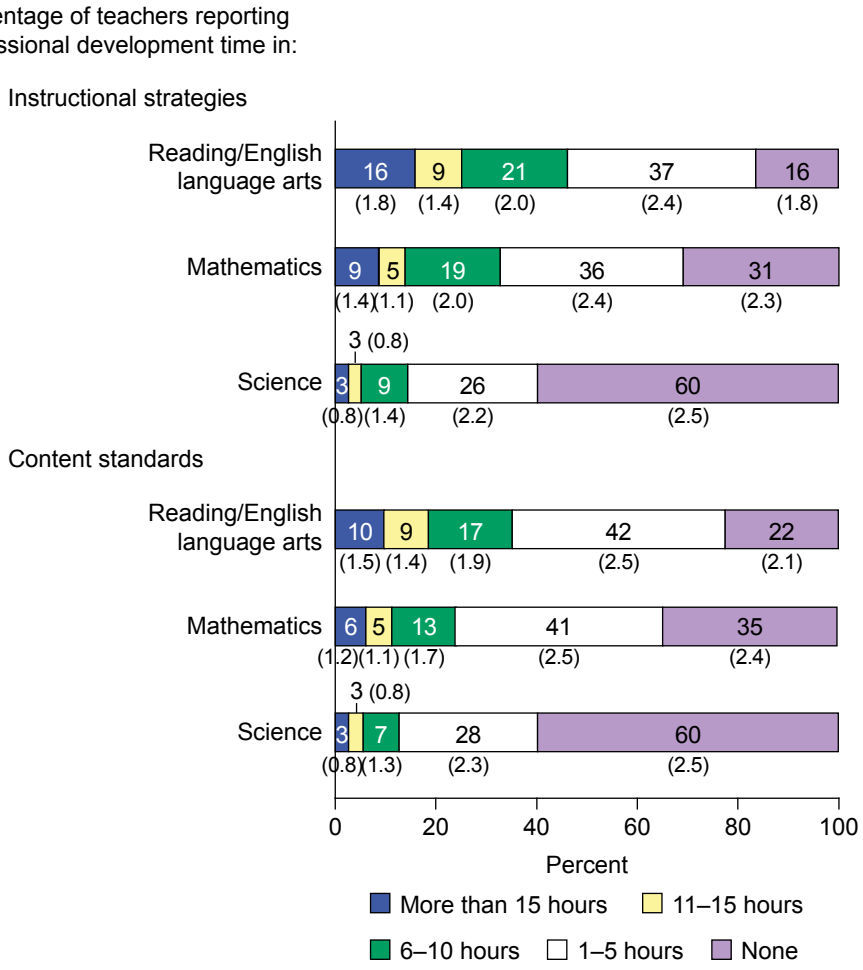
Mathematics

- *More than 15 hours* – Nine percent of teachers reported receiving more than 15 hours of professional development in instructional strategies in teaching mathematics during the past 12 months.
- *11 to 15 hours* – Five percent of teachers reported receiving 11 to 15 hours of professional development in instructional strategies in teaching mathematics during the past 12 months.
- *6 to 10 hours* – Nineteen percent of teachers reported receiving 6 to 10 hours of professional development in instructional strategies in teaching mathematics during the past 12 months.
- *1 to 5 hours* – Thirty-six percent of teachers reported receiving 1 to 5 hours of professional development in instructional strategies in teaching mathematics during the past 12 months.
- *None* – Thirty-one percent of teachers reported that they had received no professional development in teaching mathematics during the past 12 months.

Science

- *More than 15 hours* – Three percent of teachers reported receiving more than 15 hours of professional development in instructional strategies in teaching science during the past 12 months.
- *11 to 15 hours* – Three percent of teachers reported receiving 11 to 15 hours of professional development in instructional strategies in teaching science during the past 12 months.

Figure 52. Time spent in the last 12 months in professional development activities related to instructional strategies and content standards



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 410 for teachers in reading/English language arts and 400 teachers in mathematics and science.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009

- *6 to 10 hours* – Nine percent of teachers reported receiving 6 to 10 hours of professional development in instructional strategies in teaching science during the past 12 months.
- *1 to 5 hours* – Twenty-six percent of teachers reported receiving 1 to 5 hours of professional development in instructional strategies in teaching science during the past 12 months.
- *None* – Sixty percent of teachers reported that they had received no professional development in teaching science during the past 12 months.

Professional development in content standards

Teachers were asked how much time in the past 12 months they had spent engaged in professional development in "reading/English language arts content standards," "math content

standards," and "science content standards." The response options were "> 15 hours," "11-15 hours," "6–10 hours," "1–5 hours," and "None" (figure 52).

Reading/English language arts

- *More than 15 hours* – Ten percent of teachers reported receiving more than 15 hours of professional development in reading/English language arts content standards during the past 12 months.
- *11 to 15 hours* – Nine percent of teachers reported receiving 11 to 15 hours of professional development in reading/English language arts content standards during the past 12 months.
- *6 to 10 hours* – Seventeen percent of teachers reported receiving 6 to 10 hours of professional development in reading/English language arts content standards during the past 12 months.
- *1 to 5 hours* – Forty-two percent of teachers reported receiving 1 to 5 hours of professional development in reading/English language arts content standards during the past 12 months.
- *None* – Twenty-two percent of teachers reported that they had received no professional development in reading/English language arts content standards during the past 12 months.

Mathematics

- *More than 15 hours* – Six percent of teachers reported receiving more than 15 hours of professional development in mathematics content standards during the past 12 months.
- *11 to 15 hours* – Five percent of teachers reported receiving 11 to 15 hours of professional development in mathematics content standards during the past 12 months.
- *6 to 10 hours* – Thirteen percent of teachers reported receiving 6 to 10 hours of professional development in mathematics content standards during the past 12 months.
- *1 to 5 hours* – Forty-one percent of teachers reported receiving 1 to 5 hours of professional development in mathematics content standards during the past 12 months.
- *None* – Thirty-five percent of teachers reported that they had received no professional development in mathematics content standards during the past 12 months.

Science

- *More than 15 hours* – Three percent of teachers reported receiving more than 15 hours of professional development in science content standards during the past 12 months.
- *11 to 15 hours* – Three percent of teachers reported receiving 11 to 15 hours of professional development in science content standards during the past 12 months.
- *6 to 10 hours* – Seven percent of teachers reported receiving 6 to 10 hours of professional development in science content standards during the past 12 months.
- *1 to 5 hours* – Twenty-eight percent of teachers reported receiving 1 to 5 hours of professional development in science content standards during the past 12 months.
- *None* – Sixty percent of teachers reported that they had received no professional development in science content standards during the past 12 months.

Influence of instructional materials for students with significant cognitive disabilities

Teachers were asked the extent to which "instructional materials for students with significant cognitive disabilities" influenced what they taught in reading/English language arts, mathematics, and science classes. The response options were "Strong influence," "Moderate influence," "Minimal influence," and "No influence." Eighty-five percent of teachers for reading/English language arts, 83 percent for mathematics, and 76 percent for science reported that instructional materials for students with significant cognitive disabilities strongly or moderately influenced what they taught such students (figure 53).

Reading/English language arts

- *Strong influence* – Fifty-one percent of teachers reported that instructional materials for students with significant cognitive disabilities had a strong influence on what they taught in reading/English language arts classes.
- *Moderate influence* – Thirty-four percent of teachers reported that instructional materials for students with significant cognitive disabilities had a moderate influence on what they taught in reading/English language arts classes.
- *Minimal influence* – Thirteen percent of teachers reported that instructional materials for students with significant cognitive disabilities had minimal influence on what they taught in reading/English language arts classes.
- *No influence* – Three percent of teachers reported that instructional materials for students with significant cognitive disabilities had no influence on what they taught in reading/English language arts classes.

Mathematics

- *Strong influence* – Forty-nine percent of teachers reported that instructional materials for students with significant cognitive disabilities had a strong influence on what they taught in mathematics classes.
- *Moderate influence* – Thirty-four percent of teachers reported that instructional materials for students with significant cognitive disabilities had a moderate influence on what they taught in mathematics classes.
- *Minimal influence* – Fourteen percent of teachers reported that instructional materials for students with significant cognitive disabilities had minimal influence on what they taught in mathematics classes.
- *No influence* – Three percent of teachers reported that instructional materials for students with significant cognitive disabilities had no influence on what they taught in mathematics classes.

Science

- *Strong influence* – Fifty-one percent of teachers reported that instructional materials for students with significant cognitive disabilities had a strong influence on what they taught in science classes.
- *Moderate influence* – Twenty-five percent of teachers reported that instructional materials for students with significant cognitive disabilities had a moderate influence on what they taught in science classes.

- *Minimal influence* – Seventeen percent of teachers reported that instructional materials for students with significant cognitive disabilities had minimal influence on what they taught in science classes.
- *No influence* – Six percent of teachers reported that instructional materials for students with significant cognitive disabilities had no influence on what they taught in science classes.

Influence of general education content, materials, and activities

Teachers were asked the extent to which "content, materials, and/or activities used by general education teachers in my school" influenced what they taught in reading/English language arts, mathematics, and science classes. The response options were "Strong influence," "Moderate influence," "Minimal influence," and "No influence." Forty-four percent of teachers for reading/English language arts, 38 percent for mathematics, and 46 percent for science reported that content, materials, and/or activities used by general education teachers in their school strongly or moderately influenced what they taught students with significant cognitive disabilities (figure 53).

Reading/English language arts

- *Strong influence* – Twelve percent of teachers reported that content, materials, or activities used by general education teachers had a strong influence on what they taught in reading/English language arts classes.
- *Moderate influence* – Thirty-two percent of teachers reported that content, materials, or activities used by general education teachers had a moderate influence on what they taught in reading/English language arts classes.
- *Minimal influence* – Thirty-five percent of teachers reported that content, materials, or activities used by general education teachers had minimal influence on what they taught in reading/English language arts classes.
- *No influence* – Twenty-one percent of teachers reported that content, materials, or activities used by general education teachers had no influence on what they taught in reading/English language arts classes.

Mathematics

- *Strong influence* – Ten percent of teachers reported that content, materials, or activities used by general education teachers had a strong influence on what they taught in mathematics classes.
- *Moderate influence* – Twenty-eight percent of teachers reported that content, materials, or activities used by general education teachers had a moderate influence on what they taught in mathematics classes.
- *Minimal influence* – Forty-two percent of teachers reported that content, materials, or activities used by general education teachers had minimal influence on what they taught in mathematics classes.
- *No influence* – Twenty-one percent of teachers reported that content, materials, or activities used by general education teachers had no influence on what they taught in mathematics classes.

Science

- *Strong influence* – Twelve percent of teachers reported that content, materials, or activities used by general education teachers had a strong influence on what they taught in science classes.
- *Moderate influence* – Thirty-four percent of teachers reported that content, materials, or activities used by general education teachers had a moderate influence on what they taught in science classes.
- *Minimal influence* – Thirty-two percent of teachers reported that content, materials, or activities used by general education teachers had minimal influence on what they taught in science classes.
- *No influence* – Twenty-two percent of teachers reported that content, materials, or activities used by general education teachers had no influence on what they taught in science classes.

Influence of classroom assessment results

Teachers were asked the extent to which "classroom assessment results (e.g., curriculum-based assessment)" influenced what they taught in reading/English language arts, mathematics, and science classes. The response options were "Strong influence," "Moderate influence," "Minimal influence," and "No influence." Seventy-nine percent of teachers for reading/English language arts, 82 percent for mathematics, and 69 percent for science reported that classroom assessment results strongly or moderately influenced what they taught students with significant cognitive disabilities (figure 53).

Reading/English language arts

- *Strong influence* – Forty-three percent of teachers reported that classroom assessment results had a strong influence on what they taught in reading/English language arts classes.
- *Moderate influence* – Thirty-six percent of teachers reported that classroom assessment results had a moderate influence on what they taught in reading/English language arts classes.
- *Minimal influence* – Sixteen percent of teachers reported that classroom assessment results had minimal influence on what they taught in reading/English language arts classes.
- *No influence* – Five percent of teachers reported that classroom assessment results had no influence on what they taught in reading/English language arts classes.

Mathematics

- *Strong influence* – Forty-three percent of teachers reported that classroom assessment results had a strong influence on what they taught in mathematics classes.
- *Moderate influence* – Thirty-nine percent of teachers reported that classroom assessment results had a moderate influence on what they taught in mathematics classes.
- *Minimal influence* – Fourteen percent of teachers reported that classroom assessment results had minimal influence on what they taught in mathematics classes.

- *No influence* – Five percent of teachers reported that classroom assessment results had no influence on what they taught in mathematics classes.

Science

- *Strong influence* – Thirty-five percent of teachers reported that classroom assessment results had a strong influence on what they taught in science classes.
- *Moderate influence* – Thirty-four percent of teachers reported that classroom assessment results had a moderate influence on what they taught in science classes.
- *Minimal influence* – Twenty-two percent of teachers reported that classroom assessment results had minimal influence on what they taught in science classes.
- *No influence* – Nine percent of teachers reported that classroom assessment results had no influence on what they taught in science classes.

