Including Individuals with Disabilities in Test Security Policies

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International Test Security Conference

Vancouver, British Columbia
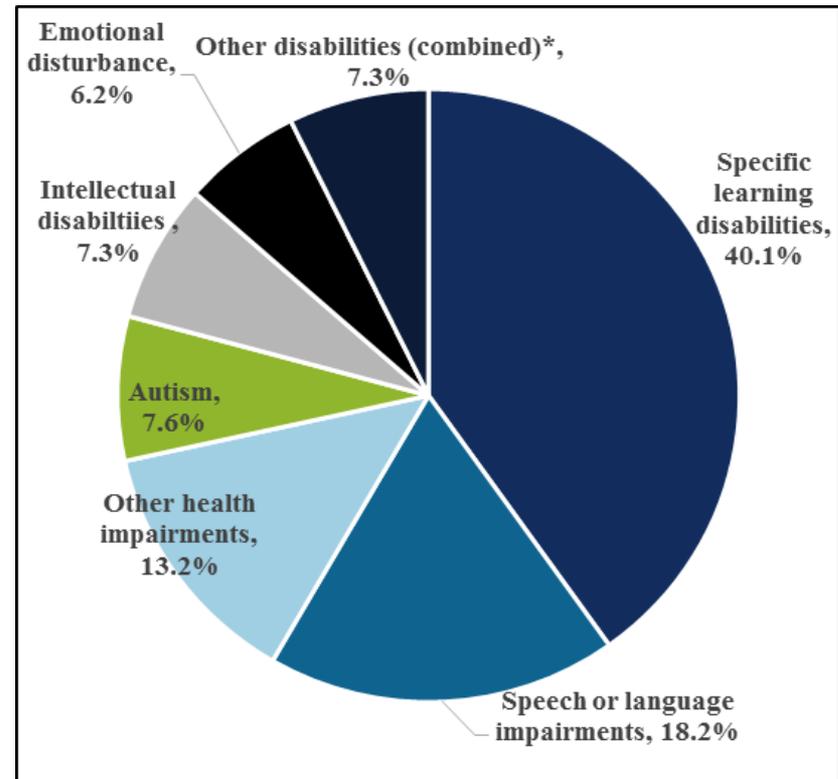
July 4, 2016

Balancing Accessibility and Test Security

- Many individuals with disabilities need accommodations to access assessments.

- Test security policies and procedures need to address accommodations and other issues related to individuals with disabilities to help ensure the integrity and validity of a test.

- However, some accommodations may create test security challenges:

  - Require that someone other than the student sees the test.

  - Require the use of specialized accessibility software, or different forms/images.

  - Require individual or small group individual administration.

Individuals with Disabilities

- Do not have good data for the population likely to take licensure & certification exams—but here's what we know:
  - 19% of the people in the U.S. have a disability (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2012)
  - At the K-12 level, **specific learning disabilities** is the most frequently identified disability (40% of students with disabilities) (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2014)

Percentage of Students with Disabilities by Disability Category

Emotional disturbance, 6.2%

Other disabilities (combined)*, 7.3%

Intellectual disabilties, 7.3%

Specific learning disabilities, 40.1%

Autism, 7.6%

Other health impairments, 13.2%

Speech or language impairments, 18.2%

Accommodations

- Changes that are made to "standardized" test conditions.

- Enable individuals with barriers to meaningfully access a test.

- Include tools and procedures that provide equitable access.

- Help ensure a valid measure of test constructs.

Common Accommodations

- Auditory presentation (text-to-speech, human reader, audio-tape)
- Braille
- Brailler
- Calculation devices
- Extended time
- Location change to increase physical access

- Multiple or frequent breaks
- Record response in test booklet
- Response in native language
- Change of schedule
- Scribe
- Speech to text
- Sign language

Many assessment also have other *accessibility features* — for example, font size that ca be adjusted on a computer screen.

Americans with Disabilities ACT (ADA)

What this U.S. Law says –

When enacted in 1990, it included responses to 4 questions:

1. Does the individual have an impairment that affects one or more major life activities as identified under ADA?
2. Does the impairment rise to the level of a disability?
3. What is the impact of the impairment on performance in the area for which accommodations are being considered?
4. What are the appropriate accommodations, given the specific tasks required of the individual?

