



Transcript of Conference Call Presentation

Alternate Assessments: Allowing All Students to Participate in Large-Scale Assessments

presented by

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Mary Mack: This is Mary Mack from the University of Minnesota National Transition Alliance. I would like to welcome you to our June teleconference. We are fortunate this month to have Ed Roeber, the Vice-President, Advanced Systems in Measurement and Evaluation, a testing firm in New Hampshire, to talk to us on alternate assessment. Ed?

Edward Roeber: Thank you and welcome. I hope in the next hour that I can cover a pretty wide range of topics because there are some new requirements in large scale and district assessment for students with disabilities. I want to talk about what those are, why they are, how states and others are working to try to comply with those laws, and ultimately what the goals of all of this are.

First of all, some terminology. You will hear the terms “alternate assessment” or “alternative assessment.” The special education community is, I believe, attempting to standardize on the term “alternate assessment” as an indication of the type or types of assessments that a state or district might use with students with significant disabilities unable to participate in their state or district general assessment programs, with or without accommodations.

In fact, in most places in the United States, the

idea for this type of assessment was first mentioned when the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act was reauthorized. That reauthorization was completed in December of 1997 and has been followed by a period of several months, almost a year and a half total, in which draft regulations have been under development. The regulations were issued just a couple of months ago.

There were a couple of states in the country that had state requirements for alternate assessment in place prior to the reauthorization of IDEA in 1997. The goal of the reauthorized IDEA is to encourage states and local districts to move in the direction of inclusive, standards-based individual education plans for students with disabilities. The feeling is that if students are exempted or excluded from state testing programs, that they will not count, certainly in the assessment reports, but far more significantly, that they will not count in the educational planning that goes on at the building and district levels. The goal, therefore, is to include all students with disabilities, even those with the most severe disabilities, in state- and district-level assessments that are given to all students, since it is thought to improve their achievement of important statewide content standards.

There has been a growing amount of attention

to this issue at the state level. Almost all of the states are aware of the issue and are working towards it in one way or another. I will mention some of the ways in which states are working.

Unfortunately, I don't believe that the same can be said for district-level assessments. Virtually every school district in the United States administers one or more assessment programs to all students at one or more grade levels. It may be a standardized off-the-shelf test or a custom-developed assessment that the district has created itself or with the help of a contractor. But my experience has been that when I describe this issue to local educators, it is usually met with a blank stare and the comment, "You mean that applies to us, too?" Indeed, IDEA does apply to local districts.

When the draft regulations came out in 1997, they indicated that no more than 2% of the entire student population or about 20% of the special ed. population would be alternately assessed.

And, in fact, one of the issues that states will have to define — and continue to refine — will be their accommodations policy. Many students are left out of testing programs simply because students like them were not included when the assessments were developed, pilot tested, or standardized. This is particularly true of off-the-shelf tests. Publishers have had great difficulty in getting local educators to permit significantly disabled students to participate in norming studies. It is hard enough to convince local educators to participate in norming studies to begin with, and when you add these students, the fear is that districts will say no. When, in turn, these tests are used at the district or state level, many students that would have been accommodated on a state assessment program are simply exempted or excluded.

The two most frequently given definitions of the students to be alternately assessed are, first of all, one that follows the federal definition in IDEA, that is, all students who are unable to be accommodated are to be alternately assessed. Students with disabilities fall into one of three categories: those that are tested with the regular test without accommodations, those that are tested with the regular test with accommodations, and those that are tested with an alternate assessment process.

More recently, several states have developed a more restrictive definition of students that would be alternately assessed, a definition that takes into account students that are significantly behind in their educational program, that have some type of cognitive disability that would prevent them from moving ahead in a regular instructional program, and difficulty in generalizing learning from one instructional setting to another. Using this more restrictive definition typically results in four categories — students in the three previous categories, plus some additional ones that fall between the accommodated and alternatively assessed ones — the so-called gap or gray-area kids. Therefore, students with disabilities fall in the category of those tested without accommodations, those tested with accommodations, the more restrictive definition of those that are alternately assessed, and the students that fall between the alternate assessment and the accommodative group. They are "gap" students because there are no accommodations that will allow them to participate in the regular program, and yet they are not cognitively disabled, do not have the difficulty in generalizing from one setting to another in instruction, and/or are not necessarily significantly behind in their instructional program. It's just that our testing accommo-

dations are not sufficient for these students to utilize them.