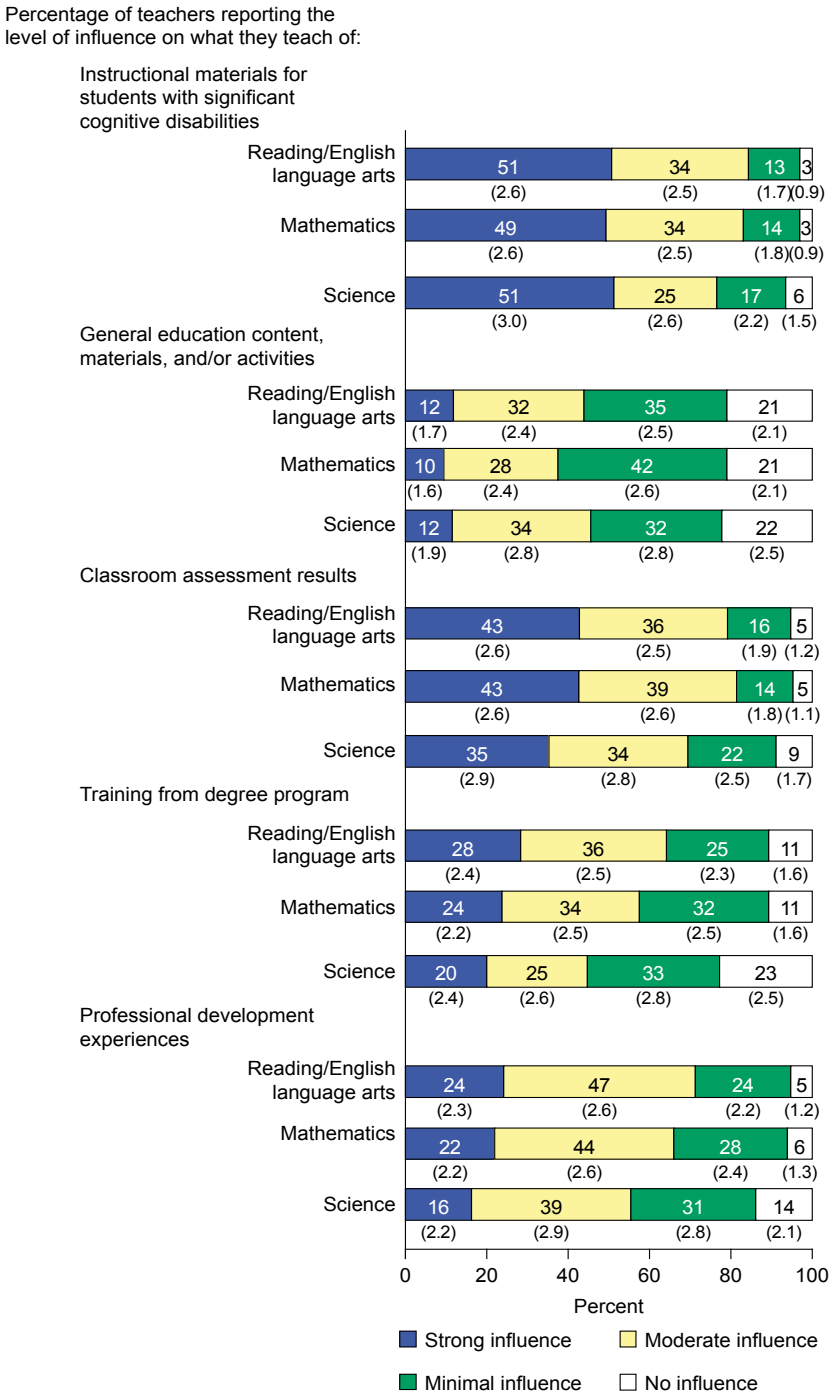
Influence of degree program training

Teachers were asked the extent to which "training from my degree program (undergraduate or graduate)" influenced what they taught in reading/English language arts, mathematics, and science classes. The response options were "Strong influence," "Moderate influence," "Minimal influence," and "No influence." Sixty-four percent of teachers for reading/English language arts, 58 percent for mathematics, and 45 percent for science reported that their training from their degree program strongly or moderately influenced what they taught students with significant cognitive disabilities (figure 53).

Reading/English language arts

- *Strong influence* – Twenty-eight percent of teachers reported that training they received in their degree program had a strong influence on what they taught in reading/English language arts classes.
- *Moderate influence* – Thirty-six percent of teachers reported that training they received in their degree program had a moderate influence on what they taught in reading/English language arts classes.
- *Minimal influence* – Twenty-five percent of teachers reported that training they received in their degree program had minimal influence on what they taught in reading/English language arts classes.

Figure 53. Influences of training and resources on instruction in reading/English language arts, mathematics, and science



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 370 teachers who provide instruction in reading/English language arts, 360 teachers who provide instruction in mathematics, and 280 teachers who provide instruction in science. Total numbers vary because teachers who did not teach a certain subject were instructed not to answer questions in that section.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009

- *No influence* – Eleven percent of teachers reported that training they received in their degree program had no influence on what they taught in reading/English language arts classes.

Mathematics

- *Strong influence* – Twenty-four percent of teachers reported that training they received in their degree program had a strong influence on what they taught in mathematics classes.
- *Moderate influence* – Thirty-four percent of teachers reported that training they received in their degree program had a moderate influence on what they taught in mathematics classes.
- *Minimal influence* – Thirty-two percent of teachers reported that training they received in their degree program had minimal influence on what they taught in mathematics classes.
- *No influence* – Eleven percent of teachers reported that training they received in their degree program had no influence on what they taught in mathematics classes.

Science

- *Strong influence* – Twenty percent of teachers reported that training they received in their degree program had a strong influence on what they taught in science classes.
- *Moderate influence* – Twenty-five percent of teachers reported that the training they received in their degree program had a moderate influence on what they taught in science classes.
- *Minimal influence* – Thirty-three percent of teachers reported that training they received in their degree program had minimal influence on what they taught in science classes.
- *No influence* – Twenty-three percent of teachers reported that training they received in their degree program had no influence on what they taught in science classes.

Influence of professional development

Teachers were asked the extent to which "professional development experiences" influenced what they taught in reading/English language arts, mathematics, and science classes. The response options were "Strong influence," "Moderate influence," "Minimal influence," and "No influence." Seventy-one percent of teachers for reading/English language arts, 66 percent for mathematics, and 55 percent for science reported that their professional development experiences strongly or moderately influenced what they taught students with significant cognitive disabilities (figure 53).

Reading/English language arts

- *Strong influence* – Twenty-four percent of teachers reported that their professional development experiences had a strong influence on what they taught in reading/English language arts classes.
- *Moderate influence* – Forty-seven percent of teachers reported that their professional development experiences had a moderate influence on what they taught in reading/English language arts classes.

- *Minimal influence* – Twenty-four percent of teachers reported that their professional development experiences had minimal influence on what they taught in reading/English language arts classes.
- *No influence* – Five percent of teachers reported that their professional development experiences had no influence on what they taught in reading/English language arts classes.

Mathematics

- *Strong influence* – Twenty-two percent of teachers reported that their professional development experiences had a strong influence on what they taught in mathematics classes.
- *Moderate influence* – Forty-four percent of teachers reported that their professional development experiences had a moderate influence on what they taught in mathematics classes.
- *Minimal influence* – Twenty-eight percent of teachers reported that their professional development experiences had minimal influence on what they taught in mathematics classes.
- *No influence* – Six percent of teachers reported that their professional development experiences had no influence on what they taught in mathematics classes.

Science

- *Strong influence* – Sixteen percent of teachers reported that their professional development experiences had a strong influence on what they taught in science classes.
- *Moderate influence* – Thirty-nine percent of teachers reported that their professional development experiences had a moderate influence on what they taught in science classes.
- *Minimal influence* – Thirty-one percent of teachers reported that their professional development experiences had minimal influence on what they taught in science classes.
- *No influence* – Fourteen percent of teachers reported that their professional development experiences had no influence on what they taught in science classes.

Selected Findings

Selected findings for chapter 5 include:

- Overall, 95 percent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that they understand the alternate assessment process.
- Ninety-three percent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that they are well prepared to administer the alternate assessment.
- Seventy percent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that they have adequate resources to conduct the alternate assessment.

6. Student Opportunity to Learn Academic Content

A key component of the standards-based theory of action is providing all students with access to the same content standards (Resnick and Zurawsky 2005). Inherent in this goal is the expectation that districts and schools will create their own curricula and instructional programs to provide all their students with an opportunity to learn the state's content standards.

Items in this section are linked to box 4 of the SBR model (described in the Study Design) and address the following research questions:

- What types of instructional approaches and assessments do teachers use when teaching and measuring achievement of students with significant cognitive disabilities?
- Who typically plans and delivers instruction to students with significant cognitive disabilities?
- How frequently do students with significant cognitive disabilities receive instruction in the academic content areas?

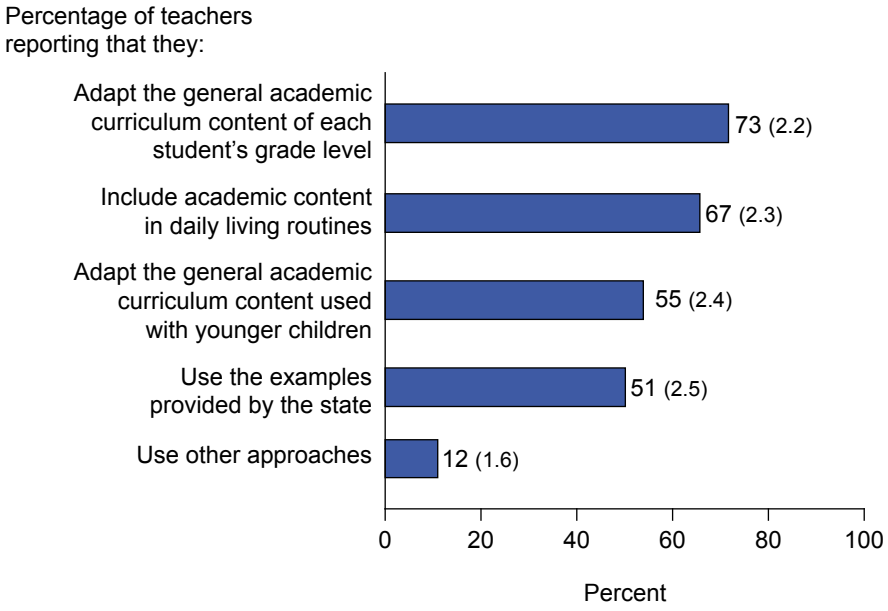
The following section presents the survey responses from teachers to questions about providing an opportunity for students with significant cognitive disabilities, in general, and their target students, specifically, to learn academic content.

Approaches used to teach academic content standards to students with significant cognitive disabilities

Teachers were asked what approaches they used in teaching academic content standards to students with significant cognitive disabilities. They were instructed to "mark all that apply" from five options: "Adapt the general academic curriculum content used with younger children," "Adapt the general academic curriculum content of each student's grade level," "Include academic content in daily living routines," "Use the examples provided by the state (e.g., teaching activities, state curriculum, or lesson plans)," and "Other." Of those responding, 73 percent of teachers reported that they adapted the general academic curriculum content of each student's grade level and 51 percent reported using the examples provided by the state (figure 54).

- *Adapt the general academic curriculum content of each student's grade level* – Seventy-three percent of teachers reported adapting the general academic curriculum content of each student's grade level in teaching academic content standards.
- *Include academic content in daily living routines* – Sixty-seven percent of teachers reported including academic content in daily living routines in teaching academic content standards.
- *Adapt the general academic curriculum content used with younger children* – Fifty-five percent of teachers reported adapting the general academic curriculum content used with younger children in teaching academic content standards.
- *Use the examples provided by the state* – Fifty-one percent of teachers reported using the examples provided by the state in teaching academic content standards.
- *Use other approaches* – Twelve percent of teachers reported using some other approach in teaching academic content standards.

Figure 54. Approaches used to teach academic content standards to students with significant cognitive disabilities



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because multiple responses were possible. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 420 teachers.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Frequency of types of assessments in reading/English language arts, mathematics, and science classes

Teachers were asked how often they used each of three types of assessment in reading/English language arts, mathematics, and science classes: objective questions, performance on-demand, and teacher observation.

Objective questions

Teachers were asked how often they used "Objective questions (e.g., true/false, multiple choice, yes/no)." The response options were "3+ times per week," "1–2 times per week," "1–3 times per month," "<1 time per month," and "Not at all." The percentage of teachers reporting the frequency of the use of objective questions in assessing student performance in each content area ranged from 35 percent for 1 to 2 times per week to 8 percent for less than once a month for reading/English language arts, from 29 percent for 1 to 2 times per week to 12 percent for less than once a month for mathematics, and from 30 percent for 1 to 2 times per week to 10 percent for less than once a month for science (figure 55).

Reading/English language arts

- *3 or more times per week* – Thirty percent of teachers reported using objective questions 3 or more times per week as an assessment in reading/English language arts.

- *1 to 2 times per week* – Thirty-five percent of teachers reported using objective questions 1 to 2 times per week as an assessment in reading/English language arts.
- *1 to 3 times per month* – Seventeen percent of teachers reported using objective questions 1 to 3 times per month as an assessment in reading/English language arts.
- *Less than 1 time per month* – Eight percent of teachers reported using objective questions less than once a month as an assessment in reading/English language arts.
- *Not at all* – Eleven percent of teachers reported that they did not use objective questions as an assessment in reading/English language arts.

Mathematics

- *3 or more times per week* – Twenty percent of teachers reported using objective questions 3 or more times per week as an assessment in mathematics.
- *1 to 2 times per week* – Twenty-nine percent of teachers reported using objective questions 1 to 2 times per week as an assessment in mathematics.
- *1 to 3 times per month* – Twenty-two percent of teachers reported using objective questions 1 to 3 times per month as an assessment in mathematics.
- *Less than 1 time per month* – Twelve percent of teachers reported using objective questions less than once a month as an assessment in mathematics.
- *Not at all* – Seventeen percent of teachers reported that they did not use objective questions as an assessment in mathematics.