ADA, cont.

- When reauthorized in 2008, it expanded its interpretation of the definition of disability to include learning disabilities
- Expanded definition of major life activities is illustrative of such activities as reading, concentrating, and communicating
  - Section 309 of Title III of the reauthorized ADA covers courses and assessments. This includes tests and courses for applications, licensing, certification, and credentialing for professions or trades.

U.S. Department of Justice Technical Assistance Guidance (Sept. 2015)*

- Clarifies the types of tests covered

    " . . .exams administered by any private, state, or local government entity related to applications, licensing, certification, or credentialing for secondary or postsecondary education, professional, or trade purposes…"

- Clarifies nature of documentation that can be required

    – Past testing accommodations on similar standardized exams or high-stakes tests

    – Formal public school accommodations (e.g., IEP or Section 504 documented accommodations)

    – Documentation from a qualified professional

*Available at: http://www.ada.gov/regs2014/testing_accommodations.html

Standards

- **_Assessment Standards:_** _Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing_ – AERA/APA/NCME(2014)
  - Must be comparability in the interpretation of scores from accommodated and non-accommodated tests
  - Rests on clear definition of the intended construct to be measured
- **Certification Standards:** Standards for the Accreditation of Certification _Programs - National Commission_ for Certifying Agencies (NCCA); _Guidance on Psychometric Requirements_ - American National Standards Institute (ANSI)

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State Test Security Policy Analysis
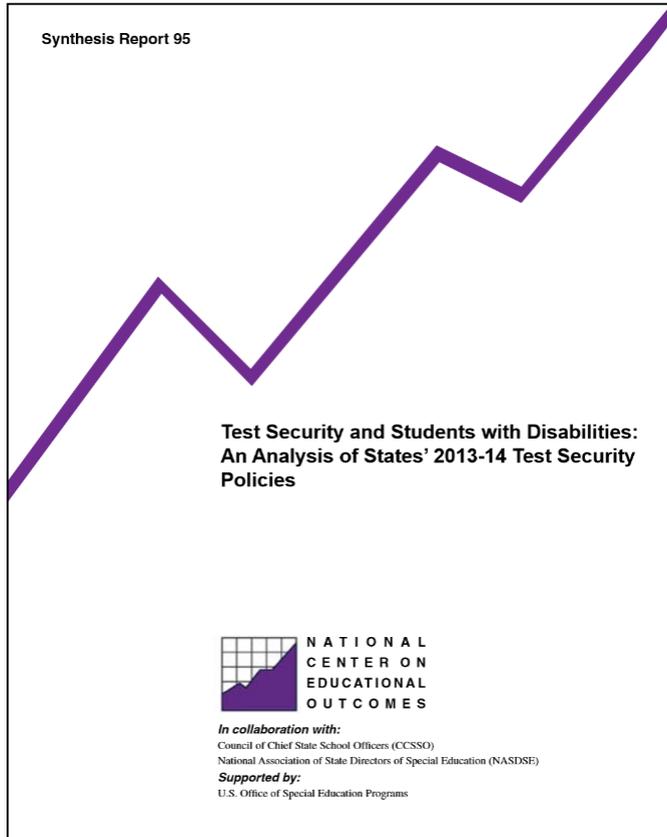
Test security and students with disabilities: An analysis of states' 2013-14 test security policies (Synthesis Report 95). National Center on Educational Outcomes. Available at: www.nceo.info

Test Administration Procedures

Bar chart titled "Number of states" (x-axis).

