

IMPLEMENTING THE FEDERAL NCLB ASSESSMENT POLICY AT THE LOCAL LEVEL
FOR LEARNERS AFFECTED WITH MODERATE TO SEVERE DISABILITIES:
AN ANALYSIS OF EDUCATORS' DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

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ABSTRACT

The No Child Left Behind legislation of 2001 required 98% of students in the United States to be assessed annually. No Child Left Behind along with the Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Act of 2004 allowed for the most profoundly disabled two to three percent of students in each school district to be assessed by alternative processes. The State of Missouri uses the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP and MAP-A) to assess students as required by federal legislation during the spring of each year. When not qualifying in alternative assessment, certain accommodations to administration, setting, timing, and response can be provided to students with documented disabilities.

Students challenged by a disability which moderately to severely affects their learning are among the most impacted by the requirements of federal and state government to be assessed annually. Likewise, the team making the decision for accommodations or alternative assessment is faced with the challenge to make a decision for a testing route that provides the most leveled playing field possible for the student. This research targeted decision-making teams who made decisions about assessment for its third, fourth, and fifth graders who were challenged with moderate to severe disabilities. The purpose of this mixed method study was to examine the training, knowledge, and procedures used to make these decisions. This study used surveys and interviews with IEP team members and key school district leadership.