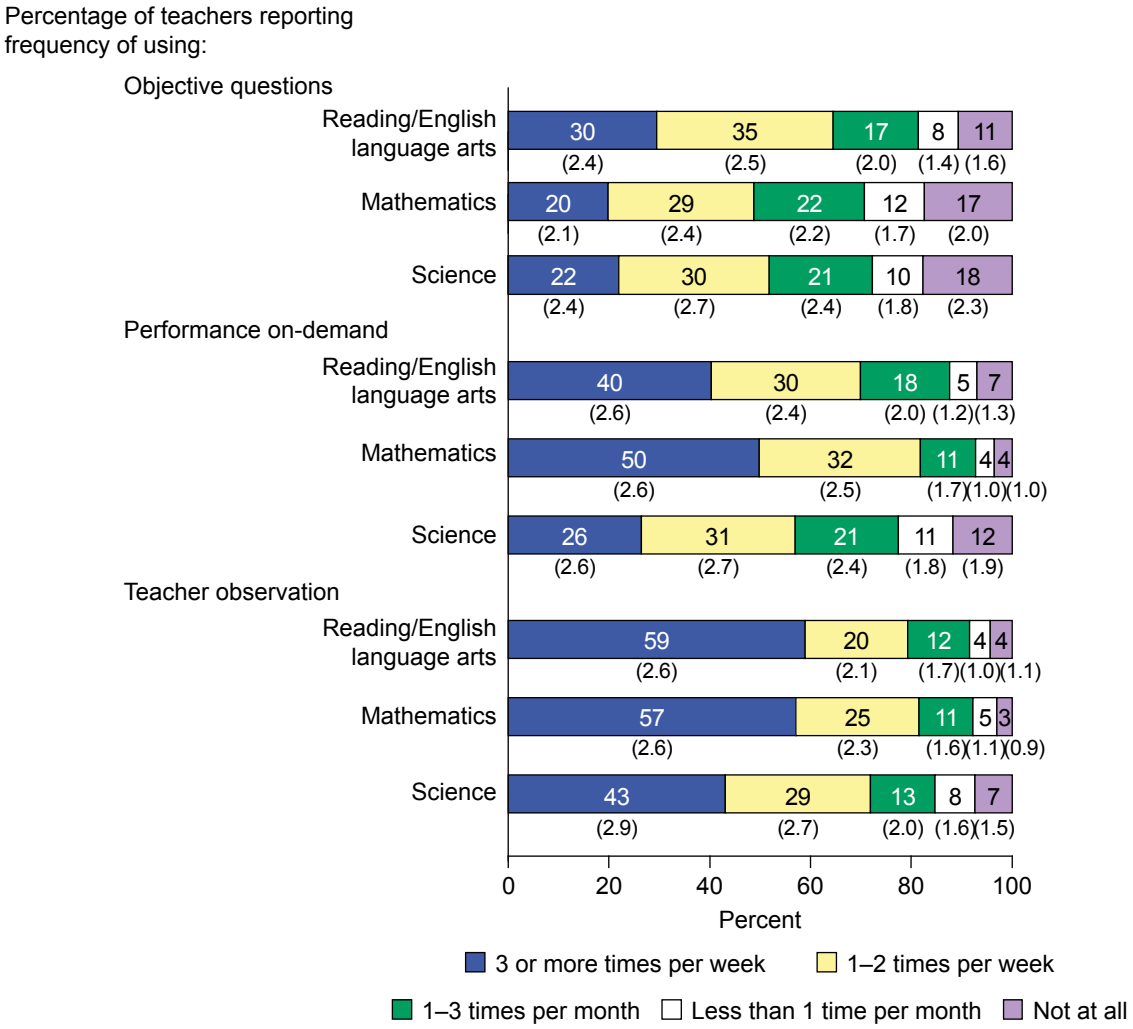
Science

- *3 or more times per week* – Twenty-two percent of teachers reported using objective questions 3 or more times per week as an assessment in science.
- *1 to 2 times per week* – Thirty percent of teachers reported using objective questions 1 to 2 times per week as an assessment in science.
- *1 to 3 times per month* – Twenty-one percent of teachers reported using objective questions 1 to 3 times per month as an assessment in science.
- *Less than 1 time per month* – Ten percent of teachers reported using objective questions less than once a month as an assessment in science.
- *Not at all* – Eighteen percent of teachers reported that they did not use objective questions as an assessment in science.

Performance on-demand tasks

Teachers were also asked how often they used "Performance on-demand (e.g., task analysis steps, repeated trials, incidence recording)" as an assessment tool. The response options were "3+ times per week," "1–2 times per week," "1–3 times per month," "<1 time per month," and "Not at all." The percentage of teachers reporting the frequency of the use of on-demand tasks in assessing student performance in each content area ranged from 40 percent for 3 or more times per week to 5 percent for less than once a month for reading/English language arts, from 50 percent for 3 or more times per week to 4 percent for less than once a month and not at all for mathematics, and from 31 percent for 1-2 times per week to 11 percent for less than once a month for science (figure 55).

Figure 55. Frequency of using objective questions, performance on-demand, and teacher observation as an assessment tool in reading/English language arts, mathematics, and science classes



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 370 teachers who provide instruction in reading/English language arts, 360 teachers who provide instruction in mathematics, and 290 teachers who provide instruction in science. Total numbers vary because teachers who did not teach a certain subject were instructed not to answer questions in that section.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Reading/English language arts

- *3 or more times per week* – Forty percent of teachers reported using performance on-demand 3 or more times per week as an assessment in reading/English language arts.
- *1 to 2 times per week* – Thirty percent of teachers reported using performance on-demand 1 to 2 times per week as an assessment in reading/English language arts.
- *1 to 3 times per month* – Eighteen percent of teachers reported using performance on-demand 1 to 3 times per month as an assessment in reading/English language arts.

- *Less than 1 time per month* – Five percent of teachers reported using performance on-demand less than once a month as an assessment in reading/English language arts.
- *Not at all* – Seven percent of teachers reported that they did not use performance on-demand as an assessment in reading/English language arts.

Mathematics

- *3 or more times per week* – Fifty percent of teachers reported using performance on-demand 3 or more times per week as an assessment in mathematics.
- *1 to 2 times per week* – Thirty-two percent of teachers reported using performance on-demand 1 to 2 times per week as an assessment in mathematics.
- *1 to 3 times per month* – Eleven percent of teachers reported using performance on-demand 1 to 3 times per month as an assessment in mathematics.
- *Less than 1 time per month* – Four percent of teachers reported using performance on-demand less than once a month as an assessment in mathematics.
- *Not at all* – Four percent of teachers reported that they did not use performance on-demand as an assessment in mathematics.

Science

- *3 or more times per week* – Twenty-six percent of teachers reported using performance on-demand 3 or more times per week as an assessment in science.
- *1 to 2 times per week* – Thirty-one percent of teachers reported using performance on-demand 1 to 2 times per week as an assessment in science.
- *1 to 3 times per month* – Twenty-one percent of teachers reported using performance on-demand 1 to 3 times per month as an assessment in science.
- *Less than 1 time per month* – Eleven percent of teachers reported using performance on-demand less than once a month as an assessment in science.
- *Not at all* – Twelve percent of teachers reported that they did not use performance on-demand as an assessment in science.

Teacher observation

Teachers were asked how often they used "Teacher observation (e.g., anecdotal or descriptive data)" as an assessment tool. The response options were "3+ times per week," "1–2 times per week," "1–3 times per month," "<1 time per month," and "Not at all." The percentage of teachers reporting the frequency with which they used observation to assess student performance in each content area ranged from 59 percent for 3 or more times per week to 4 percent for less than once a month or not at all for reading/English language arts, from 57 percent for 3 or more times per week to 3 percent for not at all for mathematics, and from 43 percent for 3 or more times per week to 7 percent for not at all for science (figure 55).

Reading/English language arts

- *3 or more times per week* – Fifty-nine percent of teachers reported using teacher observation 3 or more times per week as an assessment in reading/English language arts.

- *1 to 2 times per week* – Twenty percent of teachers reported using teacher observation 1 to 2 times per week as an assessment in reading/English language arts.
- *1 to 3 times per month* – Twelve percent of teachers reported using teacher observation 1 to 3 times per month as an assessment in reading/English language arts.
- *Less than 1 time per month* – Four percent of teachers reported using teacher observation less than once a month as an assessment in reading/English language arts.
- *Not at all* – Four percent of teachers reported that they did not use teacher observation as an assessment in reading/English language arts.

Mathematics

- *3 or more times per week* – Fifty-seven percent of teachers reported using teacher observation 3 or more times per week as an assessment in mathematics.
- *1 to 2 times per week* – Twenty-five percent of teachers reported using teacher observation 1 to 2 times per week as an assessment in mathematics.
- *1 to 3 times per month* – Eleven percent of teachers reported using teacher observation 1 to 3 times per month as an assessment in mathematics.
- *Less than 1 time per month* – Five percent of teachers reported using teacher observation less than once a month as an assessment in mathematics.
- *Not at all* – Three percent of teachers reported that they did not use teacher observation as an assessment in mathematics.

Science

- *3 or more times per week* – Forty-three percent of teachers reported using teacher observation 3 or more times per week as an assessment in science.
- *1 to 2 times per week* – Twenty-nine percent of teachers reported using teacher observation 1 to 2 times per week as an assessment in science.
- *1 to 3 times per month* – Thirteen percent of teachers reported using teacher observation 1 to 3 times per month as an assessment in science.
- *Less than 1 time per month* –Eight percent of teachers reported using teacher observation less than once a month as an assessment in science.
- *Not at all* – Seven percent of teachers reported that they did not use teacher observation as an assessment in science.

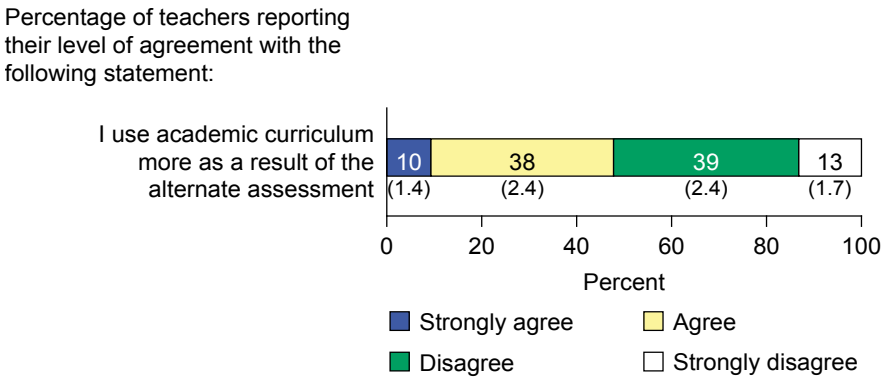
Increased use of academic curriculum as a result of the alternate assessment

Teachers were asked the extent to which they agreed with the statement, "I use academic curriculum more as a result of the alternate assessment." The response options were "Strongly agree," "Agree," "Disagree," and "Strongly disagree." Overall, 48 percent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that they used academic curriculum more as a result of the alternate assessment (figure 56).

- *Strongly agree* – Ten percent of teachers strongly agreed that they used academic curriculum more as a result of the alternate assessment.

- *Agree* – Thirty-eight percent of teachers agreed that they used academic curriculum more as a result of the alternate assessment.
- *Disagree* – Thirty-nine percent of teachers disagreed that they used academic curriculum more as a result of the alternate assessment.
- *Strongly disagree* – Thirteen percent of teachers strongly disagreed that they used academic curriculum more as a result of the alternate assessment.

Figure 56. Increased use of academic curriculum as a result of the alternate assessment



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on a sample of approximately 420 teachers.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Planning of instruction for the target student

Teachers were asked who was involved in instructional planning for the target student for each of the following content area categories: reading/English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, arts, health or physical education, and nonacademic content and skills. Teachers indicated whether a general education teacher, special education teacher, or paraprofessional planned the instruction for their target student. Because planning in each subject area may be done by combinations of general education teachers, special education teachers, and paraprofessionals, teachers were asked to mark all the options that applied in each subject area. The percentage of teachers reporting that a special education teacher planned the student's instruction in these subject areas ranged from 98 percent for mathematics to 36 percent for arts and health or physical education. The percentage reporting that instructional planning was done by a general education teacher ranged from 67 percent for health or physical education to 4 percent for mathematics. The percentage reporting that a paraprofessional planned instruction ranged from 11 percent for nonacademic content and skills to 5 percent for social studies (figure 57).

Reading/English language arts

- *Special education teacher* – Ninety-six percent of teachers reported that a special education teacher planned the target student's instruction in reading/English language arts.

- *General education teacher* – Six percent of teachers reported that a general education teacher planned the target student's instruction in reading/English language arts.
- *Paraprofessional* – Six percent of teachers reported that a paraprofessional planned the target student's instruction in reading/English language arts.

Mathematics

- *Special education teacher* – Ninety-eight percent of teachers reported that a special education teacher planned the target student's instruction in mathematics.
- *General education teacher* – Four percent of teachers reported that a general education teacher planned the target student's instruction in mathematics.
- *Paraprofessional* – Six percent of teachers reported that a paraprofessional planned the target student's instruction in mathematics.

Science

- *Special education teacher* – Seventy-nine percent of teachers reported that a special education teacher planned the target student's instruction in science.
- *General education teacher* – Twenty-five percent of teachers reported that a general education teacher planned the target student's instruction in science.
- *Paraprofessional* – Six percent of teachers reported that a paraprofessional planned the target student's instruction in science.

