



## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### General Assessments | Reporting

#### **What are the reporting requirements for tests that include students with disabilities, English learners (ELs), and ELs with disabilities?**

States are required to report assessment data for students with disabilities and ELs separately to the **federal** government. They are also required to produce **public** reports for these groups, for some assessments.

**Public** reports provide information on all students and on particular subgroups of students such as students with disabilities and ELs. These reports are usually available on state department of education websites. The reports include the number of students with disabilities or ELs who took an assessment, and how those students scored as a group. The reports may also include the number of children who took an assessment with accommodations. If a state chooses to develop alternate assessments for students with disabilities, the information from these tests must also be publicly reported.

In addition to public reports, states must also submit **federal** reports to the secretary of education. [The Annual Performance Report \(APR\)](#) for students with disabilities describes student progress toward state targets on reading and math assessments. Detailed data on participation and performance in these assessments are submitted to the U.S. Department of Education by states online via a tool called the [EDFacts Initiative](#).

There is a specific electronic form that states use to submit EL data. In each type of federal report, states describe how they plan to improve student participation and performance while moving toward the assessment targets they have established.

#### **How do states use the data they report?**

Generally, state-level performance data are used to determine the extent to which educational programs are helping students to achieve positive results from their education. Poor assessment scores are used to indicate the need for improved programs and services.

#### **Will individual students be identified in public reporting?**

States do not report public data that identify individual students. In circumstances where there are very few students participating in a particular assessment, a state will set a minimum number below which it will not publicly report results. This minimum number, which varies by state, is intended to protect student confidentiality.

## **How should the performance of students with disabilities, ELs, and ELs with disabilities be reported when they may take tests under different conditions from other students?**

Some students from special populations take assessments of reading, math, and other content areas under different accessibility conditions, such as with accommodations. Some students may take alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards. It is possible to combine scores from the general assessment taken with accessibility features (including accommodations) because they have been determined to not change what the test measures. When a student uses modifications that change what the assessment measures, the state makes a policy decision on whether or how to report the scores. States also make policy decisions about how to combine results from alternate assessments with general assessment results. Most states combine scores by proficiency level indicating that a proficient score on one test counts the same as a proficient score on another test.

## **Why should data on ELs with disabilities be publicly reported?**

It is important to report data specifically for ELs with disabilities when there is a large enough group to protect the identity of individual students. ELs with disabilities have a unique set of educational needs, and states will not know how well the needs of these students are being met if their assessment data are not examined separate from the data of other students. The data should be reported in four ways. Data on ELs with disabilities should be:

- aggregated with data from the total student body
- included in the students with disabilities subgroup
- included in the ELs subgroup
- disaggregated into a separate ELs with disabilities group

For public reporting, states should clearly report both participation data and performance data, so that performance data can be interpreted in light of participation rates. States should explain how participation rates or percentages are derived. For example, states should use all students in the school at the beginning of the year rather than only those in attendance on the day of testing. States also should indicate whether any scores are removed when reporting on performance. For example, states should clarify if scores were removed from students who did not take the test under standard procedures.

## **How can reading, math, and science test performance of ELs and ELs with disabilities be reported when these students may not speak English?**

ELs, including those who also have a disability, vary widely in their levels of English proficiency. In addition, each student's proficiency levels in listening, speaking, reading, and writing may be different. Despite these variations, it is important to report on the



performance of ELs and ELs with disabilities in reading, math, science, and other content areas. It may also be informative to report their performance as a function of their English proficiency level.

**Can publicly reported data for students with disabilities, ELs, ELs with disabilities be used to compare their performance across states?**

There are many reasons why cross-state comparisons of performance are not possible. Generally, assessments of reading, math, and other content have differed across states. Although this challenge may be alleviated by common assessments developed for consortia of states, there are other possible reasons for difficulty in comparing across states. For example, states may use different procedures for identifying students who are eligible for special education and for defining disability categories. States may also use different procedures to determine which students are eligible for EL services, and also may use different English proficiency assessments to identify students' language proficiency levels. Similarly, data on ELs with disabilities likely are not comparable across states because each state may use different criteria for identifying these students.