**Assessing Special Education Students (ASES)**

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The Assessing Special Education Students (ASES) State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS) supports states as they enhance their 21st century assessment, accountability, and curriculum and instruction systems to provide full equity for students with disabilities. As the only national consortium of assessment and special education professionals, ASES addresses the inclusion of students with disabilities in standards, policy development and implementation, curriculum, instruction, assessment, and accountability systems, and the effects of these systems on education reform efforts. Members have a deep commitment to addressing the unique issues facing students with disabilities participating in general assessments as well as those participating in alternate assessments linked to alternate achievement standards.

During the 2016-2017 membership year, the ASES SCASS focused on several critical issues and provided the following supports and resources:

* In collaboration with the FAST SCASS and other national formative assessment (FA) experts, we developed an electronic resource, [Formative Assessment for Students with Disabilities](http://www.ccsso.org/resource-library/formative-assessment-students-disabilities), highlighting how the FA process can include students with mild-moderate disabilities. This work continued to explore how FA can also include learners with more significant support needs.
* Colleagues from the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) and the English Learners (EL) SCASS collaborated to create the new [CCSSO Accessibility Manual](http://www.ccsso.org/resource-library/how-select-administer-and-evaluate-use-accessibility-supports-instruction-and) outlining strategies for selecting, administering, and evaluating use of accessibility supports for instruction and assessment of all students. This document is available in Word format so states may adapt the document to include their policies and context.
* In collaboration with the EL SCASS, we are completing a small research study identifying effective practices and policies in identifying and supporting English learners with disabilities.
* During state discussions, presentations, and small group work, we addressed:
  + The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and resources to enhance capacity of state departments of education to meet the act's requirements including peer review expectations
  + Obligations of public schools to meet communication needs of all students including IDEA, ADA, and Section 504 implications, and bridging science and practice in supporting learners with print disabilities
  + Monitoring accommodations and accessibility supports by mentoring local districts in building monitoring and technical support capacity
  + Test security, particularly in alternate assessments
  + "Unpacking 21st Century Standards"- State demonstration and sharing of effective practices integrating standards and relevant life/transition skills through rationale, examples, and vignettes of students with a range of mild, moderate, and significant cognitive disabilities
* Updates from national partners including the U.S. Department of Education, business partners, assessment consortia representatives, and funded research projects (e.g., Enhanced Assessment Grants, Institute for Educational Sciences projects)

The following topics will be addressed in the 2017-2018 membership year during face-to-face and virtual meetings:

* ESSA issues identified by states to support their (and local district) continued capacity building in meeting the requirements of the act. Anticipated areas of focus include alternate assessment participation caps, monitoring accommodations and accessibility supports, and English language proficiency assessments for learners with significant cognitive disabilities
* A text reader common language resource providing common terminology and definitions describing types of text to speech that can be used by states in RFPs
* An expansion of the 2016-2017 publication highlighting effective formative assessment practices for including students with significant intellectual disabilities
* Development of professional development resources to accompany the recently released Accessibility Manual and completion of a joint research study with the EL SCASS on English learners with disabilities
* Updates from national partners including the U.S. Department of Education, business partners, assessment consortia representatives, and funded research projects (e.g., Enhanced Assessment Grants, Institute for Educational Sciences projects)

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