Another issue that states will face is what the alternate assessment measures are and how these are related to the students' IEP. Will the same standards be measured in the alternate assessment or will different standards be assessed? IDEA is very clear that the purpose of the alternate assessment process is to give all students with disabilities access to the state and district general curriculum. But when it comes to actually defining what instruction students receive on a daily basis, is the same general set of academic standards used for all students or is a more restrictive functional set of standards used? There is much disagreement about this among special educators.

Certainly, students that are significantly disabled need attention to functional skills. But even the most significantly disabled youngsters are capable of learning academic skills, perhaps through functional instruction. And so a number of states that are beginning to work on alternate assessment have begun by defining the critical functions of their state academic skills and the attributes of the standards set for all students. Probably the best way that I can explain it is in terms of educators. It would be reasonable to expect all educators to have competence in statistics. However, the mere mention of statistics is enough to frighten some people away from the field of education. But in reality what we mean is that some people, such as teachers, need to understand such basic concepts as reliability and validity but they certainly do not need to calculate a reliability coefficient. They need to understand that if they observe students two or three times, do they see the same behavior in students or does the student

exhibit different behavior on different occasions? That is reliability. Other individuals, such as statisticians, would need to know how to derive statistical formulas, calculate them, and interpret computer printouts. Both types of individuals are exhibiting competence in the same standard but at different levels.

However you define this, there are certainly a number of debates that will take place. These debates are taking place in several states in which we are doing work. Is it realistic to expect all students to achieve the same standard? Shouldn't some students receive instruction focused primarily on functional skills? Others argue that any difference in instruction on academic skills will perpetuate a two-tier system in which some students are taught at a lower level than others.

I have personally seen classrooms where students are in fully inclusive environments that have been that way for years where students are taught to the same standards as other students and yet at a level appropriate for them. For example, in a reading/writing exercise, students might listen to a story being read and respond verbally or with pictures rather than "reading" and "writing." The same concepts of main idea and understanding the details of the story can still be assessed but through a different mode.

As the alternate assessment component to the state assessment or district assessment program is developed, there are several pieces that need to be developed. First, a guiding philosophy and a policy definition are needed. Participation guidelines and criteria, with guiding principles or assumptions (the vision that you have for the alternate assessment), are needed. We feel it is important to nail this down at the outset so that everyone involved in

carrying out this work has come to a mutual understanding about the guiding philosophy, participation guidelines, and criteria that will be used.

One of the ways in which states' definitions differ is whether or not students who are alternately assessed are eligible to receive a high school diploma if they pass the assessment. For example, twenty-two states have graduation requirements that include passing a test. Will students who are alternately assessed be automatically excluded from being considered for high school graduation? That is, are they in a separate program? In some states, the answer is yes, by law or policy. In other states, the answer is no, by law and policy. For each state, this is something that will have to be considered in the overall guiding philosophy and participation guidelines.

The second step is to define the kinds of standards that will be assessed. Most states start with their existing state content standards and adapt, extend, or extrapolate from those the ways in which students that are significantly disabled can access those standards. Oftentimes, these serve as additional examples of the benchmarks that may fall underneath the content standards. These benchmarks will give the significantly disabled student a chance to be observed on the content standards that guide all students.

The third set of activities is the development of a variety of assessment methods. There are several types of assessment strategies that can be used. These are—

- Unstructured teacher observations: Teachers observe students in a natural classroom setting over a period of time looking for certain kinds of behaviors. For example, how often during a

classroom week does a student engage in cooperative behavior with other students (which might be a citizenship or social studies standard)?

