

Analysis of DC CAS ELL Accommodation Rates

Task: Using data provided by the District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) Office of Assessment and Accountability, MACC conducted two analyses: (1) an analysis of provision rates for each ELL accommodation and (2) a comparison of DC Comprehensive Assessment System (CAS) overall ELL accommodation rates (across urban districts and SEAs participating in NAEP) to offer implications on DC CAS policy and training practices.

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1. Analysis of Provision Rates for Each ELL Accommodation

Data on the individual accommodations indicates an overall increase in the percentage of accommodations provided to ELLs between the 2009 and 2010 DC CAS administrations. Except for the decrease to 0% in the use of read aloud accommodations on the reading test, provision of ELL accommodations increased between 10-50% between the 2009 and 2010 DC CAS administrations. **This data provides preliminary evidence of improved policy and training on ELL accommodation.** (The new *DC OSSE Testing Accommodations Manual* and supporting training were developed and implemented in Summer/Fall 2009 and used with the Spring 2010 DC CAS administration; the increase in DC ELL accommodation rates occurred after the manual and training had been developed and implemented.)

Recommendations to improve the Spring 2011 DC CAS administration:

- **Collect separate data on English dictionary and bilingual word-to-word dictionary.**

Rationales:

 - The English dictionary is allowed as a SPED accommodation; clearly the bilingual word-to-word dictionary is not since it is specifically designed to meet ELL needs.
 - OSSE will be able to obtain a clearer picture of ELL usage of each of the two accommodations, English dictionary and bilingual word-to-word dictionary. Data from other SEAs indicates OSSE will find the bilingual word-to-word dictionary is provided more often than the English dictionary. Is that so?
 - Also there is confusion among SEAs as to when to offer English dictionary accommodation. Some SEAs offer it to all ELLs, and one SEA (Virginia) offers it only in instances when a bilingual word-to-word dictionary is not available in the student's native language. At which English language proficiency level should ELLs receive this accommodation?
- **Eliminate provision of *Assistance with interpretation of directions* to ELLs.**
 - Rationale: This accommodation is not found in ELL guidelines used between 2007 to present, which suggests there is some confusion regarding its allowance to ELLs. Also the wording of *Assistance with interpretation of directions* and another accommodation, *On-the-spot Translation of Words on Math Test (SPED only)* is ambiguous. Does this accommodation refer to *clarification* of directions or *interpretation* (sight translation) of

directions? (Since this accommodation is allowed to SPED students, it most likely refers to *clarification* of directions.) There is a similar confusion with the word *translation* in *On-the-spot Translation of Words on Math Test (SPED only)*. Here, does *translation* means *definition*?

- Check first: Was this data for ELs who had an IEP? Is so, then they would be allowed use of the accommodation *Assistance with interpretation of directions*. **Is there data collected on ELL-LD students?**

Table 1.
Number/Percentage of ELLs Receiving Accommodations on DC CAS

	2009 (n= 1780)	2010 (n=1822)	Change in Accommodation Rate 2009 to 2010
Direct Linguistic Support - Oral			
1. Oral reading of the test (math/science/composition)	140/8%	255/18%	+10%
2. Read aloud for entire reading test	42/2%	0/0%	-2%
3. Read aloud of comprehension passage on reading test	29/ 2%	0 /0%	-2%
4. Oral reading of directions	752/ 42%	1124/79%	+37%
5. Repetition of directions	904/51%	1285/90%	+39%
6. Simplification of directions	912/ 51%	1274/89%	+38%
7. Assistance with interpretation of directions**	91/5%	55/4%	-1%
8. Simplification of writing prompt	334/19%	702/49%	+30%
Direct Linguistic Support - Written			
9. Use English dictionary*	510/29%	943/66%	
10. Use bilingual word-to-word dictionary*	(9 and 10 data collected together)	(9 and 10 data collected together)	+37%
Indirect Linguistic Support			
11. Extended testing time	917/52%	1369 /96%	+44%
12. Use of place markers to maintain place	355/20%	454/32%	+12%
13. Time of day most beneficial to student (morning or afternoon)	416/23%	650/ 46%	+22%
14. Breaks allowed between subtests	753/42%	1001/70%	+28%
15. Breaks during a subtest (lasting no longer than 3-5 minutes)	164/9%	539/38%	+29%
16. Flexible scheduling (order of subtests is altered)	410/23%	625/44%	+21%
17. Test administered over several days (one or two subtests per day)	604/34%	933/65%	+31%
18. Person familiar with student administers test	633 /36%	773/54%	+19%
19. Preferential seating	406/23%	752/53%	+30%
20. Small group testing	770/43%	1333/ 93%	+50%
21. Other approved accommodations by the OSSE	9/1%	23/2%	+1%

