

# Education News & Notes

## High Standards: A Move in the Right Direction

(NAPSA)—There's a new concept in education. Under the No Child Left Behind Act, schools and districts are required not only to include students with disabilities in state- and districtwide assessments, but they also have to report how these students are doing.

While there is still variability in the percentage of students with disabilities being tested, the average rate of participation in general assessments is about 90 percent according to 2001-2002 publicly reported data, says Martha Thurlow, professor and researcher at the University of Minnesota.

The benefits of including students with disabilities in standardized assessments are the same as those for giving non-disabled students standardized tests—it is a means by which schools can determine the effectiveness of their educational programs. Through standardized assessments, schools can determine whether their special education programs are providing an effective education for students with disabilities or whether they need additional resources or professional development to improve a program.

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) has long supported including students with disabilities in assessment and accountability systems. To ensure these students are assessed fairly, CEC also states that:

- No single test score should be used to make critical educational decisions for students with disabilities;
- State determinations of adequate yearly progress must address the progress made on grade promo-



**Standardized assessments help ensure that children with disabilities get the education they deserve.**

tions and graduation rates for students with exceptionalities; and

- All students with disabilities should be included when assessment scores are publicly reported, whether they participate with or without accommodations or through an alternate assessment.

“By including students with disabilities in the accountability system, we have a real opportunity to ensure special education programs are the best and students with disabilities receive the education they deserve,” says CEC President Suzanne Martin. “It is a move in the right direction to improve accountability and provide quality education for all children.”

The Council for Exceptional Children is the largest professional association dedicated to improving the educational success of children with disabilities and/or gifts and talents. To learn more about effective educational practices for all children, visit [www.cec.sped.org](http://www.cec.sped.org).