- Structured teacher observation: Teachers observe students in classrooms engaged in activities set up for assessment purposes. For example, does a student participate in planning a science report with a group of other students? The teacher could provide time during class for such planning to occur and to observe students participating or not participating in the planning of the report.
- Surveys of parents and teachers collect information from parents and teachers on specific student behaviors. Some states have proposed formal ways of doing this with a series of questions to be answered on specific skills. Others have used more general checklists or simple open-ended responses to get feedback from parents. Comparable kinds of information could be collected from teachers. Parents could indicate through a parent survey whether students are able to use money when making purchases in a store. Teachers could indicate how often a student participates in group activities throughout the school day, such as in English language arts.
- Review of written records: There are considerable written records about the student. By reviewing these, educators may be able to ascertain whether or not students have met content standards. For example, in visual arts, have students been able to demonstrate skills in producing works of art? Some students are expressing themselves in written form. Samples of student written work, if retained, could be assessed.

- Performance events are on-demand types of assessments that are shorter in length or that might occur within one class period. For example, does the student sing age-appropriate songs with peers in music class?
- Performance task is an assessment that might be carried out over a period of time but which yields a product that can be assessed. For example, does the student participate with a group of students planning a weekly menu for the school and engage in healthy eating habits over that one-week period?
- Portfolios are a very popular way of assessing students that are significantly disabled. Both Kentucky and Maryland have developed portfolio assessments. Maryland has also developed performance events. In both states, teachers select standards and a way of assessing students. The performance events and tasks are a way of adding more rigor to the portfolios, since they suggest pre-specified assessment strategies that teachers can pick and choose from, as well as adding ones that they feel would help tell a more complete story about the student. The portfolio could have certain types of information in it. The portfolio could contain a table of contents; a cover letter from the student, parent, and/or teacher; the parent and teacher surveys; the IEP components that relate to the standards being assessed; a brief description of the student's mode of communication; one or more entries for each learning area, each of which would have a cover sheet that would identify the learning area and the critical functions and skills being assessed, and then relate that to the state standard(s); a signature sheet which would indicate how the student

accomplished the work, what assistance was given, and indicate that the work was that of the student; the schedule which indicates how the student accomplished the task; the entry itself, which might be written, audiotaped, or videotaped, or a combination of these; and score sheets that show how the work of the student was scored by the teacher. For this to occur, information on as representative a sample of students as possible will need to be collected so that scoring guides with scoring rubrics and student exemplars that will help teachers learn those standards can be constructed.

In summary, the third step in the development of the alternative assessment process is development of a variety of assessment methods. There are several steps to be carried out. First, the assessments have to be based on realistic expectations for students who are significantly disabled. Second, the assessments have to be tried out to make sure that they work and that they are understandable to teachers, parents, and students, since some of the directions will be given to students. The assessments will need to be refined. One or more iterations of the tryouts and refinements may be necessary to make sure that the assessments work. One way to do this is to create prototype assessments that can be pilot tested to see if they work before investing much time and effort in developing the full range of assessments.

The fourth step — which is as critical as the first three combined — is the development of the communication, dissemination, and training pieces needed to learn about the system and how to use it. One metaphor is that the first three pieces — the development of the philosophy and guiding principles, the development of the critical functions for

the state's standards, and the development of the assessment system — are really like building the airplane while we're flying it. We don't have three to five years to develop the system, try it out, and refine it and try this one a second, third, and fourth times. We have to have systems up and running by the 2000-2001 school year. This means we are going to have to make our best guesses at some of these things and implement them as best we can.

