

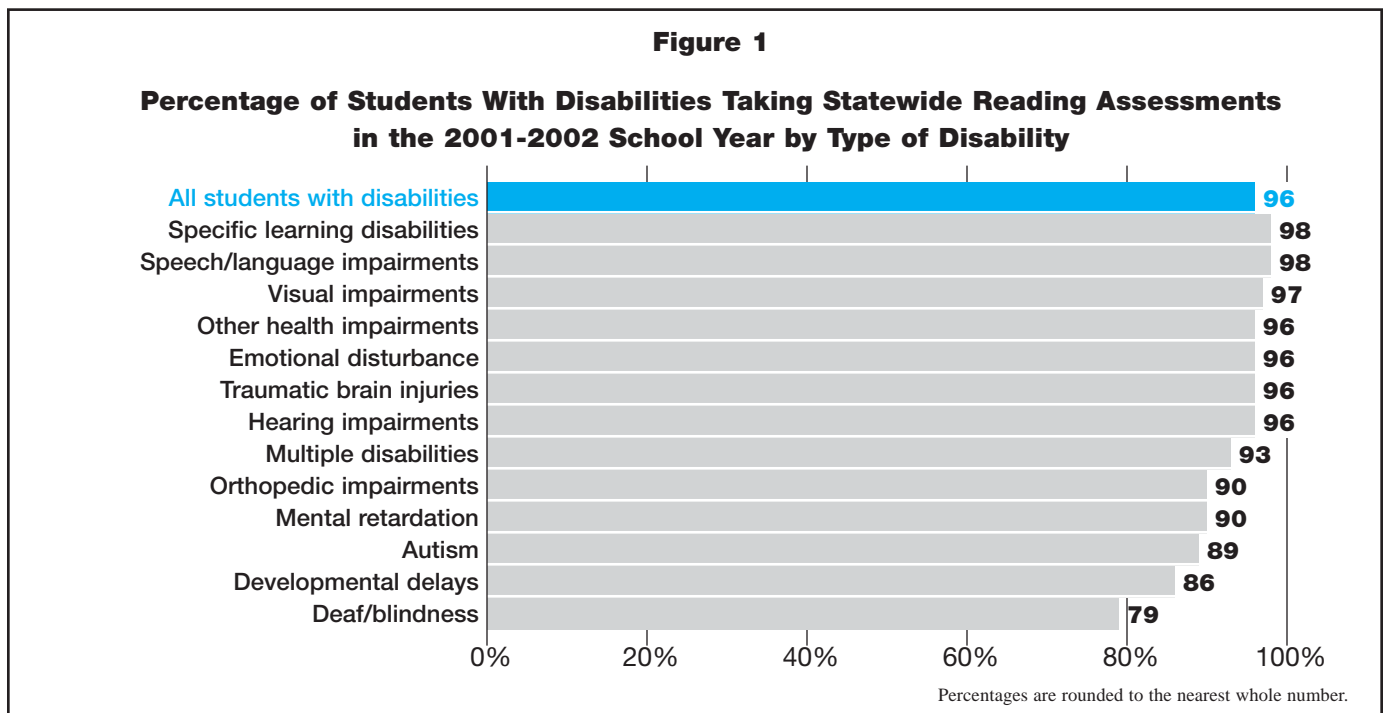
To what extent are students with disabilities participating in statewide reading assessments?

State education leaders and policymakers increasingly are concerned about the extent to which students with disabilities are participating in statewide achievement tests. Through testing, states can gauge their progress and ensure that the academic needs of students with disabilities are being met. Furthermore, two federal laws are pushing states and districts toward more inclusive systems. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires states to include students with disabilities in their assessments. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) designates students with disabilities as one of the student sub-groups whose test scores are used to determine whether individual schools have met their annual performance goals. Below we report on the participation rates of students with disabilities in statewide reading assessments in the grades tested during the 2001-2002 school year.

Participation rates among students with disabilities in statewide reading assessments were high. (See Figure 1)

For instance, our study found that:

- Ninety-six percent of students with disabilities participated in a statewide reading test.
- Students with a variety of disabilities were able to participate in statewide reading assessments at high levels, including students with specific learning disabilities (98 percent), speech/language impairments (98 percent), and visual impairments (97 percent). Participation also was high among students with severe disabilities, including traumatic brain injuries (96 percent), multiple disabilities (93 percent), mental retardation (90 percent), and autism (89 percent).