*Accommodation with research base indicating it is very likely to reduce construct-irrelevant variance due to English proficiency

** Accommodation not found in ELL guidelines between 2007 to present. Suggests there is some confusion regarding its allowance to ELLs

2. Comparison of DC Overall Accommodation Rates on Mathematics and Science with NAEP ELL Accommodation Rates across Urban Districts and SEAs

Because there is no Consolidated State Performance Report requirement to track the extent to which ELLs are assessed with accommodations in state content assessments (Shafer Willner, Rivera, & Acosta, 2010), we consulted the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data on ELL accommodation for comparison. The validity of this comparison is based on the fact that research has shown that the provision of accommodations to ELs during NAEP is determined using state ELL accommodation policy/guidelines as a reference. Shafer Willner, Rivera, & Acosta (2007) note that NAEP ELL accommodation directions require educators to refer to student participation in the state academic assessment. The directions state,

If the subject is reading or mathematics, refer to the state assessment used for reporting adequate yearly progress under No Child Left Behind. If this student does not take a state test in this subject, refer to local testing or instructional practice.

Because of this NAEP administration guidance, there is a high likelihood that the implementation of ELL accommodations for the Trial Urban District assessment (TUDA) and SEA administrations of NAEP is similar to the accommodation practices used in each state for the state content assessment.

The following table provides a comparison of the OSSE Data on Overall ELL Accommodation in the Spring 2009 and 2010 DC CAS with data on NAEP ELL accommodation rates for TUDA and for states. This data suggest that **DC ELL accommodation rates (78% in 2010 and 71% in 2009) are higher than the average ELL accommodation rates for urban districts (34%) and SEAs (35%) participating in the 2009 NAEP.**

Table 2.
Comparison of Average ELL Accommodation Rates

	DC CAS Mathematics and Science		NAEP 2009 Mathematics – Grade 4		
	DC CAS Rate 2010	DC CAS Rate 2009	DC Rate	Average State Rate	Average Urban District Rate
Percent of all ELL students receiving one or more ELL accommodations	78.27%	71.12%	78%	35%	34%

Limitations of this analysis:

1. This data from the 2009 administration of NAEP, compares ELL accommodation rates for the DC CAS Mathematics and Science with ELL accommodation rates for Mathematics (NCES, 2010). Note: To reduce complexity in the ELL accommodation data shown in Table2, Grade 4 data was selected for this comparison since it tends to be higher than Grade 8. Since the ELL accommodations allowed on the DC CAS Mathematics and Science are exactly the same, it would be useful to determine next year if there are differences in accommodation usage by content assessment. *A next step for OSSE is to determine whether ELLs in DC are receiving different numbers and types of accommodations on the DC CAS mathematics, science, and reading assessments.*
2. OSSE ELL accommodation data is not broken down by grade level. An examination of DC ELL accommodation rates for the TUDA of NAEP indicates that ELL accommodation is higher in

grade 4 than grade 8. (See Table 3.) However, the Grade 8 ELL accommodation rates for DC in 2009 NAEP (42%) are much lower than they were in 2007 (87%). (See Table 4 for this data.) What happened? *A next step for OSSE is to determine whether ELLs in middle school and high school who are taking the DC CAS are accommodated as frequently as ELLs in the elementary grades.*

There are roughly 3 patterns of ELL accommodation shown in Table 3.