The key to implementation is going to be the receptivity of the field. That is, while we are "building the airplane in flight," we also have to be scouting out the area where we're going to build the landing strip, leveling the land, paving it, putting the marker lights in and so forth. This means that we need to prepare parents and educators for the system. We can do a wonderful job in creating a tight definition of who will be assessed. We can come up with some wonderful statements about the things which we want all students to learn and be able to do. And we can develop really nifty assessments that are both feasible and realistic. And yet if we have IEP teams that ask, "Why do I need to do this?", are antagonistic to alternate assessment, and fight the system at every turn, none of the development work will do much good. The transformational potential of alternate assessment will not be realized unless parents and educators understand and are supportive of the alternate assessment systems.

One way to build field support for alternate assessment will be through a network of IEP teams within a state or district. If stakeholders serve as an ongoing focus group throughout the development process (review the participation guidelines, the extended standards to see if they view them as realistic for their children, and try out some of the

prototype assessments to see if they work), they will better understand and support the alternate assessment. Contractors and staff will be able to use their perception to refine the assessment materials and strategies. Eventually, this network of educators and parents can help their counterparts learn and support the completed system ("airplane"). This is the key to the success of the entire effort. Not only will the network help us develop materials and strategies that are feasible, but there will be interest in using them.

The IDEA '97 does mention the reporting of assessment results and it is very specific about reporting. IDEA mentions the aggregation as well as the disaggregation of the performance of students with disabilities with all of the other assessment results collected by the state or by the district. Some states and districts are quite accustomed to disaggregated results.

In IDEA, the requirement is challenging. The disaggregation of performance is not only by students that are disabled versus non-disabled but by students that were regularly assessed with or without accommodation and those that are alternately assessed. In some states, and in many local districts, the number of students who were alternately assessed, even the number of students with disabilities total, may be so small that the number should not be reported. Although the law does not provide specifically for exclusion for small numbers of students, realistically under federal and many state laws that would have to occur. Some states use the criteria of ten or fewer students, others, twenty-five or fewer; some five or fewer, for not reporting sub-group results. Each state and district will have to determine at what level disaggregations will not be reported publicly. The concern is that reporting

small group performance may jeopardize the right to privacy of individual students.

IDEA also mentions the aggregation of the performance of these students with the performance of other students in total reports. One problem is going to be that if the assessments are fairly open-ended, only generally related to the state standards, what will it take technically to aggregate these results into the overall reports for all students from the district or the state? I believe this will be a battle between those that are technically inclined and those that are not.

The ultimate issue is whether the performance of students, even though significantly disabled, who are alternately assessed will appear in the public reports for the school, district, and state. Perhaps their results will not appear in the same reports of results, but will at least appear on the same page so that they can be tracked.

A key element of reporting will be thinking about the consequences that are tied to the regular assessment program, and whether these consequences are tied automatically to the alternate assessment program. A number of states (twenty-two) are tying graduation requirements to passage of tests as well as accumulating the necessary number of high school course credits. States will have to wrestle with the issue of what happens to students who are significantly disabled that take an alternate assessment. Are they eliminated from consideration or can they graduate with or without taking the alternate assessment? In South Carolina, it appears that students that are alternately assessed are put in that category because they are not on the high school diploma track. In Massachusetts, the advisory committee at least wants to hold out the opportunity that students who are alternately

assessed could receive a regular high school diploma. It will be interesting to monitor states as they implement their policies.

A growing number of states are moving in the direction of promotional testing or gateway testing, such as where students cannot move into fourth grade unless they pass a reading test or where students cannot move into high school unless they pass a test. If alternate assessments are created for these assessments, should students be prohibited from being advanced unless they pass the alternate assessment? Is promotion automatic without passing the test for these students? Or is a comparable criterion for promotion established for the alternate assessment? Most states and districts have not wrestled with these issues.

There are also rewards and sanctions which are applied to achievement results in some states. What happens when these students are included? Will they negatively affect schools, teachers, other educators, or public perceptions of the quality of our schools? These are additional consequences of the alternate assessment that need to be thought about — if they happen, how can such consequences be ameliorated so that they are not as severe?