Social studies

- *Special education teacher* – Seventy-six percent of teachers reported that a special education teacher planned the target student's instruction in social studies.
- *General education teacher* – Twenty-five percent of teachers reported that a general education teacher planned the target student's instruction in social studies.
- *Paraprofessional* – Five percent of teachers reported that a paraprofessional planned the target student's instruction in social studies.

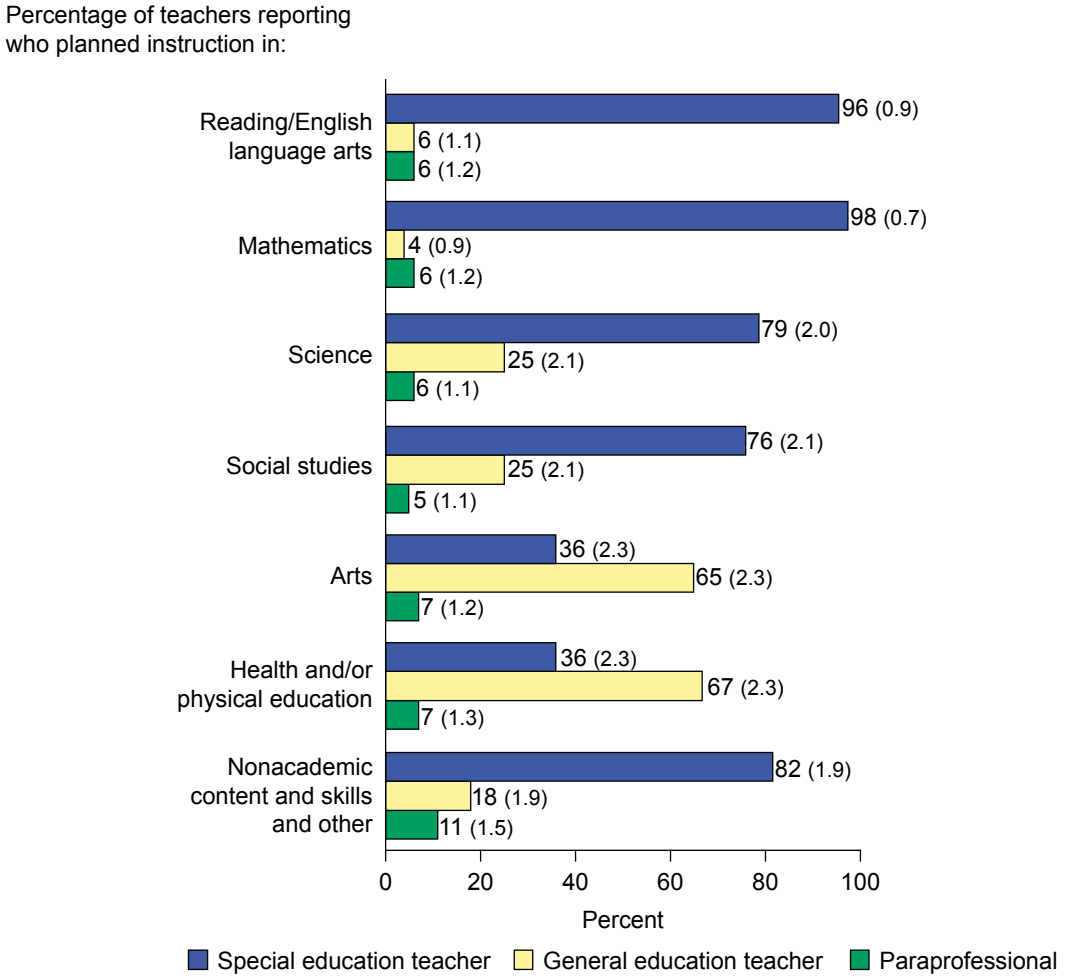
Arts

- *Special education teacher* – Thirty-six percent of teachers reported that a special education teacher planned the target student's instruction in arts.
- *General education teacher* – Sixty-five percent of teachers reported that a general education teacher planned the target student's instruction in arts.
- *Paraprofessional* – Seven percent of teachers reported that a paraprofessional planned the target student's instruction in arts.

Health or physical education

- *Special education teacher* – Thirty-six percent of teachers reported that a special education teacher planned the target student's instruction in health or physical education.

Figure 57. Planning of instruction for the target student, by subject and by type of instructor



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because multiple responses were possible. Percentages are based on samples of approximately 420 teachers who provide instruction in reading/English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, arts, health or physical education, and nonacademic content and skills and other.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

- *General education teacher* – Sixty-seven percent of teachers reported that a general education teacher planned the target student's instruction in health or physical education.
- *Paraprofessional* – Seven percent of teachers reported that a paraprofessional planned the target student's instruction in health or physical education.

Nonacademic content and skills and other

- *Special education teacher* – Eighty-two percent of teachers reported that a special education teacher planned the target student's nonacademic content and skills and other.
- *General education teacher* – Eighteen percent of teachers reported that a general education teacher planned the target student's nonacademic content and skills and other.
- *Paraprofessional* – Eleven percent of teachers reported that a paraprofessional planned the target student's nonacademic content and skills and other.

Primary instructor for the delivery of instruction to the target student

Teachers were asked to identify who delivered instruction for their target student in each of seven subject areas. Teachers were asked first to identify which type of instructor "primarily delivers instruction." The response options were "General education teacher," "Special education teacher," and "Paraprofessional." Teachers were instructed to "mark all that apply." The percentage of teachers reporting that a special education teacher was the primary instructor in these subject areas ranged from 89 percent for mathematics to 28 percent for arts. The percentage reporting that primary instruction was conducted by a general education teacher ranged from 64 percent for arts and health or physical education to 3 percent for mathematics. The percentage reporting that a paraprofessional primarily conducted instruction ranged from 23 percent for reading/English language arts to 16 percent for social studies and health or physical education (figure 58).

Reading/English language arts

- *Special education teacher* – Eighty-eight percent of teachers reported that a special education teacher was the primary person to deliver the target student's instruction in reading/English language arts.
- *General education teacher* – Five percent of teachers reported that a general education teacher was the primary person to deliver the target student's instruction in reading/English language arts.
- *Paraprofessional* – Twenty-three percent of teachers reported that a paraprofessional was the primary person to deliver the target student's instruction in reading/English language arts.

Mathematics

- *Special education teacher* – Eighty-nine percent of teachers reported that a special education teacher was the primary person to deliver the target student's instruction in mathematics.
- *General education teacher* – Three percent of teachers reported that a general education teacher was the primary person to deliver the target student's instruction in mathematics.
- *Paraprofessional* – Twenty-one percent of teachers reported that a paraprofessional was the primary person to deliver the target student's instruction in mathematics.

Science

- *Special education teacher* – Seventy-one percent of teachers reported that a special education teacher was the primary person to deliver the target student's instruction in science.
- *General education teacher* – Twenty-three percent of teachers reported that a general education teacher was the primary person to deliver the target student's instruction in science.
- *Paraprofessional* – Seventeen percent of teachers reported that a paraprofessional was the primary person to deliver the target student's instruction in science.

Social studies

- *Special education teacher* – Sixty-eight percent of teachers reported that a special education teacher was the primary person to deliver the target student's instruction in social studies.
- *General education teacher* – Twenty-four percent of teachers reported that a general education teacher was the primary person to deliver the target student's instruction in social studies.
- *Paraprofessional* – Sixteen percent of teachers reported that a paraprofessional was the primary person to deliver the target student's instruction in social studies.

Arts

- *Special education teacher* – Twenty-eight percent of teachers reported that a special education teacher was the primary person to deliver the target student's instruction in arts.
- *General education teacher* – Sixty-four percent of teachers reported that a general education teacher was the primary person to deliver the target student's instruction in arts.
- *Paraprofessional* – Seventeen percent of teachers reported that a paraprofessional was the primary person to deliver the target student's instruction in arts.

Health or physical education

- *Special education teacher* – Twenty-nine percent of teachers reported that a special education teacher was the primary person to deliver the target student's instruction in health or physical education.
- *General education teacher* – Sixty-four percent of teachers reported that a general education teacher was the primary person to deliver the target student's instruction in health or physical education.
- *Paraprofessional* – Sixteen percent of teachers reported that a paraprofessional was the primary person to deliver the target student's instruction in health or physical education.

Nonacademic content and skills and other

- *Special education teacher* – Seventy-one percent of teachers reported that a special education teacher was the primary person to deliver the target student's nonacademic content and skills and other.
- *General education teacher* – Nineteen percent of teachers reported that a general education teacher was the primary person to deliver the target student's nonacademic content and skills.
- *Paraprofessional* – Twenty percent of teachers reported that a paraprofessional was the primary person to deliver the target student's nonacademic content and skills and other.

Additional instructors for the delivery of instruction to the target student

Teachers were also asked to identify "others who deliver instruction" in addition to the instructor who "primarily delivers instruction" in the seven subject areas. "General education teacher," "Special education teacher," and "Paraprofessional" were the response options for

supplemental instructors. Teachers were instructed to "mark all that apply." The percentage of teachers who reported special education teachers as others who deliver instruction in these subject areas ranged from 15 percent for science to 12 percent for mathematics and arts. The percentage who reported general education teachers as others who deliver instruction ranged from 7 percent for arts and health or physical education to 3 percent for reading/English language arts, mathematics, and nonacademic content and skills. The percentage who reported paraprofessionals as others who delivered instruction ranged from 46 percent for reading/English language arts and mathematics to 32 percent for health or physical education (figure 58).

Reading/English language arts

- *Special education teacher* – Fourteen percent of teachers reported that a special education teacher also delivered the target student's instruction in reading/English language arts.
- *General education teacher* – Three percent of teachers reported that a general education teacher also delivered the target student's instruction in reading/English language arts.
- *Paraprofessional* – Forty-six percent of teachers reported that a paraprofessional also delivered the target student's instruction in reading/English language arts.

Mathematics

- *Special education teacher* – Twelve percent of teachers reported that a special education teacher also delivered the target student's instruction in mathematics.
- *General education teacher* – Three percent of teachers reported that a general education teacher also delivered the target student's instruction in mathematics.
- *Paraprofessional* – Forty-six percent of teachers reported that a paraprofessional also delivered the target student's instruction in mathematics.

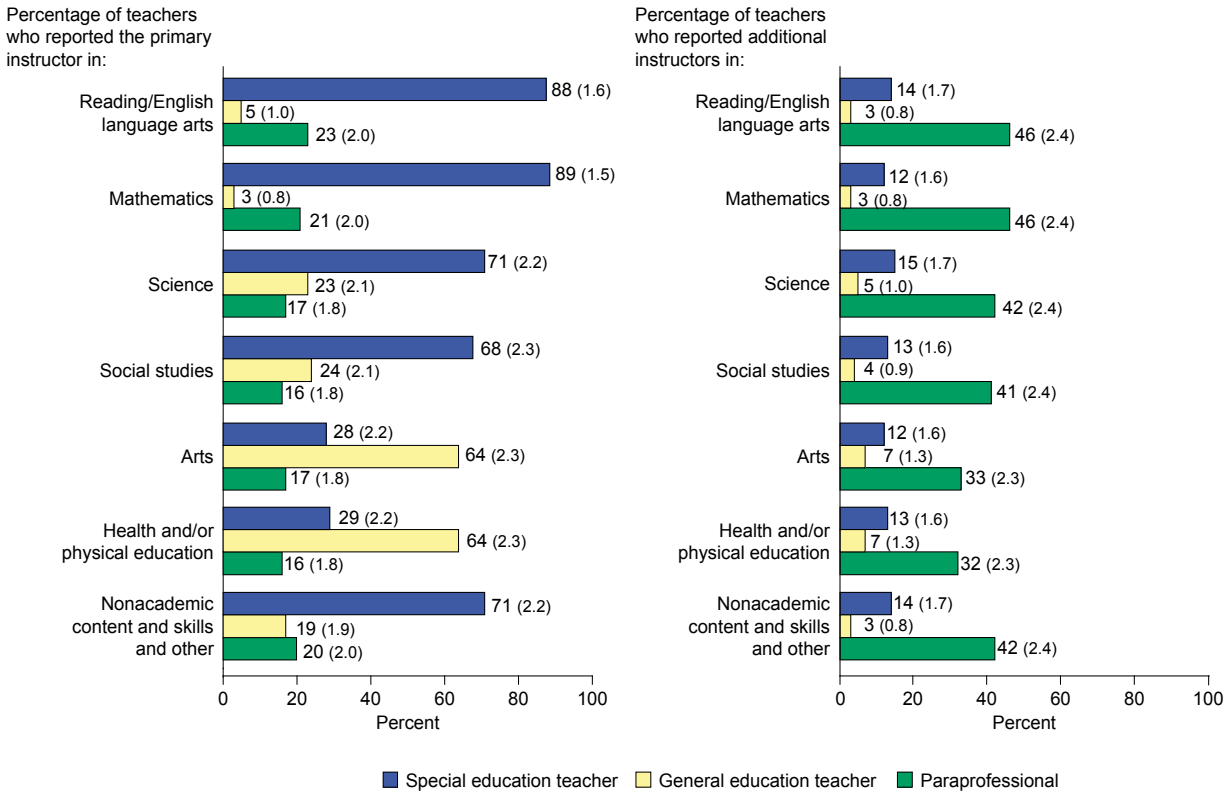
Science

- *Special education teacher* – Fifteen percent of teachers reported that a special education teacher also provided the target student's instruction in science.
- *General education teacher* – Five percent of teachers reported that a general education teacher also provided the target student's instruction in science.
- *Paraprofessional* – Forty-two percent of teachers reported that a paraprofessional also provided the target student's instruction in science.