How students participated in testing varied depending on each student's specific disability. (See Figure 2)

For instance, our study found that:

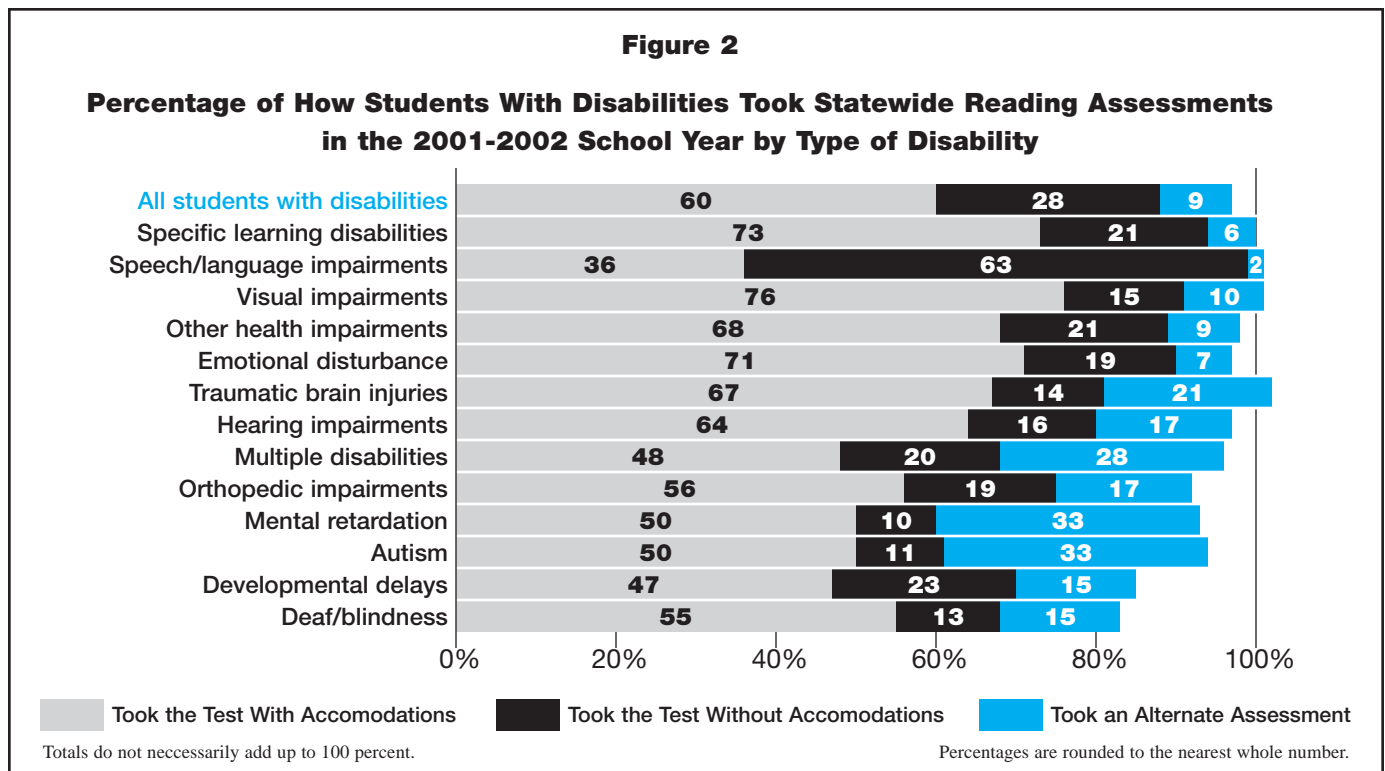
- The students with disabilities most likely to take their state test *with accommodations* were those with visual impairments (76 percent), specific learning disabilities (73 percent), and emotional disturbances (71 percent).
- A substantial proportion of students with speech and language impairments took state assessment tests *without accommodations* (63 percent).
- Less than 25 percent of students with various other disabilities took the test *without accommodations*, including 23 percent of students classified as developmentally delayed, 14 percent with traumatic brain injuries, and 11 percent with autism. Many of these students took an alternate test.

- Students with mental retardation (33 percent), autism (33 percent), and multiple disabilities (28 percent) most frequently took an alternate assessment test.

Most schools administered statewide assessments of reading achievement to students in the 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades.

For instance, our study found that:

- State reading tests were administered to students in grades 1-12, with a low of 3 percent of schools testing 12th graders, and a high of 42 percent testing 4th graders.
- Tests were most frequently administered to students in grades 3, 4, and 5 (41, 42, and 35 percent, respectively) and least frequently in grades 12, 9, 10, and 1 (3, 7, 10, and 10 percent, respectively).



The results summarized in this fact sheet are based on the longitudinal *Study of State and Local Implementation and Impact of IDEA* supported by the Office of Special Education Programs, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education, as part of Contract ED-00-CO-0026, conducted by Abt Associates Inc. Any points of view expressed in this fact sheet are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Department of Education.

Surveys were mailed to key personnel responsible for or familiar with special education issues in all 50 states and the District of Columbia - a total of 959 districts and 4,434 schools. For state, district, and school surveys, response rates were 100 percent, 87 percent, and 74 percent, respectively. Mostly, respondents completed the surveys for the 2002-2003 school year. Final data collection has been completed (2004-2005 school year), and analysis and reporting of these data will occur in March 2006.

From Abt Associates Inc. (2005, March). *Final 2nd Interim Report (2002-2003 School Year), The Study of State and Local Implementation and Impact of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*. Study reports and data tables are available at <http://abt.sliidea.org>.