The requirement for alternate assessment is that it must be ready for all assessments that are administered after July 1, 2000. There is one school year before this goes into effect. One common misperception I have found is the belief that the alternate assessment system has to be ready by July 1, 2000. That is not what the law says. The law says that an alternate assessment has to be provided at the same time that students are regularly assessed in the state or district program. Since very few states and virtually no districts are operating on July 1,

2000, such programs will not be needed until the assessments are regularly given. Virtually all (probably 80% or more of the districts and states) assess in the spring. That means the alternate assessment must be reached by the spring of 2001. This clarification was provided by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), US Department of Education. The timeline is already short — less than two years — but it need not be any shorter than it is.

But there are some things that can be done to prepare students for the alternate assessment. Ultimately, students will be assessed on different standards than they have been in the past. So, one of the key questions is going to be have students been prepared instructionally for this assessment? Has the IEP team — the teachers, administrators, and parents — looked at the state or district standards and designed an individualized educational plan for the student built around those standards? Have they provided actual instruction on the standards that will be assessed? This is not something that one will do or at least should try to do a month before the alternate assessment is given. In fact, the coming school year would be the ideal time for these changes in instruction to take place. This is going to require ongoing dissemination of the state standards to new groups of people (educators and parents) that heretofore have thought they weren't for students with significant disabilities. It will take some fairly active training, not only in things such as assessment administration, scoring, and reporting, but much more importantly, in how we build instructional programs for significantly disabled students around the types of standards that are in states' general education frameworks. That is work that should be taking place now.

One of the key things is to get the guidelines established as soon as possible so that local IEP teams and the state and district can be examining students relative to those guidelines and making the determination if they are going to be alternately assessed. Regardless of whether they are going to be alternately assessed, accommodated, or tested without accommodation, they need to ask themselves the question, "How is this IEP addressing the state curriculum content standards in each of the content areas so that students will be taught the skills that will be tested?" This can be going on for at least a school year or year and a half before the alternate assessment is given.

Finally, there are certainly some steps that need to be taken in developing the alternate assessment component. We believe that an advisory committee of stakeholders is important. Certainly a state technical advisory committee should be consulted for some of the technical issues inherent in this development work, particularly in the disaggregation and aggregation of results. We believe that a network of IEP teams, what we call a district network, is important so that stakeholders are actively involved in giving us ideas and reacting to ideas that we come up with.

We have found that it will take a state about two years to get the entire alternate assessment component ready, starting from scratch. The state will need to to develop participation guidelines and philosophy, examine the state standards and expand them for the significantly disabled student, develop the assessments, conduct pilot tests, and develop communications and training pieces. States that have moved ahead on some parts of the system can shave some time off.

We believe that it is important to have an

interdisciplinary team made up of assessment specialists, people who understand the curriculum frameworks or content standards of the state or district, professional development specialists, teachers of significantly disabled students, and parents (and perhaps, even some students) to work on this assessment.

One of the difficulties in pulling together such an interdisciplinary team is that virtually everyone on the committee has only one part of the picture. Some people have never seen the state's content standards before. Others have never seen or worked with a significantly disabled student. So part of the work, we believe, is to expose committee members to a common set of what we call "sample students." We try to elicit from volunteers on the advisory committee, as well as others, compilations of written and video information about several students that we feel would be eligible to participate in an alternate assessment. By looking at this as a group and discussing what kinds of standards these students could be instructed on as well as assessed on, we can help the committee gain a common understanding that is necessary to carry out this work. This could also be accomplished with made-up scenarios, although the one thing that is typically missing with the information that is contrived is that you don't have the actual opportunity to see the student in an instructional setting with whatever physical, communication, cognitive, or other disabilities they have. However, we feel that it is important to address this issue if you assemble such a broad-based interdisciplinary team in order to provide people with a common basis for their work.

The process is one of first developing the participation guidelines, as I've indicated earlier, then expanding on the state's or district's content

standards, and then creating and pilot testing the alternate assessments. During the pilot testing, you are pilot testing the training and dissemination materials, as well as the actual assessments. Then the development of the assessments is completed and they and the dissemination and training materials are refined. It is about a two year process.