- **Low rates (~4-26%):** Found in the California cities of Fresno, Los Angeles, and San Diego; Boston (Grade 4), and Detroit.
- **Moderate rates (~25-59%):** Austin, Houston, Jefferson County, KY (Grade 4), Charlotte (Grade 8), Boston (Grade 8), Atlanta (Grade 8), District of Columbia (Grade 8), and Chicago
- **High rates (~60-90%):** Cleveland, Charlotte (Grade 4), Atlanta, Baltimore City, Milwaukee, District of Columbia (Grade 4), Miami-Dade, Philadelphia, and New York City

Table 3.
ELL Accommodation Rates for Grades 4 and 8 2009 TUDA/NAEP Mathematics: Assessed with Accommodations (NCES, 2010)

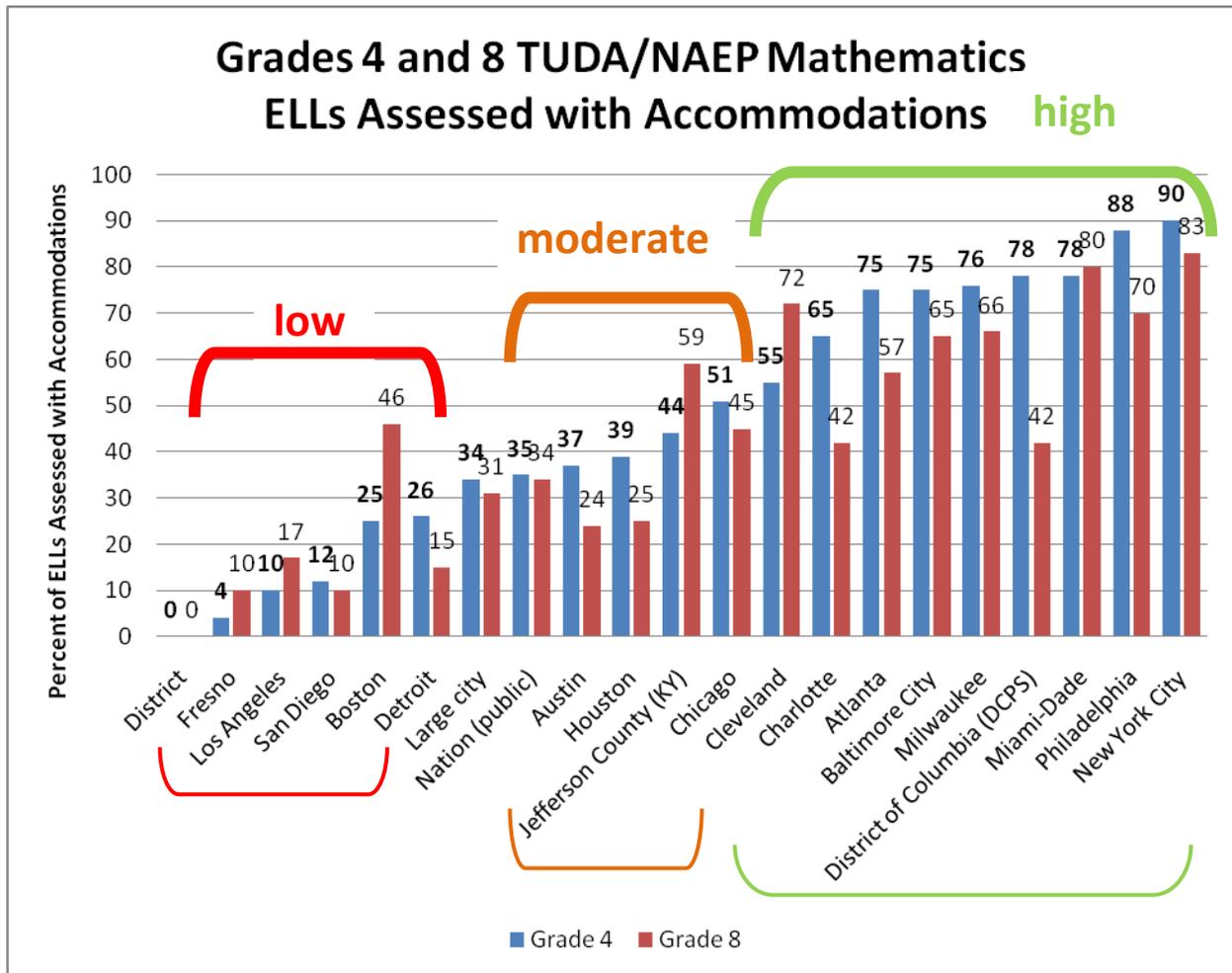
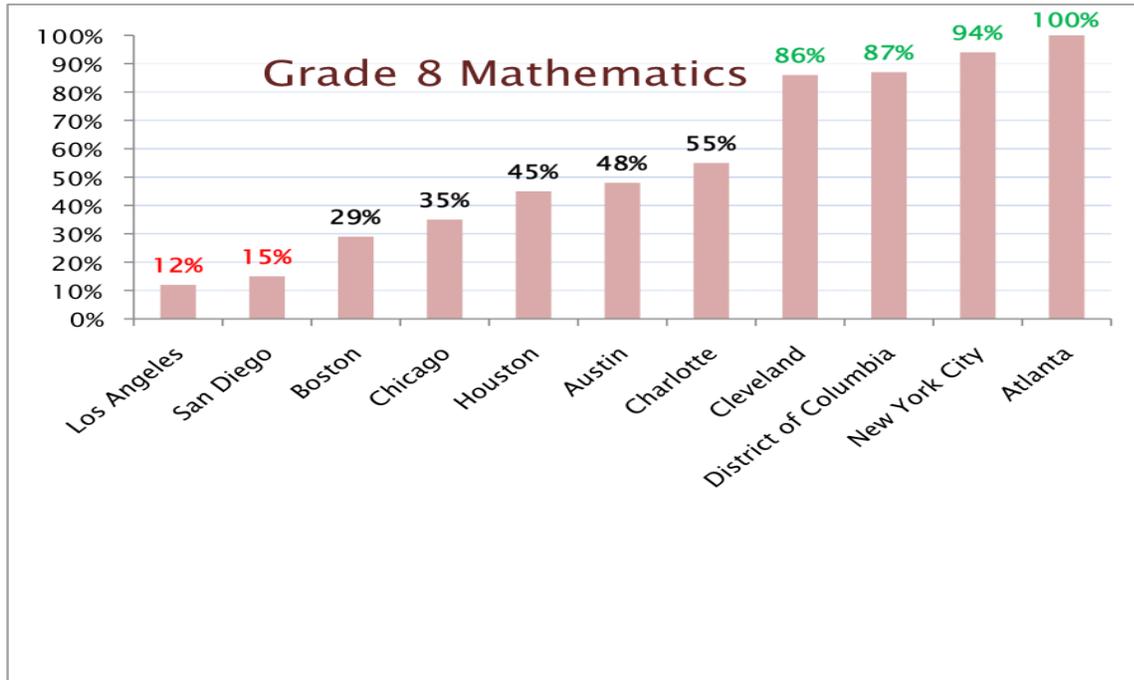