Social studies

- *Special education teacher* – Thirteen percent of teachers reported that a special education teacher also provided the target student's instruction in social studies.
- *General education teacher* – Four percent of teachers reported that a general education teacher also provided the target student's instruction in social studies.

Figure 58. Primary and additional instructors for the target student, by subject and by type of instructor



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because multiple responses were possible. Percentages are based on samples of approximately 420 teachers who provide instruction in reading/English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, arts, health or physical education, and nonacademic content and skills.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

- *Paraprofessional* – Forty-one percent of teachers reported that a paraprofessional also provided the target student's instruction in social studies.

Arts

- *Special education teacher* – Twelve percent of teachers reported that a special education teacher also provided the target student's instruction in arts.
- *General education teacher* – Seven percent of teachers reported that a general education teacher also provided the target student's instruction in arts.
- *Paraprofessional* – Thirty-three percent of teachers reported that a paraprofessional also provided the target student's instruction in arts.

Health or physical education

- *Special education teacher* – Thirteen percent of teachers reported that a special education teacher also provided the target student's instruction in health or physical education.
- *General education teacher* – Seven percent of teachers reported that a general education teacher also provided the target student's instruction in health or physical education.

- *Paraprofessional* – Thirty-two percent of teachers reported that a paraprofessional also provided the target student's instruction in health or physical education.

Nonacademic content and skills and other

- *Special education teacher* – Fourteen percent of teachers reported that a special education teacher also delivered the target student's nonacademic content and skills and other.
- *General education teacher* – Three percent of teachers reported that a general education teacher also delivered the target student's nonacademic content and skills and other.
- *Paraprofessional* – Forty-two percent of teachers reported that a paraprofessional also delivered the target student's nonacademic content and skills and other.

Frequency of academic instruction received by the target student

Teachers were asked how frequently the target student received subject-specific instruction in seven content areas. They responded to the question, "Over the last 30 days, how often did your target student receive instruction in the following content areas?" with the note that "a single lesson may address multiple content areas simultaneously." The response options were "3+ times per week," "1–2 times per week," "1–3 times per month," "<1 time per month," and "Not at all." The percentage of teachers reporting that students received instruction in the seven content areas 3 or more times per week ranged from 39 percent for arts to 93 percent for reading/English language arts (figure 59).

Reading/English language arts

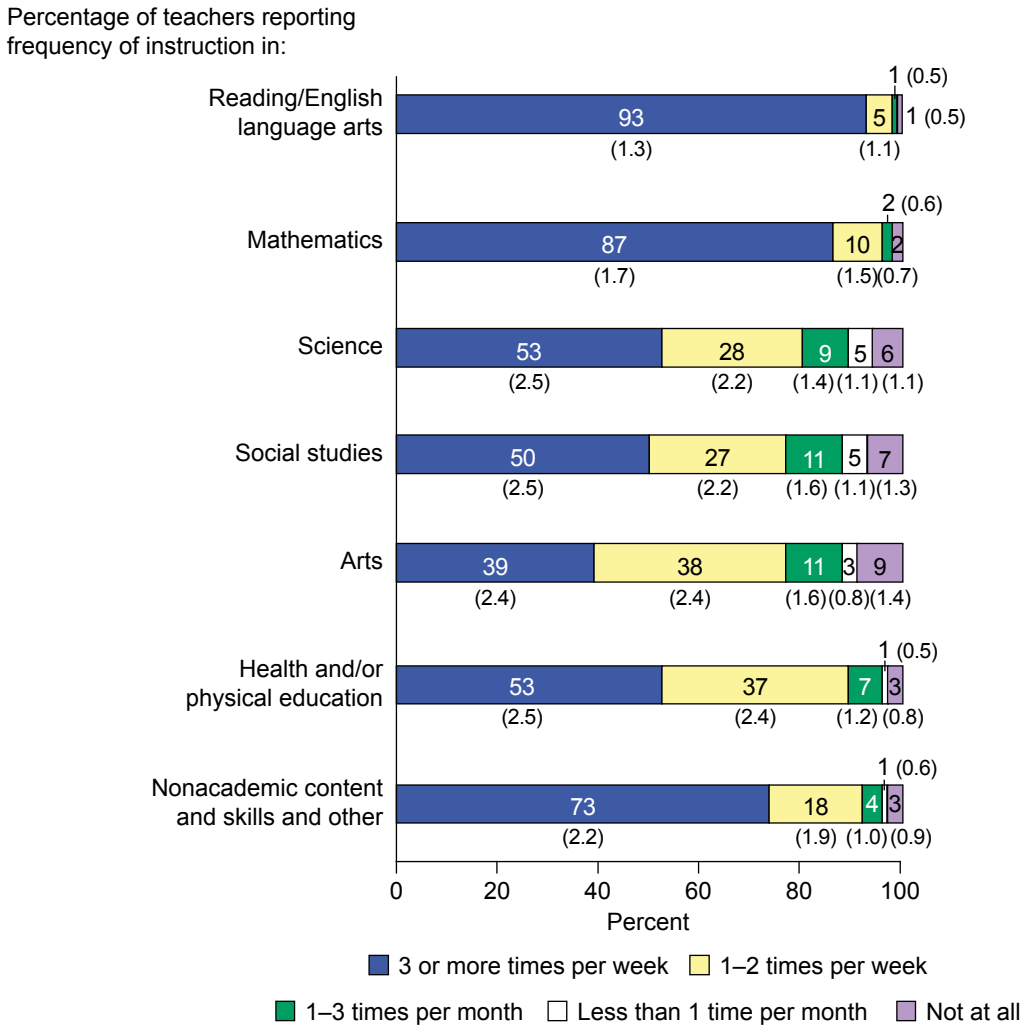
- *3 or more times per week* – Ninety-three percent of teachers reported that their target student had received reading/English language arts instruction 3 or more times per week.
- *1 to 2 times per week* – Five percent of teachers reported that their target student had received reading/English language arts instruction 1 to 2 times per week.
- *1 to 3 times per month* – One percent of teachers reported that their target student had received reading/English language arts instruction 1 to 3 times per month.
- *Less than 1 time per month* – None of the respondents (0 percent) reported that their target student had received reading/English language arts instruction less than once per month.
- *Not at all* – One percent of teachers reported that their target student had received no instruction in reading/English.

Mathematics

- *3 or more times per week* – Eighty-seven percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in mathematics 3 or more times per week.
- *1 to 2 times per week* – Ten percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in mathematics 1 to 2 times per week.
- *1 to 3 times per month* – Two percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in mathematics 1 to 3 times per month.

- *Less than 1 time per month* – None of the respondents (0 percent) reported that their target student had received reading/English language arts instruction less than once per month.
- *Not at all* – Two percent of teachers reported that their target student had no instruction in mathematics.

Figure 59. Frequency of instruction received by the target student in the last 30 days, by content area



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on samples of approximately 420 teachers who provide instruction in reading/English language arts, mathematics, and science; 410 teachers who provide instruction in social studies and health and/or physical education; and 400 who provide instruction in art and nonacademic content and skills and other.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Science

- *3 or more times per week* – Fifty-three percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in science 3 or more times per week.
- *1 to 2 times per week* – Twenty-eight percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in science 1 to 2 times per week.
- *1 to 3 times per month* – Nine percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in science 1 to 3 times per month.
- *Less than 1 time per month* – Five percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in science less than once per month.
- *Not at all* – Six percent of teachers reported that their target student had received no instruction in science.

Social studies

- *3 or more times per week* – Fifty percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in social studies 3 or more times per week.
- *1 to 2 times per week* – Twenty-seven percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in social studies 1 to 2 times per week.
- *1 to 3 times per month* – Eleven percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in social studies 1 to 3 times per month.
- *Less than 1 time per month* – Five percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in social studies less than once per month.
- *Not at all* – Seven percent of teachers reported that their target student had received no instruction in social studies.

Arts

- *3 or more times per week* – Thirty-nine percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in arts 3 or more times per week.
- *1 to 2 times per week* – Thirty-eight percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in arts 1 to 2 times per week.
- *1 to 3 times per month* – Eleven percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in arts 1 to 3 times per month.
- *Less than 1 time per month* – Three percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in arts less than once per month.
- *Not at all* – Nine percent of teachers reported that their target student had received no instruction in arts.

Health or physical education

- *3 or more times per week* – Fifty-three percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in health or physical education 3 or more times per week.
- *1 to 2 times per week* – Thirty-seven percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in health or physical education 1 to 2 times per week.

- *1 to 3 times per month* – Seven percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in health or physical education 1 to 3 times per month.
- *Less than 1 time per month* – One percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in health or physical education less than once per month.
- *Not at all* – Three percent of teachers reported that their target student had received no instruction in health or physical education.

Nonacademic content and skills and other

- *3 or more times per week* – Seventy-three percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in nonacademic content 3 or more times per week.
- *1 to 2 times per week* – Eighteen percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in nonacademic content 1 to 2 times per week.
- *1 to 3 times per month* – Four percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in nonacademic content 1 to 3 times per month.
- *Less than 1 time per month* – One percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in nonacademic content less than once per month.
- *Not at all* – Three percent of teachers reported that their target student had received no instruction in nonacademic content and skills.

Frequency of instruction on academic content standards received by the target student

Teachers were asked about the frequency of instruction on the content standards for reading/English language arts and mathematics. These consisted of four content standards in reading/English language arts—reading and literature, writing, communication, and research—and five content standards in mathematics—number sense and operations, algebra, geometry, measurement, and data.

Teachers answered the question, "Over the last 30 days, how often did your target student receive instruction related to the following content standards?" with the note that "a single lesson may address multiple content standards simultaneously." Response options were "3+ times per week," "1–2 times per week," "1–3 times per month," "<1 time per month," and "Not at all." The percentage of teachers reporting instruction 3 or more times per week in the specific reading/English language arts content standards ranged from 78 percent for reading and literature to 13 percent for research. The percentage of teachers reporting instruction 3 or more times per week in the specific mathematics content standards ranged from 75 percent for number sense and operations to 19 percent for data. (figure 60).

Reading/English language arts content standards

Reading and literature

- *3 or more times per week* – Seventy-eight percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in the reading and literature content standard 3 or more times per week.

- *1 to 2 times per week* – Seventeen percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in the reading and literature content standard 1 to 2 times per week.
- *1 to 3 times per month* – Two percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in the reading and literature content standard 1 to 3 times per month.
- *Less than 1 time per month* – No teachers (0 percent) reported that their target student had received instruction in the reading and literature content standard less than once per month.
- *Not at all* – Three percent of teachers reported that their target student had not received instruction in the reading and literature content standard over the last 30 days.

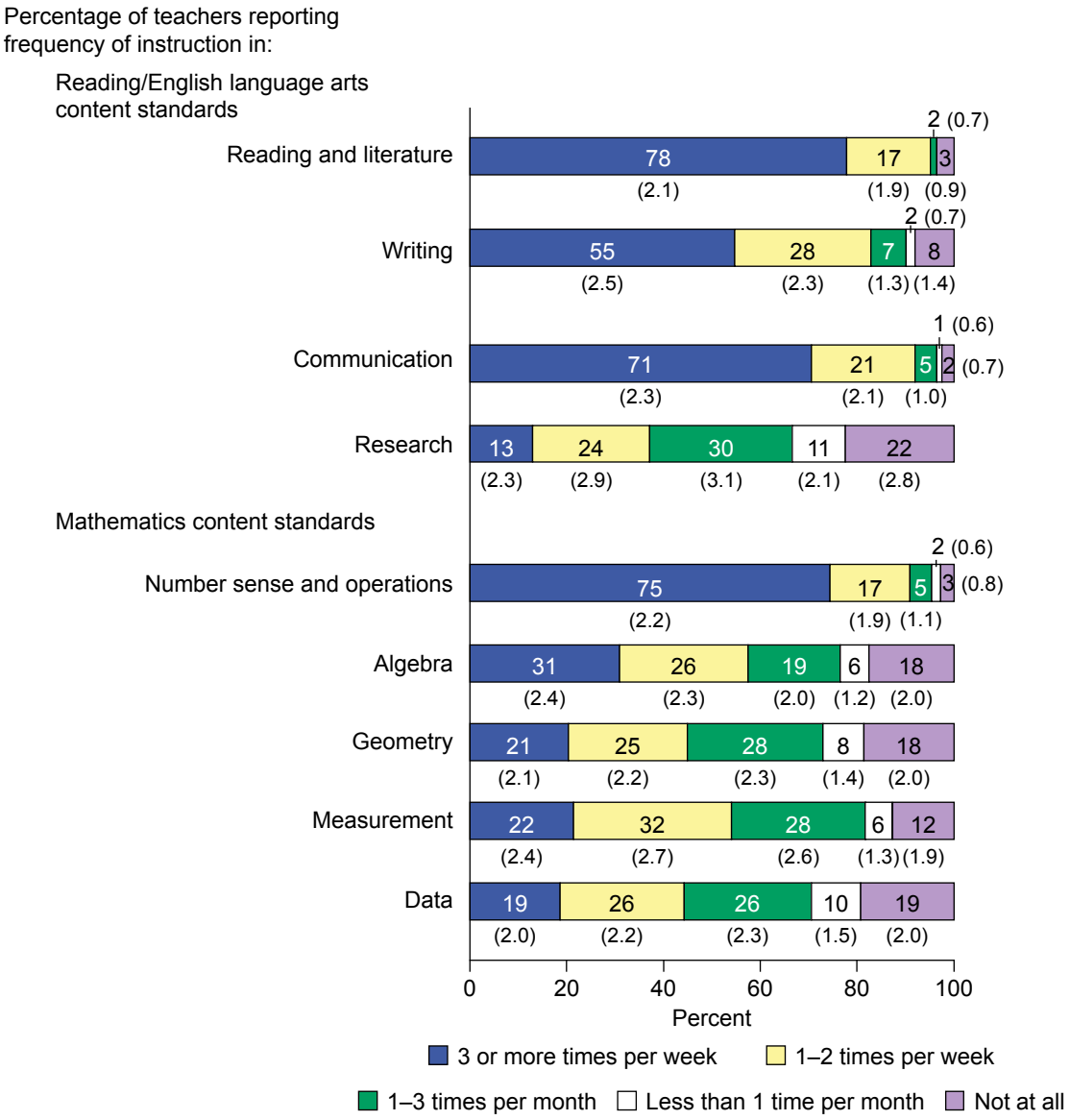
Writing

- *3 or more times per week* – Fifty-five percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in the writing content standard 3 or more times per week.
- *1 to 2 times per week* – Twenty-eight percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in the writing content standard 1 to 2 times per week.
- *1 to 3 times per month* – Seven percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in the writing content standard 1 to 3 times per month.
- *Less than 1 time per month* – Two percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in the writing content standard less than once per month.
- *Not at all* – Eight percent of teachers reported that their target student had not received instruction in the writing content standard over the last 30 days.