Procedure	Number of states
Qualifications of Test Administrators/ Accommodations Providers	20
Training	24
Security of Test Materials	14

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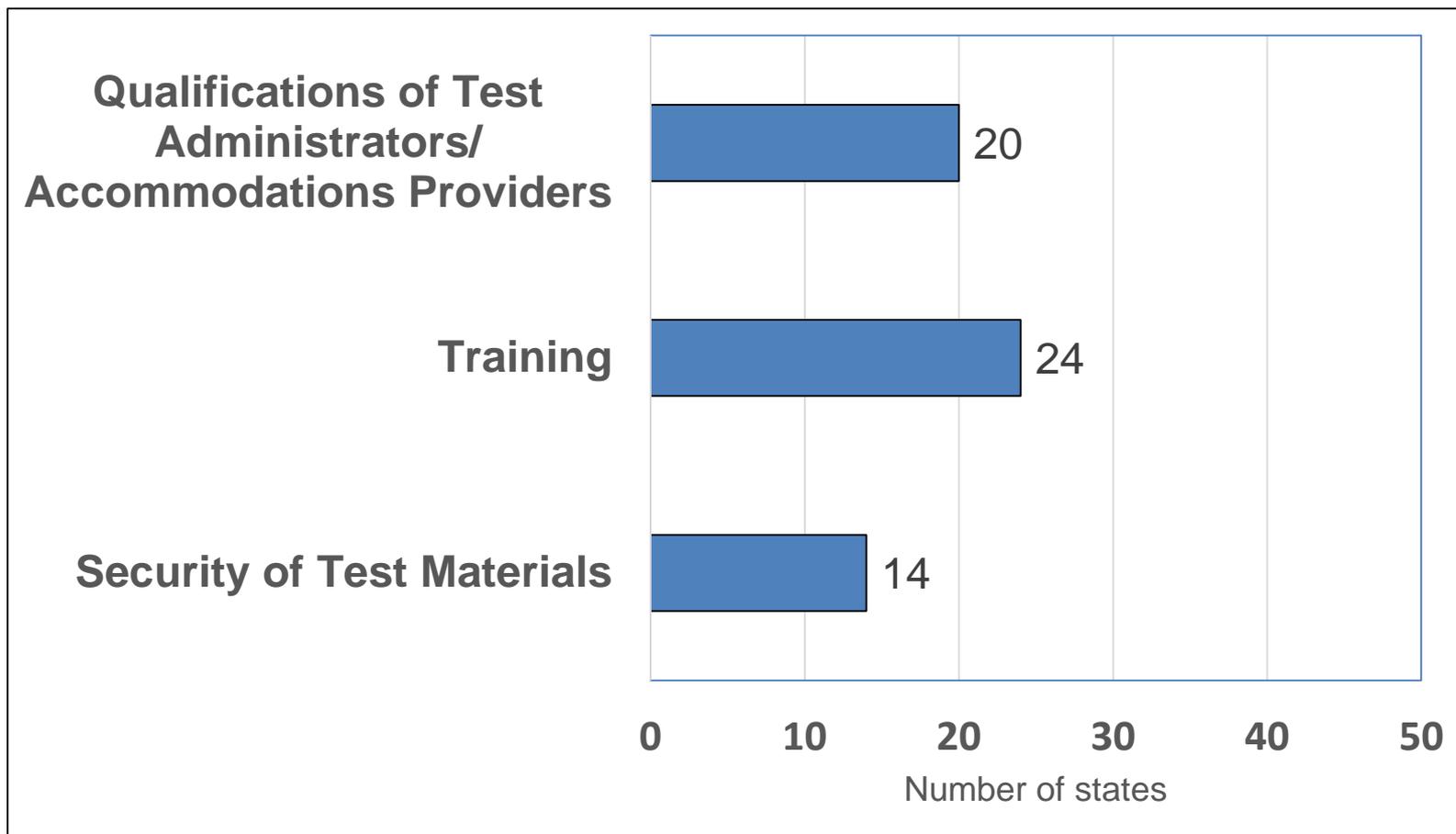
Accommodations Most Frequently Addressed in States' Test Security Policies

Braille: 37
Transcription and scribing: 34
Human reader: 32
Sign language interpretation: 30
Large print: 28