Ideally, it would be one that would be guided by research on practical as well as theoretical issues inherent in this work. However, there isn't time to develop and carry out such research. The research needs to be carried out at the same time as the development. And so, typically, we have engaged researchers to work alongside the development.

At the end of between twelve and twenty-four months, the alternate assessment will be ready to implement. Training will, of course, need to take place, depending on the size of the state and the number of teachers of the significantly disabled. In some smaller states, you can call them into one central site. In larger states it will be carried out on a regional basis. But as indicated before, the actual alternate assessment is just the starting point and the more significant potential instructional transformations can begin to occur now. We believe that if states or districts wish for that to occur, they need to be intentional about it and use the opportunity of the implementation of the alternate assessment to begin to plan through regional and local meetings how teachers can work with one another to make the kind of necessary instructional changes needed to move to that more inclusive standards-based system of instruction and learning.

This is an overview of how we believe that alternate assessments that allow all students to participate in large-scale assessments should be created. I want to leave some time now for you to

ask me questions during the remainder of our time together.

Mary Mack: Are there any questions?

Deborah Leuchovius (Minnesota): This is Deborah from PACER and I have a question. The alternate assessment that is devised for a state will be devised and broadly applied. The question is, how does that meet an individual's needs?

Edward Roeber: I think what will be devised and implemented broadly throughout the state will be a system of standards and a system of assessments that individual educational planning teams will need to select from. Some methods of assessment simply will not be appropriate for some students. Their communication disability does not permit them to use a particular method of assessment. Some standards will not be relevant for the student. In mathematics, English language arts, science, and social studies, there will probably be a couple of hundred benchmarks that could be assessed. But I think realistically, unless the team is going to spend all year on assessment, there will have to be picking and choosing. And that's part of the training process and how to go about picking and choosing. One decision, then, that an IEP team will have to make is that if the state has devised seven ways of assessing students, which one of those should be used to assess the student? Which standards should be selected for instruction and assessment?

Mary Mack: Did that clarify things for you?

Deborah Leuchovius (Minnesota): Yes. Thank you very much.

Mary Mack: What are some of the systems in place that are appropriate for an individual student that do not water down the standards for that particular person, depending on their skills and

abilities?

Edward Roeber: Well, I think that a major issue in devising the critical functions for the state standards is to make sure that they still have an academic focus to them with some rigor rather than the simple functional types of skills. There are states that have functional sets of skills. I know of at least one in the Midwest that is very proud of its set of functional skills for students called the AUEN system. It has four levels. The top level, which is the most strongly academic in nature, is unfortunately not connected with the state academic standards and therefore is not related to the state assessments. I believe eventually it will be found in non-compliance with IDEA '97.

In states that are looking at trying to expand their state standards to give all students access to them, they are going to have to attend to academic versus functional skills. IEP teams of necessity will have to pick and choose among many benchmarks. They will have to be monitored on the extent to which they are selecting the most trivial examples, focusing on functional skills rather than standards that move students ahead.

I speak as a parent of a severely mentally impaired/autistic child. I remember that in his IEP, we could have focused on very trivial kinds of skills. But we kept looking down the road at his future employment opportunities and the types of skills he might need in the workplace. We knew that he needed to be able to work with others, to listen to others, and to carry out their requests. There would undoubtedly be certain job skills that would be helpful to him. In my experience of running the state's assessment program, I was very familiar with the kind of content standards that were being tested with all the other students. I could sense how those

would relate to him even though he was a most significantly disabled young adult. We need to be able to get IEP teams to think about the long-term goals for the students, how those relate to the state content standards, and how they can translate them into meaningful instruction for the student.

There is no easy answer to this, partly because at least some special educators have been taught very well what disabled students cannot do. An inherent assumption of IDEA '97 is that even the most significantly disabled students can learn academic skills or additional academic skills beyond where they currently can accomplish. It is an assumption that we are trying to prove.

