



## Position Statement June 2005

# Education

## POSITION STATEMENT ON EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND TESTING

### Summary of the Issue:

In recent years there has been an increased demand across the United States for accountability in the education of all students in public schools. This includes a new requirement for the inclusion of students with disabilities in accountability activities. Accurate measurement of achievement and growth in students with a wide range of disabilities has presented many challenges. The inclusion of students with disabilities in accountability activities is viewed as an important step to assuring quality education for students with disabilities.

### Background:

During the 1990's, nearly all States initiated accountability systems based on large-scale tests and performance standards at various grade levels. For the most part, students with disabilities were not included in these testing programs. Frequently, students with disabilities and programs that served students with disabilities have not been subject to any form of standardized evaluation.

The **No Child Left Behind Act of 2001** required that states must include separate, measurable annual objectives for "continuous and substantial improvement" of all students, including students with disabilities. States are required to issue annual report cards of assessment results in a number of categories including disability and must demonstrate Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) or face improvement planning, corrective action, or even designated sanctions.

Many schools have resisted the inclusion of students with disabilities in their testing results because of concerns that their scores will lower the school-wide average and prevent the school from being able to demonstrate Adequate Yearly Progress. The provision of appropriate accommodations, supports, and services can equalize access and increase the participation in testing of many students with disabilities.

### Council Position:

The Oregon Council on Development Disabilities believes that the Oregon system of public education must be accountable for the achievement results of students with

disabilities, and that parents / families, and adults and youth with disabilities should be included in the development of the accountability system.

The Oregon Council on Development Disabilities believes that system change in the area of accountability should include, but not be limited to:

- The maintenance of high academic standards and clear performance goals for **all** students;
- State Education Agency's established goals for the performance of students with disabilities and indicators for measuring their progress, and reports to parents and the public on their progress;
- Clear definition, tracking, and reporting of the school and post-school results that students with disabilities are expected to achieve;
- Greater activity leading to inclusion of students with disabilities in the standards-based assessments of the general accountability system;
- The development and implementation of accommodations, as necessary, including alternate assessments and participation guidelines;
- The development and implementation of accountability consequences for low-performing schools and school based programs.

**Future Activities:**

- Monitoring of performance and progress goals established for students with disabilities.
- Monitoring of school and post school outcomes for students with disabilities.