Number of States
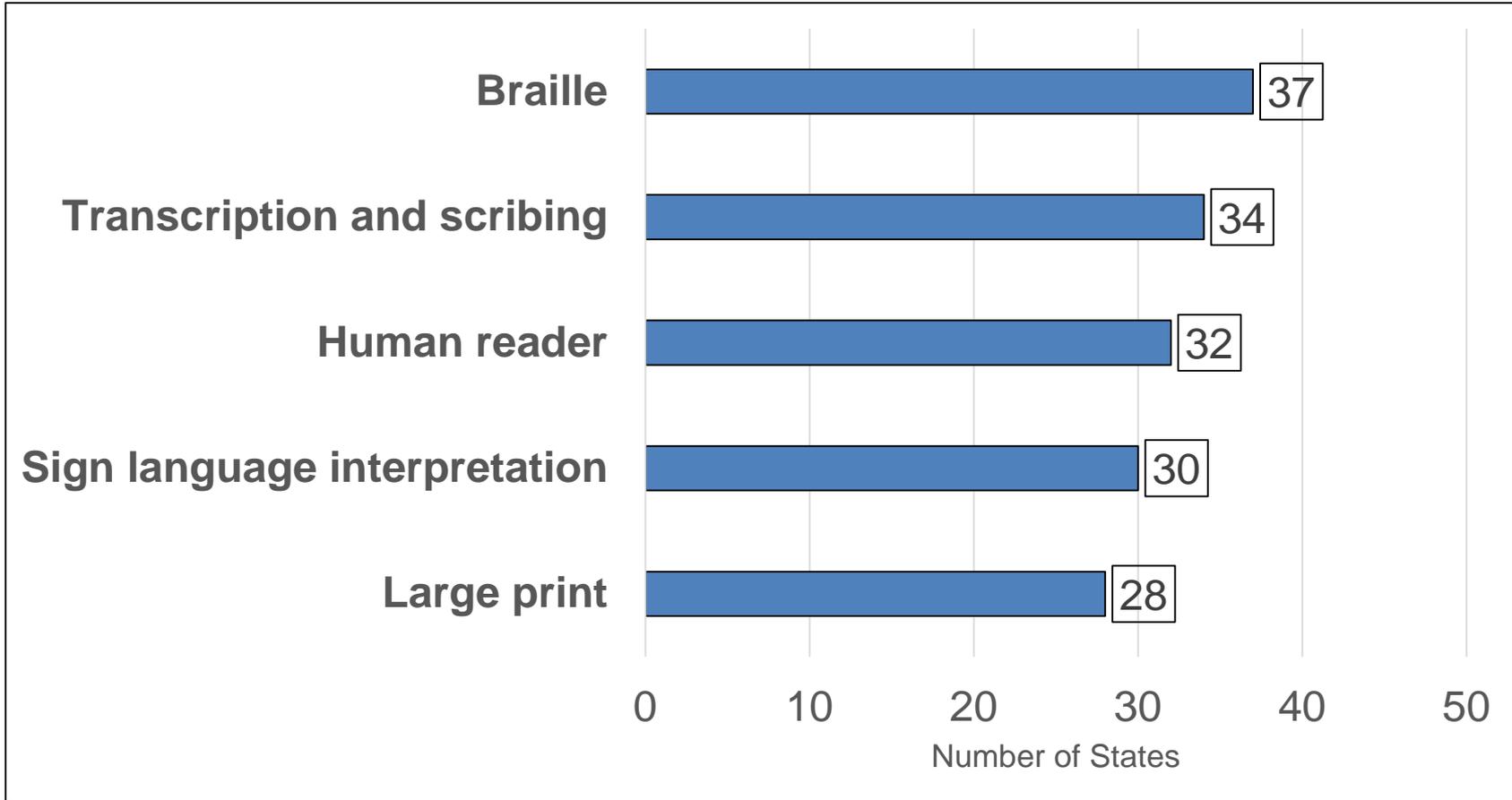
Scheduling and Timing Accommodations
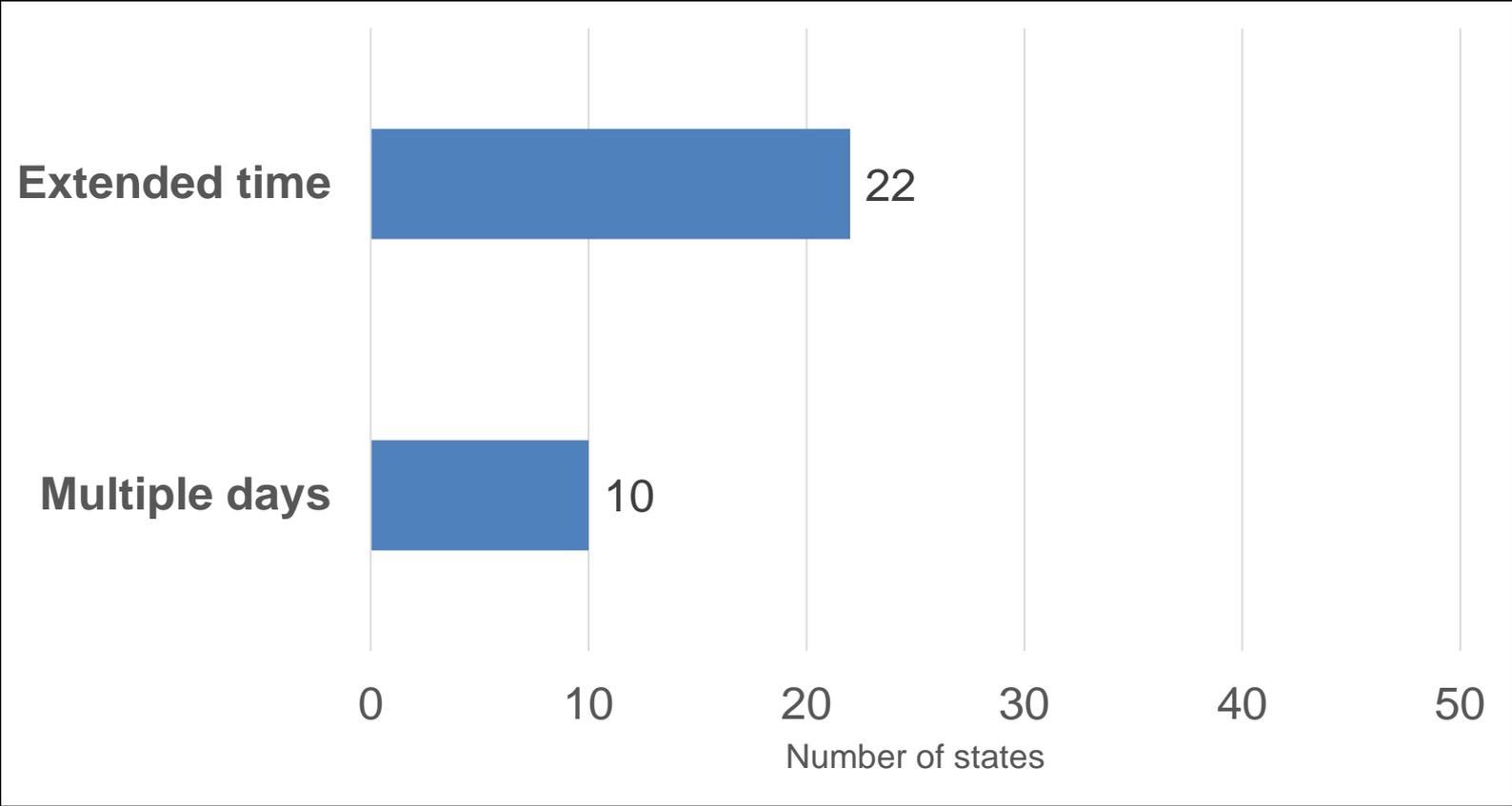
Oral Delivery Accommodations
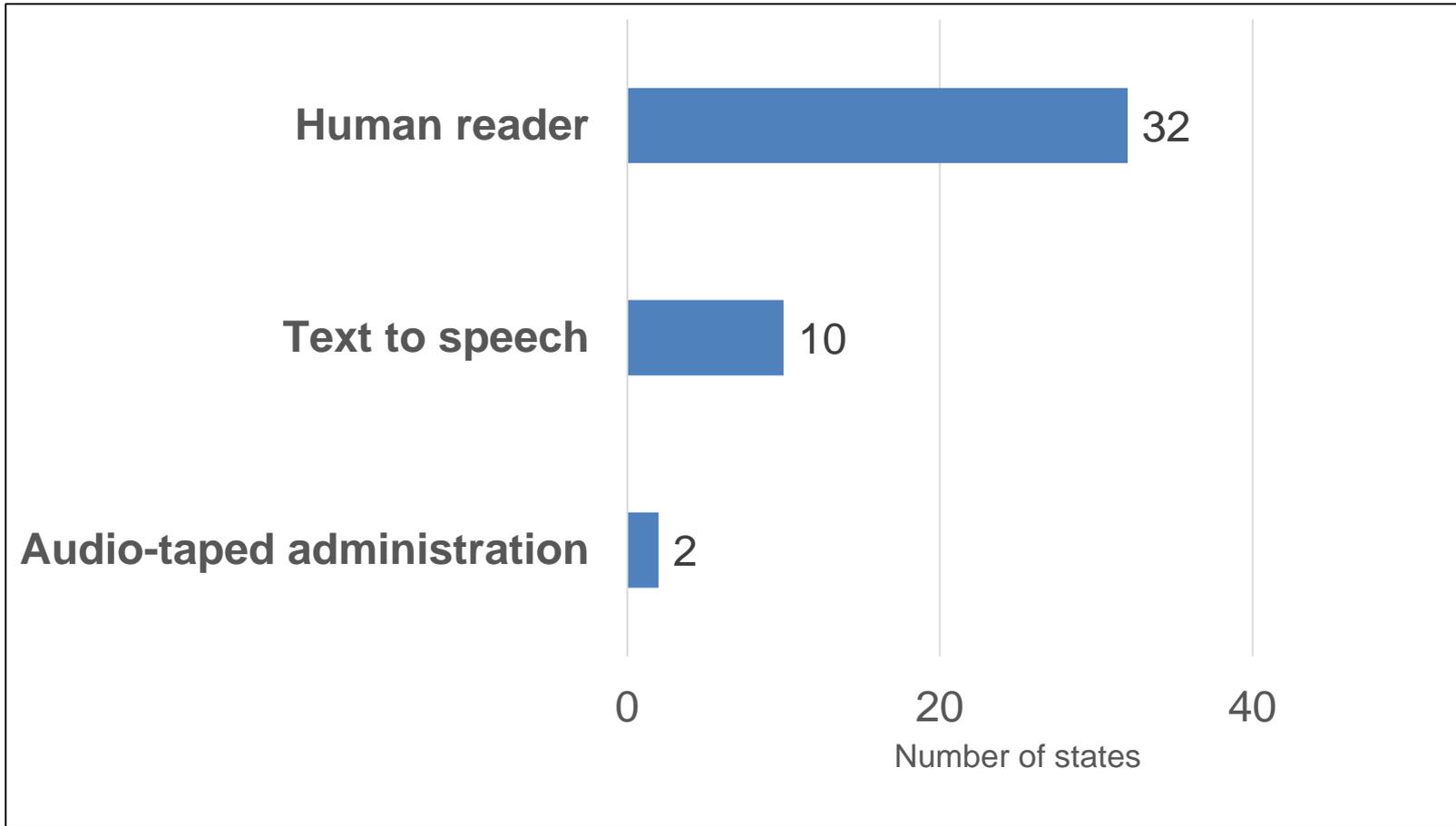
Considerations When Including Students with Disabilities in Test Security Policies

Available at: www.nceo.info

Ask

1. Are all test administrators qualified?

2. Does everyone who accesses the assessment sign a test security/ confidentiality agreement?

3. Are adequate logs/records kept?

4. Are accessibility features and accommodations with the fewest security risks identified as preferred features and accommodations?

Considerations When Including Students with Disabilities in Test Security Policies, Cont.

Ask

5. Do test security policies and procedures address adaptive technology?

6. Are test security procedures in place for situations when a test is accessed prior to administration?

7. Are appropriate procedures used for small group and individual administrations?

8. Are appropriate test security procedures in place for alternate assessments?

For More Information

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