Communication

- *3 or more times per week* – Seventy-one percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in the communication content standard 3 or more times per week.
- *1 to 2 times per week* – Twenty-one percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in the communication content standard 1 to 2 times per week.
- *1 to 3 times per month* – Five percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in the communication content standard 1 to 3 times per month.
- *Less than 1 time per month* – One percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in the communication content standard less than once per month.
- *Not at all* – Two percent of teachers reported that their target student had not received instruction in the communication content standard over the last 30 days.

Figure 60. Frequency of instruction received by the target student in the last 30 days, by academic content standard



NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Percentages are based on samples of approximately 400 teachers for reading and communication and number sense and operations, 390 for writing and data, 380 for algebra and geometry, and 300 for measurement.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Study on Alternate Assessments (NSAA), teacher survey, 2009.

Research

- *3 or more times per week* – Thirteen percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in the research content standard 3 or more times per week.
- *1 to 2 times per week* – Twenty-four percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in the research content standard 1 to 2 times per week.

- *1 to 3 times per month* – Thirty percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in the research content standard 1 to 3 times per month.
- *Less than 1 time per month* – Eleven percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in the research content standard less than once per month.
- *Not at all* – Twenty-two percent of teachers reported that their target student had not received instruction in the research content standard over the last 30 days.

Mathematics content standards

Number sense and operations

- *3 or more times per week* – Seventy-five percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in the number sense and operations content standard 3 or more times per week.
- *1 to 2 times per week* – Seventeen percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in the number sense and operations content standard 1 to 2 times per week.
- *1 to 3 times per month* – Five percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in the number sense and operations content standard 1 to 3 times per month.
- *Less than 1 time per month* – Two percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in the number sense and operations content standard less than once a month.
- *Not at all* – Three percent of teachers reported that their target student had not received instruction in the number sense and operations content standard over the last 30 days.

Algebra

- *3 or more times per week* – Thirty-one percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in the algebra content standard 3 or more times per week.
- *1 to 2 times per week* – Twenty-six percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in the algebra content standard 1 to 2 times per week.
- *1 to 3 times per month* – Nineteen percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in the algebra content standard 1 to 3 times per month.
- *Less than 1 time per month* – Six percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in the algebra content standard less than once per month.
- *Not at all* – Eighteen percent of teachers reported that their target student had not received instruction in the algebra content standard over the last 30 days.

Geometry

- *3 or more times per week* – Twenty-one percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in the geometry content standard 3 or more times per week.

- *1 to 2 times per week* – Twenty-five percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in the geometry content standard 1 to 2 times per week.
- *1 to 3 times per month* – Twenty-eight percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in the geometry content standard 1 to 3 times per month.
- *Less than 1 time per month* – Eight percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in the geometry content standard less than once per month.
- *Not at all* – Eighteen percent of teachers reported that their target student had not received instruction in the geometry content standard over the last 30 days.

Measurement

- *3 or more times per week* – Twenty-two percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in the measurement content standard 3 or more times per week.
- *1 to 2 times per week* – Thirty-two percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in the measurement content standard 1 to 2 times per week.
- *1 to 3 times per month* – Twenty-eight percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in the measurement content standard 1 to 3 times per month.
- *Less than 1 time per month* – Six percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in the measurement content standard less than once per month.
- *Not at all* – Twelve percent of teachers reported that their target student had not received instruction in the measurement content standard over the last 30 days.

Data

- *3 or more times per week* – Nineteen percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in the data content standard 3 or more times per week.
- *1 to 2 times per week* – Twenty-six percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in the data content standard 1 to 2 times per week.
- *1 to 3 times per month* – Twenty-six percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in the data content standard 1 to 3 times per month.
- *Less than 1 time per month* – Ten percent of teachers reported that their target student had received instruction in the data content standard less than once per month.
- *Not at all* – Nineteen percent of teachers reported that their target student had not received instruction in the data content standard over the last 30 days.

Selected Findings

Selected findings for chapter 6 include:

- The percentage of teachers reporting that the special education teacher was the primary instructor was 88 percent for reading/English language arts, 89 percent for mathematics, and 71 percent for science.
- A variety of approaches were used to teach academic content standards to students with significant cognitive disabilities. Seventy-three percent of teachers reported adapting general academic curriculum content of the students' grade level; 67 percent reported including academic content in daily living routines; 55 percent adapted content used for younger children; and 51 percent reported using examples provided by the state (e.g., teaching activities, state curriculum, or lesson plans).
- The percentage of teachers reporting that students received instruction in the seven content areas 3 or more times per week ranged from 39 percent for arts to 93 percent for reading/English language arts.
- Eighty-seven percent of teachers reported that students received instruction in mathematics 3 or more times per week and 53 percent of teachers reported that students received instruction in received science at the same frequency.

7. Summary

This report presents information about school-level implementation of alternate assessments for students with significant cognitive disabilities using data from the NSAA teacher survey. Participating teachers instructed students with significant cognitive disabilities. Teachers were from three states with stable alternate assessment systems whose standards and assessments had received one of three levels of approval from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education Standards and Assessment Peer Review Process and who had administered the same alternate assessment for at least three years.

The NSAA teacher survey was developed using the Standards Based Reform (SBR) model as its theoretical framework (see chapter 2) and the study research questions listed below. SBR is seen as a way to raise student achievement by specifying what students should be learning and what teachers should be teaching in schools. Generally, the premise of SBR is that an aligned education system consisting of clearly articulated content and achievement standards, aligned assessments, school-level curricular and pedagogical flexibility, and accountability can raise student performance. In such an environment, school systems have clear expectations and goals and use data to improve instruction and instructional programs.

The NSAA teacher survey collected data on teachers' understanding of the alternate assessment system, their expectations and beliefs, the availability and use of instructional resources, and their students' opportunity to learn academic content. The survey also collected data on teachers' background and experience, as well as information about the age and grade level of students they taught and the instructional settings in which they taught.

The study research questions and selected findings are presented by chapter below. In chapter 3, "Background, Environment, and Demographics," the following research questions were addressed.

- What are the qualifications of teachers who teach and assess students with significant cognitive disabilities?
- What is the typical classroom environment of teachers who teach and assess students with significant cognitive disabilities?
- What are the characteristics of students who take the alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards?

Selected findings for chapter 3 were as follows:

- Seventy-eight percent of teachers reported that they have been teaching students with significant cognitive disabilities for at least 5 years, 65 percent of teachers taught reading/English language arts and mathematics and 62 percent of teachers taught science.
- Eighty-seven percent of teachers reported that they had between one to eight students in their classroom or on their caseload who took the alternate assessment.
- Forty-four percent of teachers reported that the primary disability category of their target student was mental retardation, 19 percent of teachers reported that the primary disability category of their target student was autism, and 18 percent of teachers

reported that the primary disability category of their target student was multiple disabilities.

- Ninety-two percent of teachers reported that their target student was performing at least 3 years below grade level.

In chapter 4, "Clear Expectations and Motivation," the following research questions were addressed.

- To what extent is instruction influenced by alternate assessment requirements and results, state content standards and curriculum materials, instructional materials used in general education, local priorities or initiatives, and administrator expectations?
- What are teachers' perceptions of how the school or district uses alternate assessment results to allocate resources; evaluate, reward, or punish teachers; and develop school improvement plans?
- What are teachers' perceptions of whether parents and students understand the alternate assessment process and results?
- What are teachers' beliefs about the alternate assessment requirements and outcomes?
- What challenges or conflicts do teachers encounter in providing instruction to students with significant cognitive disabilities?

Selected findings for chapter 4 were as follows:

- The percentage of teachers who reported that state alternate assessment requirements had a strong or moderate influence on their instruction was 88 percent for reading/English language arts and mathematics and 84 percent for science.
- The percentage of teachers who reported that results of the state alternate assessment had a strong or moderate influence on their instruction was 60 percent for reading/English language arts, 62 percent for mathematics, and 58 percent for science.
- Ninety-one percent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that it is important that students with significant cognitive disabilities receive academic instruction, 41 percent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that the alternate assessment measures the skills and knowledge that are specific to the instructional needs of students with significant cognitive disabilities, and 43 percent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that students with significant cognitive disabilities can meet the expectations set by the state.
- Ninety percent of teachers reported that teaching academic standards versus students' other skill areas was a large or moderate challenge.
- Teachers reported a variety of possible consequences that could be linked to the results of the alternate assessment. Possible consequences included: additional professional development (41 percent of teachers), provision of individual feedback (36 percent), classroom observations (18 percent), additional resources (18 percent), lesson plan reviews (15 percent), and additional staff (10 percent). Twenty-seven percent of teachers reported that no consequences or interventions would occur based on results of the alternate assessment.

In chapter 5, "Professional Capacity and Resources," the following research questions were addressed.

- What are teachers' self-perceptions of their understanding of the alternate assessment process and their ability to provide instruction to students with significant cognitive disabilities?
- Do teachers perceive that they have adequate resources for administering alternate assessments and providing instruction to students with significant cognitive disabilities? How do teachers utilize these resources?

Selected findings for chapter 5 were as follows:

- Overall, 95 percent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that they understand the alternate assessment process.
- Ninety-three percent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that they are well prepared to administer the alternate assessment.
- Seventy percent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that they have adequate resources to conduct the alternate assessment.

In chapter 6, "Student Opportunity to Learn Academic Content," the following research questions were addressed.

- What types of instructional approaches and assessments do teachers use when teaching and measuring achievement of students with significant cognitive disabilities?
- Who typically plans and delivers instruction to students with significant cognitive disabilities?
- How frequently do students with significant cognitive disabilities receive instruction in the academic content areas?

Selected findings for chapter 6 were as follows:

- The percentage of teachers reporting that the special education teacher was the primary instructor was 88 percent for reading/English language arts, 89 percent for mathematics, and 71 percent for science.
- A variety of approaches were used to teach academic content standards to students with significant cognitive disabilities. Seventy-three percent of teachers reported adapting general academic curriculum content of the students' grade level; 67 percent reported including academic content in daily living routines; 55 percent adapted content used for younger children; and 51 percent reported using examples provided by the state (e.g., teaching activities, state curriculum, or lesson plans).
- The percentage of teachers reporting that students received instruction in the seven content areas 3 or more times per week ranged from 39 percent for arts to 93 percent for reading/English language arts.
- Eighty-seven percent of teachers reported that students received instruction in mathematics 3 or more times per week and 53 percent of teachers reported that students received instruction in science at the same frequency.

As with any study, there were limitations that should be taken into consideration. First, teachers' responses to survey items were self-reported and may not reflect their actual practices. No attempt was made to validate teachers' responses or explain why teachers responded as they

did. Second, the purpose of this report was descriptive; none of the findings should be interpreted as implying causal relationships, and no conclusions can be drawn from this report regarding the relative merits of any given school-level strategy. More complex analyses and research questions can be explored using the NSAA survey data; however, they are beyond the scope of this report. Some of the survey items were created for the purpose of this study and lack reliability and validity data. Finally, the report presents responses from special education teachers from three states; the findings should not be generalized to special education teachers throughout the nation.

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Appendix
National Study on Alternate Assessments Teacher Survey

National Study on Alternate Assessments

TEACHER SURVEY

Important note:
Please use a BLACK pen. Blue or red pens and pencil cannot be read by our scanners. When asked to mark boxes, make an "X" through the box.

Sample: ☒ Right ☑ Wrong

Use block printing when you complete any text or numeric responses. If you wish to change a response, please mark the correct response and CIRCLE it.

Paperwork Burden Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1850-0860. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 1 hour (or 60 minutes) per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection.

Data will be combined to produce statistical reports. All responses will be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose, unless otherwise compelled by law.

If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate(s) or suggestions for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 20202-4537. **If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, write directly to:** Kristen Lauer, U.S. Department of Education - Capitol Place, 555 New Jersey Ave, room 508H, Washington, D.C. 20208-5644.

National Study on Alternate Assessments

The NSAA Teacher Survey begins with a screening questionnaire that is used to determine your eligibility for completing the survey. We are looking for teachers who have recent experience working with students with significant cognitive disabilities who take your state's alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards.

Please answer three brief questions to determine whether you should continue completing the survey. Thank you for your valuable time.

SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE

1. **Do you currently (2008-09 school year) teach students with significant cognitive disabilities?** *Mark (X) one only.* (NSAA)
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

2. **Will any of your students with significant cognitive disabilities take your state's alternate assessment this school year (2008-09)?** *Mark (X) one only.* (NSAA)
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

3. **Did you administer the alternate assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities in any of the past three school years?** *Mark (X) all that apply.* (NSAA)
   - ☐ Yes, I administered the alternate assessment in 2005-06.
   - ☐ Yes, I administered the alternate assessment in 2006-07.
   - ☐ Yes, I administered the alternate assessment in 2007-08.
   - ☐ No, I did not administer the alternate assessment in the past three years.

If you answered No to any of the questions above, thank you for completing the screening. Please return the questionnaire in the postage-paid envelope provided.

If you answered Yes to questions 1 and 2 and Yes at least once in question 3, please continue to fill out the survey. Your responses are vitally important to gain an understanding of the influence that alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards have on the instructional experiences of students with significant cognitive disabilities.

National Study on Alternate Assessments
Teacher Survey Instructions

This survey is designed to gather information about what your students with significant cognitive disabilities are taught, how you teach, and what resources you use for instruction.

Part 1 of the survey asks a series of questions in the following four areas:

A. Demographics and Context
B. Preparation and Resources
C. Instruction and Assessment
D. Alternate Assessment Support and Results

You should respond to this part of the survey with all students with significant cognitive disabilities in your class or caseload in mind. If you do not teach in a self-contained setting (e.g., your students are in inclusive settings or are homebound), respond with your caseload of students with significant cognitive disabilities in mind.

Note: The phrases "my/your students" or "students in my/your classroom" in the questions refer specifically to students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Part 2 of the survey asks you to identify one of your students who will be the "target student" for the remainder of the survey and answer some brief questions regarding the instruction this target student receives.

All responses should refer to the current school year (2008-09), unless noted otherwise.

PART 1 - GENERAL INFORMATION

A. Demographics and Context

1.A.1 **What are the grade level bands for most students in your classroom or on your caseload?** *Mark (X) all that apply.* (CIS)

- ☐ K - 2
- ☐ 3 - 5
- ☐ 6 - 8
- ☐ 9 - 12

1.A.2 **How many students are in your classroom or on your caseload?** *Mark (X) one only.* (CIS)

- ☐ 1 - 2
- ☐ 3 - 5
- ☐ 6 - 8
- ☐ 9 - 11
- ☐ 12 - 15
- ☐ > 15

1.A.3 **How many of the students in your classroom or on your caseload will take the alternate assessment this school year (2008-09)?** *Mark (X) one only.* (NSAA)

- ☐ 0 ▶ If "0", thank you. Please return the survey without proceeding further.
- ☐ 1 - 2
- ☐ 3 - 5
- ☐ 6 - 8
- ☐ 9 - 11
- ☐ 12 - 15
- ☐ > 15

1.A.4 **How many years have you been…?**
Mark (X) one per row. (CIS)

	0-1	2-4	5-10	11-20	21 or more
a. Teaching	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Teaching reading/English language arts	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Teaching math	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Teaching science	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Teaching students with significant cognitive disabilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.A.5 **What is the highest degree you hold?** *Mark (X) one only.* (CIS)

- ☐ Bachelor's
- ☐ Master's
- ☐ Advanced graduate degree or diploma beyond a master's degree
- ☐ PhD or EdD
- ☐ Other (Specify): _____

1.A.6 **What certifications do you possess?** *Mark (X) all that apply.* (CIS)

- ☐ Special Education
- ☐ Elementary Education
- ☐ Middle
- ☐ Secondary
- ☐ National Board
- ☐ Other (Specify): _____

1.A.7 **Do you hold any teaching license with a concentration in…?** *Mark (X) all that apply.* (CIS)

- ☐ Reading/English language arts
- ☐ Math
- ☐ Science
- ☐ Special education
- ☐ Other (Specify): _____

B. Preparation and Resources

1.B.1 **How well prepared do you feel to do each of the following activities?** *Mark (X) one per row.* (NSAA)

	Not at all prepared	Somewhat well prepared	Well prepared	Very well prepared
a. Develop standards-based IEP goals in academic content	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Embed nonacademic skills within standards-based instruction	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.B.2 **During the <u>past 12 months</u>, how much time have you spent engaged in professional development in each of the following areas?** *Mark (X) one per row.* (CIS)

(Professional development includes workshops, inservices, college courses, summer institutes, etc.)	None	1-5 hours	6-10 hours	11-15 hours	> 15 hours
a. Instructional strategies in teaching reading/English language arts	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Reading/English language arts content standards	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Instructional strategies in teaching math	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Math content standards	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Instructional strategies in teaching science	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Science content standards	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.B.3 **Below is a list of resources commonly used to prepare individuals to administer and/or assemble alternate assessments. First indicate which resource(s) you used. Second, for resources that you did use, indicate whether they were useful.** (NSAA)

Resources	I used this resource	Was this resource useful?
a. Administration manuals and guidance (e.g., web-based or hardcopy materials)	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
b. Web-based training event or module	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
c. Face-to-face training (provided by the state, a regional agency, or the district)	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
d. In-person resources (such as a school or district alternate assessment coordinator or other technical assistance)	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
e. Other (Specify):	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No

C. Instruction and Assessment

1.C.1 **The following are several conflicts experienced by teachers providing instruction to students with significant cognitive disabilities. How great a challenge is each of these conflicts for you?** *Mark (X) one per row.* (NSAA)

	Large challenge	Moderate challenge	No challenge
a. Time to teach versus time to conduct the alternate assessment	☐	☐	☐
b. Teaching academic standards versus students' other skill areas	☐	☐	☐
c. Student individual needs versus state expectations for academic achievement	☐	☐	☐
d. Parental preferences versus requirements of the alternate assessment	☐	☐	☐
e. Routine duties and paperwork versus time with students	☐	☐	☐

1.C.2 **Which approaches do you use in teaching academic content standards to students with significant cognitive disabilities?** *Mark (X) all that apply.* (NSAA)

☐ Adapt the general academic curriculum content used with younger children

☐ Adapt the general academic curriculum content of each student's grade level

☐ Include academic content in daily living routines

☐ Use the examples provided by the state (e.g., teaching activities, state curriculum, or lesson plans)

☐ Other (Specify): _____

1.C.3 **To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?** *Mark (X) one per row.* (NSAA)

I have a clear understanding of the content standards in my state in:	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. Reading/English language arts	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Mathematics	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Science	☐	☐	☐	☐

I am prepared to adapt academic curriculum for students with significant cognitive disabilities in:	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. Reading/English language arts	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Mathematics	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Science	☐	☐	☐	☐

I feel capable of providing academic instruction to students with significant cognitive disabilities in:	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. Reading/English language arts	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Mathematics	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Science	☐	☐	☐	☐

Reading/English Language Arts Information

Note: If you do not teach reading/English language arts classes, please skip to question 1.C.6.

1.C.4 **How often do you use the following types of assessment in reading/English language arts classes?** *Mark (X) one per row.* (CIS)

	Not at all	<1 time per month	1-3 times per month	1-2 times per week	3+ times per week
a. Objective questions (e.g., true/false, multiple choice, yes/no)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Performance on-demand (e.g., task analysis steps, repeated trials, incidence recording)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Teacher observation (e.g., anecdotal or descriptive data)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.C.5 **How much does each of the following influence what you teach in reading/English language arts classes?** *Mark (X) one per row.* (CIS)

	No influence	Minimal influence	Moderate influence	Strong influence
a. State reading/English language arts content standards	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. State reading/English language arts curriculum frameworks or guidance documents for curriculum scope and sequence	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Textbooks and instructional materials used in general education	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. State alternate assessment requirements	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. State alternate assessment results from previous years	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Reading/English language arts content, materials, and/or activities used by general education teachers in my school	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Training from my degree program (undergraduate or graduate)	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. Students' needs as documented on IEPs	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. School or district initiatives or priorities	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. Principal or other administrator expectations	☐	☐	☐	☐
k. Professional development experiences	☐	☐	☐	☐
l. Classroom assessment results (e.g., curriculum-based assessment)	☐	☐	☐	☐
m. Instructional materials for students with significant cognitive disabilities	☐	☐	☐	☐

Mathematics Information

Note: If you do not teach mathematics classes, please skip to question 1.C.8.

1.C.6 **How often do you use the following types of assessment in math classes?**
Mark (X) one per row. (CIS)

	Not at all	<1 time per month	1-3 times per month	1-2 times per week	3+ times per week
a. Objective questions (e.g., true/false, multiple choice, yes/no)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Performance on-demand (e.g., task analysis steps, repeated trials, incidence recording)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Teacher observation (e.g., anecdotal or descriptive data)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.C.7 **How much does each of the following influence what you teach in math classes?**
Mark (X) one per row. (CIS)

	No influence	Minimal influence	Moderate influence	Strong influence
a. State math content standards	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. State math curriculum frameworks or guidance documents for curriculum scope and sequence	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Textbooks and instructional materials used in general education	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. State alternate assessment requirements	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. State alternate assessment results from previous years	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Math content, materials, and/or activities used by general education teachers in my school	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Training from my degree program (undergraduate or graduate)	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. Students' needs as documented on IEPs	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. School or district initiatives or priorities	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. Principal or other administrator expectations	☐	☐	☐	☐
k. Professional development experiences	☐	☐	☐	☐
l. Classroom assessment results (e.g., curriculum-based assessment)	☐	☐	☐	☐
m. Instructional materials for students with significant cognitive disabilities	☐	☐	☐	☐

Science Information

Note: If you do not teach science classes, please skip to Section D.

1.C.8 **How often do you use the following types of assessment in science classes?**
Mark (X) one per row. (CIS)

	Not at all	<1 time per month	1-3 times per month	1-2 times per week	3+ times per week
a. Objective questions (e.g., true/false, multiple choice, yes/no)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Performance on-demand (e.g., task analysis steps, repeated trials, incidence recording)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Teacher observation (e.g., anecdotal or descriptive data)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.C.9 **How much does each of the following influence what you teach in science classes?**
Mark (X) one per row. (CIS)

	No influence	Minimal influence	Moderate influence	Strong influence
a. State science content standards	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. State science curriculum frameworks or guidance documents for curriculum scope and sequence	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Textbooks and instructional materials used in general education	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. State alternate assessment requirements	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. State alternate assessment results from previous years	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Science content, materials, and/or activities used by general education teachers in my school	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Training from my degree program (undergraduate or graduate)	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. Students' needs as documented on IEPs	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. School or district initiatives or priorities	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. Principal or other administrator expectations	☐	☐	☐	☐
k. Professional development experiences	☐	☐	☐	☐
l. Classroom assessment results (e.g., curriculum-based assessment)	☐	☐	☐	☐
m. Instructional materials for students with significant cognitive disabilities	☐	☐	☐	☐

D. Alternate Assessment Support and Results

1.D.1 **To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?**
Mark (X) one per row. (NSAA)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not Applicable
a. The alternate assessment measures the skills and knowledge that are specific to the instructional needs of students with significant cognitive disabilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. I have the resources I need to provide academic instruction to students with significant cognitive disabilities in:					
1. Reading/English language arts	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Mathematics	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Science	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.D.2 **Which of the following kinds of support have you received to help with <u>alternate assessment administration and assembly</u>?** *Mark (X) all that apply.* (NSAA)

☐ Reduced or flexible teaching schedule

☐ Common planning time or collaboration with other teachers administering/assembling the alternate assessment

☐ Extra classroom assistance (e.g., teacher aides)

☐ Regular supportive communication with your principal, other administrators, or department chair

☐ Guidance or assistance from another teacher

☐ Release time from instruction through the provision of a substitute

1.D.3 **Regarding results from the alternate assessment, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?** *Mark (X) one per row.* (NSAA)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. I receive results from the alternate assessment in time for IEP development.	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. The alternate assessment provides me information that is used for IEP development.	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. I receive results from the alternate assessment in time for instructional planning for the following year.	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Results from the alternate assessment accurately reflect the performance of my students at their various ability levels.	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Results from the alternate assessment are used by my school and/or district to make decisions about resources (e.g., funds, staff, curricular materials, assistive technologies).	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. I worry about the evaluation of my teaching because of the performance of my students with significant cognitive disabilities on state and/or local tests.	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.D.4 **Regarding your students and their parents, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?** *Mark (X) one per row.* (NSAA)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	I don't know
a. Parents of my students understand the results from the alternate assessment.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. I am able to interpret the results of the alternate assessment for parents.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Most of my students are aware of the alternate assessment process.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Most of my students understand the meaning of the alternate assessment scores.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.D.5 **In your school, are alternate assessment results included in the following?** *Mark (X) one per row.* (NSAA)

	Yes	No	I don't know
a. Teacher performance evaluations	☐	☐	☐
b. School improvement plans	☐	☐	☐

1.D.6 **Which of the following can happen in your school or district as a result of alternate assessment outcomes of students in your classroom?** *Mark (X) all that apply.* (NSAA)

(Note: School or district leaders may include school principals, school or district administrators, or teacher leaders.)

☐ A school or district leader observes content delivery in my classroom.

☐ A school or district leader provides me with feedback.

☐ A school or district leader reviews my lesson plans in academic content areas.

☐ Additional resources are provided to me to improve student performance.

☐ Additional staff is provided to me to improve student performance.

☐ Professional development (e.g., workshops or events) is provided to me to improve student performance.