Table 4.
ELL Accommodation Rates for the 2007 Trial Urban District Assessment



References

- NCES. (2010). National Assessment for Educational Progress State and District Report Cards: About the Assessment: Inclusion Rates. Washington, DC: [National Assessment of Educational Progress, National Center for Education Statistics](http://nationsreportcard.gov/math_2009/). Available: http://nationsreportcard.gov/math_2009/. (Direct link: http://nationsreportcard.gov/math_2009/districts_inclusion_district.asp?tab_id=tab3&subtab_id=Tab_2#chart.)
- Shafer Willner, L., Rivera, C., and Acosta, B. (2010). *Examination of Peer Review and Title I Monitoring Feedback Regarding the Inclusion and Accommodation of English Language Learners in State Content Assessments*. Report prepared for the U.S. Department of Education. Arlington, VA: The George Washington University Center for Equity and Excellence in Education. Available: http://ceee.gwu.edu/MonitoringReport_5_25_10.pdf.
- Shafer Willner, L., Rivera, C. & Acosta, B. (2007). *Decision-Making Practices of Urban Districts for Including and Accommodating English Language Learners in NAEP – School-Based Perspectives*. Prepared for the National Center for Educational Statistics, U.S. Department of Education. Arlington, VA: The George Washington University Center for Equity and Excellence in Education. Available: <http://ceee.gwu.edu/Projects/TUDA.html>