Mary Mack: Do you know of systems that are also developing some competencies that IEP teams must have in order to really be able to make these decisions?

Edward Roeber: I have not. I have heard of several states that they are developing training programs for IEP teams, but I do not know if they are standards-based. It's a good idea.

Mary Mack: The reason I bring this up because Kathy Boundy from the Center for Law and Education had a breakout session at the CCSSO Large Scale Assessment Conference in Snowbird, Utah. That was one of her concerns from the legal perspective — a possible pitfall for states and districts. Any other questions?

Deborah Leuchovius (Minnesota): Yes. A question from PACER again. Are there any tests out there that have already been normed for students with disabilities that can be applied, or are we at ground zero?

Edward Roeber: There are really no tests. I don't think that a paper and pencil test will ever be devised for this.

Deborah Leuchovius (Minnesota): In functional areas, there have been other means of assessment already developed. Is there anything that's applicable?

Edward Roeber: In Massachusetts, where local districts have been required to create their own alternate assessments or select their own, two or three kinds of things are observed. First, some districts use developmental or readiness kinds of scales, which we don't think is appropriate because they do not have an academic focus to them.

A second strategy that some districts have used is to use an off-the-shelf norm-referenced test instead of the state's custom-developed assessment. That may seem silly, but it is usually an off-grade form of the test, such as giving a second grade or third grade test to an eighth or tenth grader. Again, I am troubled by that. I think it sends messages that are unfortunate to the student, the parent, and the teacher.

Probably the closest thing to existing assessments come from the States of Maryland, where they have performance events and a portfolio, and Kentucky, where they have had a portfolio assessment process in place now for about seven years. The State of Tennessee, for example, has adopted the Kentucky alternate portfolio assessment model and will do a statewide pilot test during the coming school year. The people at the University of Kentucky, both the Mid-South Regional Resource Center and the Inclusive Large Scale Standards and Assessment group (ILSSA), have been working with states on portfolio assessment. I think that it is a part of what many states will use, but they will add some of the other assessment methods that I mentioned.

It is not like starting from ground zero, but it is

not like a state can simply adopt something somebody else has done, either. By and large, each state is going to have to go through the process and work through the details themselves, and borrow and adapt what others have done.

Nancy Lauria (New York): This is Nancy Lauria from New York. We have twenty-eight learning standards for all kids that have already been established. We have taken those twenty-eight learning standards and come up with key performance indicators. For students with severe disabilities, we have alternative indicators. Those performance indicators have been broken out as to what that means and how you determine achievement. Right now, we are working with a contractor to come up with measurements for those.

We started out with the standards and some pre-skills towards reaching the standards that we have decided are appropriate for students with severe disabilities. We worked with a group, like you suggested, from across the state that included parents and educators and others. We are trying to determine the best measurement of whether those pre-skills have been reached or not. However, they are standards based, as you have suggested.

Edward Roeber: Right.

Nancy Lauria (New York): You might want to talk to Candy Shyer in our Department who is in charge of that project.

Edward Roeber: Some other people that you might want to talk with are Dan Wiener in the Massachusetts Department of Education, and the ILSSA group at the University of Kentucky, including Ken Warlick, Sarah Kennedy, and Pat Burgess. These three are really good people that have talked to a number of states and local districts about alternate assessment.

Mary Mack: Ed, thank you so very much for presenting great information.

Edward Roeber: I enjoyed it. Please refer to the following web sites for further information:

Advanced Systems in Measurement and Evaluation:

<http://www.asme.com/clients/clientsframe.htm>

Inclusive Large-Scale Standards and Assessment:

<http://www.ihdi.uky.edu/projects/ILSSA>

The Regional Resource and Federal Centers Network:

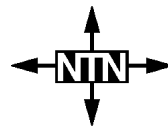
<http://www.dssc.org/frc/rrfc.htm>

Mid-South Regional Resource Center:

<http://www.ihdi.uky.edu/projects/MSRRC/index.htm>

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