☐ Other (Specify):

☐ There are no consequences or interventions in my school that result from alternate assessment outcomes

☐ I don't know whether any of the consequences and interventions relate to alternate assessment outcomes

1.D.7 **To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?**
Mark (X) one per row. (NSAA)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. Students with significant cognitive disabilities benefit from inclusion in the accountability system.	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. It is important that students with significant cognitive disabilities receive academic instruction.	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. I have adequate resources to conduct the alternate assessment.	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. I use **academic** curriculum more as a result of the alternate assessment.	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. I understand the alternate assessment process.	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Alternate assessment scores reflect the actual achievement of the students.	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. I am well prepared to administer the alternate assessment.	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. Alternate assessment scores accurately reflect student progress.	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. I understand the learning characteristics of each of my students.	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. I am prepared to identify the most effective instructional strategies for each student.	☐	☐	☐	☐
k. The state sets high expectations for students through the alternate assessment process.	☐	☐	☐	☐
l. Students with significant cognitive disabilities can meet the expectations set by the state.	☐	☐	☐	☐

PART 2 - IDENTIFYING A TARGET STUDENT

The purpose of this part of the survey is to identify one of your students who will be the **"target student"** for the remainder of the survey. Please follow the procedure outlined below to select the target student.

STEP 1: Please make a list of your students who take the alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards (AA-AAS). The student names can be in any order. Please number those students starting at the top of your list: 1, 2, 3, etc. This list is for your use during the target student selection process. **Do not submit this list with your completed survey.**

STEP 2: If you have one student who takes the AA-AAS, please complete the rest of survey with this student in mind. If you have two or more students in your classroom(s) or caseload, continue to Step 3.

STEP 3: If you have two or more students, look at the table included with your letter and find the column that is appropriate for your teaching load. For example, if you teach 5 students in your classroom(s) or caseload, you would use the column labeled "2 to 10 Students"; if you teach 14 students in your classroom(s) or caseload, you would use the column labeled "11 to 25 Students." Continue to Step 4.

STEP 4: Look in the column you identified in Step 3 and find the first number that occurs in the column that appears in your list of assigned numbers from Step 1. Please complete the survey with this student in mind.

Note: Before you move on, make a note to yourself about which student you chose as the target student. **You will need to think <u>only</u> about this student for the rest of the survey.**

2.1 **Which of the communication levels listed <u>best</u> reflects the highest level at which your target student currently communicates?** *Mark (X) one only.* (CIS)

☐	**Level 1:** Has not yet acquired the skills to discriminate between pictures or other symbols (and does not use symbols to communicate). May or may not use objects to communicate. May or may not use idiosyncratic gestures, sounds/vocalizations, and movements/touch to communicate with others. A direct and immediate relationship between a routine activity and the student's response may or may not be apparent. The student may have the capacity to sort very different objects, may be trial and error. Mouthing and manipulation of objects leads to knowledge of how objects are used. May combine objects (e.g., place one block on another).
☐	**Level 2:** May use some symbols to communicate (e.g., pictures, logos, objects). Beginning to acquire symbols as part of a communication system. May have limited emerging functional academic skills. Representations probably need to be related to the student's immediate environment and needs.
☐	**Level 3:** Communicates with symbols (e.g., pictures) or words (e.g., spoken words, assistive technology, ASL, home signs). May have emerging or basic functional academic skills. Emerging writing or graphic representation for the purpose of conveying meaning through writing, drawing, or computer keying.

2.2 **What is your target student's chronological age?** *Mark (X) one only.* (CIS)

☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16 ☐ 17 ☐ 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20

2.3 **What is your target student's assigned grade level?** *Mark (X) one only.* (CIS)

☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ Ungraded

2.4 **At what grade level is your target student performing?** *Mark (X) one only.* (NSAA)

☐ Pre-K ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12

2.5 **Please describe the disability of your target student. Provide the primary disability in the first column. In the second column, provide all disabilities (including the primary disability).** (NSAA; CIS)

	Column 1: **Primary disability** (for IDEA Child Count Reporting) *Mark (X) one only.*	Column 2: **All disabilities** *Mark (X) all that apply.*
a. Mental retardation	☐	☐
b. Autism	☐	☐
c. Hearing impairment/deafness	☐	☐
d. Traumatic brain injury	☐	☐
e. Speech/language impairment	☐	☐
f. Visual impairment/blindness	☐	☐
g. Specific learning disability	☐	☐
h. Serious emotional disturbance	☐	☐
i. Deaf-blindness	☐	☐
j. Orthopedic impairment	☐	☐
k. Multiple disabilities	☐	
l. Other health impairment	☐	☐

2.6 **Is your target student an English language learner? (i.e., speaks a language other than English primarily at home - Spanish, French, Russian)** *Mark (X) one only.* (LCI)

☐ Yes

☐ No

2.7 **What best describes the classroom setting for your target student?** *Mark (X) one only.* (LCI)

☐ Special school

☐ Regular school, self contained classroom for almost all activities

☐ Regular school, self contained classroom except for homeroom, lunch, and "specials"

☐ Self contained, children go to some general education academic classes but return to special education (61% or more of school day in special education classes)

☐ Resource room - e.g., children come for services and then go back to their general education classroom (at least 40% of the school day in general education classes)

☐ Inclusive/Collaborative - students based in general education classes, special education services delivered in the general education class (at least 80% of the school day in general education classes)

2.8 **Does your target student use an augmentative communication system in addition to or in place of oral speech?** *Mark (X) one only.* (LCI)

☐ Yes ▶ (Continue with Question 2.9)

☐ No ▶ (Proceed to Question 2.10)

2.9 **Check the best description of your target student's use of the augmentative communication system.** *Mark (X) one only.* (LCI)

☐ Uses only one symbol or sign at a time and is able to use only a few symbols in total to express simple or early intents (e.g., drink, eat, toilet, greeting, preferred activity, refusal).

☐ Can combine two symbols together to express broader intents such as social content, answer simple questions, etc. (e.g., expresses greetings, peer names, social exchanges, personal interests).

☐ Uses mostly iconic symbols (clear representations) or signs together in sequence to express functional intents, extensive social interactions, academic content, and to respond consistently to answer questions.

☐ Uses multiple abstract symbols, signs, or print in sentences or phrases on the augmentative communication system to express a variety of academic, social, and self-initiated interactions.

2.10 **Check the best description of the extent to which your target student is receiving speech/language as a related service.** *Mark (X) one only.* (LCI)

☐ Direct services for communication/language therapy (pull-out)

☐ Direct services integrated into student's routine/classroom-collaboration

☐ Consultation services only

☐ Student does not currently receive speech language as a related service

For questions 2.11 through 2.19, please choose the best description of your target student for each ability area. Choose only one description for each area.

2.11 **Expressive Communication** *Mark (X) only one for your target student.* (LCI)

- ☐ Uses symbolic language to communicate: Student uses verbal or written words, signs, Braille, or language-based augmentative systems to request, initiate, and respond to questions, describe things or events, and express refusal.
- ☐ Uses intentional communication, but not at a symbolic language level: Student uses understandable communication through such modes as gestures, pictures, objects/textures, points, etc., to clearly express a variety of intentions.
- ☐ Student communicates primarily through cries, facial expressions, change in muscle tone, etc., but no clear use of objects/textures, regularized gestures, pictures, signs, etc., to communicate.

2.12 **Receptive Language** *Mark (X) only one for your target student.* (LCI)

- ☐ Independently follows 1-2 step directions presented through words (e.g., words may be spoken, signed, printed, or any combination) and does NOT need additional cues.
- ☐ Requires additional cues (e.g., gestures, pictures, objects, or demonstrations/ models) to follow 1-2 step directions.
- ☐ Alerts to sensory input from another person (auditory, visual, touch, movement) BUT requires actual physical assistance to follow simple directions.
- ☐ Uncertain response to sensory stimuli (e.g., sound/voice; sight/gesture; touch; movement; smell).

2.13 **Vision** *Mark (X) only one for your target student.* (LCI)

- ☐ Vision within normal limits.
- ☐ Corrected vision within normal limits.
- ☐ Low vision; uses vision for some activities of daily living.
- ☐ No functional use of vision for activities of daily living, or unable to determine functional use of vision.

2.14 **Hearing** *Mark (X) only one for your target student.* (LCI)

- ☐ Hearing within normal limits.
- ☐ Corrected hearing loss within normal limits.
- ☐ Hearing loss aided, but still with a significant loss.
- ☐ Profound loss, even with aids.
- ☐ Unable to determine functional use of hearing.

2.15 **Motor** *Mark (X) only one for your target student.* (LCI)

- ☐ No significant motor dysfunction that requires adaptations.
- ☐ Requires adaptations to support motor functioning (e.g., walker, adapted utensils, and/or keyboard).
- ☐ Uses wheelchair, positioning equipment, and/or assistive devices for most activities.
- ☐ Needs personal assistance for most/all motor activities.

2.16 **Engagement** *Mark (X) only one for your target student.* (LCI)

- ☐ Initiates and sustains social interactions.
- ☐ Responds with social interaction, but does not initiate or sustain social interactions.
- ☐ Alerts to others.
- ☐ Does not alert to others.

2.17 **Health Issues and Attendance** *Mark (X) only one for your target student.* (LCI)

- ☐ Attends at least 90% of school days.
- ☐ Attends approximately 75% of school days; absences primarily due to health issues.
- ☐ Attends approximately 50% or less of school days; absences primarily due to health issues.
- ☐ Receives homebound instruction due to health issues.
- ☐ Highly irregular attendance or homebound instruction due to issues *other* than health.

2.18 **Reading** *Mark (X) only one for your target student.* (LCI)

- ☐ Reads fluently with critical understanding in print or Braille (e.g., to differentiate fact/opinion, point of view, emotional response).
- ☐ Reads fluently with basic (literal) understanding from paragraphs/short passages with narrative/informational texts in print or Braille.
- ☐ Reads basic sight words, simple sentences, directions, bullets, and/or lists in print or Braille.
- ☐ Aware of text/Braille, follows directionality, makes letter distinctions, or tells a story from the pictures that is not linked to the text.
- ☐ No observable awareness of print or Braille.

2.19 **Mathematics** *Mark (X) only one for your target student.* (LCI)

- ☐ Applies computational procedures to solve real-life or routine word problems from a variety of contexts.
- ☐ Does computational procedures with or without a calculator.
- ☐ Counts with 1:1 correspondence to at least 10, and/or makes numbered sets of items.
- ☐ Counts by rote to 5.
- ☐ No observable awareness or use of numbers.

2.20 **Who <u>plans the instruction</u> for your target student in each of the following subject areas?**
Mark (X) all that apply per row. (NSAA)

	General education teacher	Special education teacher	Para-professional
a. Reading/English language arts (i.e., *reading, writing, and/or communication)*	☐	☐	☐
b. Mathematics	☐	☐	☐
c. Science	☐	☐	☐
d. Social Studies	☐	☐	☐
e. Arts *(e.g., visual, performing, music)*	☐	☐	☐
f. Health and/or physical education	☐	☐	☐
g. Nonacademic content and skills *(e.g., life skills, vocational development)*	☐	☐	☐
h. Other (Specify):	☐	☐	☐

2.21 **Who <u>delivers instruction</u> for your target student in each of the following subject areas?**
Mark (X) all that apply per row. (NSAA)

	Primarily delivers instruction:			Others who deliver instruction:		
	General education teacher	Special education teacher	Para-profes-sional	General education teacher	Special education teacher	Para-profes-sional
a. Reading/English language arts *(i.e., reading, writing, and/or communication)*	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Mathematics	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Science	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Social studies	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Arts *(e.g., visual, performing, music)*	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Health and/or physical education	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Nonacademic content and skills *(e.g., life skills, vocational development)*	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. Other (Specify):	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.22 **Over the last 30 days, how often did your target student receive instruction in the following content areas? Please note that a single lesson may address multiple content areas simultaneously.** *Mark (X) one per row.* (NSAA)

	Not at all	<1 time per month	1-3 times per month	1-2 times per week	3+ times per week
a. Reading/English language arts *(i.e., reading, writing, and/or communication)*	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Mathematics	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Science	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Social studies	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Arts *(e.g., visual, performing, music)*	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Health and/or physical education	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Nonacademic content and skills *(e.g., life skills, vocational development)*	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. Other (Specify):	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2.23 **Over the last 30 days, how often did your target student receive instruction related to the following content standards? Please note that a single lesson may address multiple content standards simultaneously.** *Mark (X) one per row.* (NSAA)

English language arts content standards	Not at all	<1 time per month	1-3 times per month	1-2 times per week	3+ times per week
a. Reading	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Writing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Communication	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Research	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Mathematics content standards	Not at all	<1 time per month	1-3 times per month	1-2 times per week	3+ times per week
e. Numbers and operations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Algebra	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Geometry	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. Measurement	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. Data and probability	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY!

Example of instructions for selecting target students
(included in letter sent to survey respondents)

Instructions for Identifying Target Student

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STEP 3: If you have two or more students, look at the table listed below and find the column that is appropriate for your teaching load. For example, if you teach 5 students in your classroom(s) or caseload, you would use the column labeled "2 to 10 Students"; if you teach 14 students in your classroom(s) or caseload, you would use the column labeled "11 to 25 Students." Continue to Step 4.

STEP 4: Look in the column you identified in Step 3 and find the first number that occurs in the column that appears in your list of assigned numbers from Step 1. Please complete the survey with this student in mind.

2 to 10 Students		11 to 25 Students
9		7
1		14
10		12
5		1
3		13
8		25
4		3
2		20
6		22
7		24
		2
		16
		19
		6
		4
		9
		15
		8
		21
		11
		1
		18
		23
		10
		5

Note: Each teacher's table contains sets of uniquely generated random numbers.