**Using AA-MAS to Improve Instruction and Assessment**

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**What is AA-MAS?**

As described in the federal regulations, states have the option of providing an alternate assessment based on modified achievement standards (AA-MAS). This option is sometimes referred to as the 2% option because states may count as proficient students who receive special education services who participate in this option; however, it must not exceed 2% of the students who were assessed. Students who participate in this assessment:

- Must have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).
- May be from any disability category.
- Their progress to date, in response to appropriate instruction, must be such that the student is unlikely to achieve grade-level proficiency within the year covered by the IEP.
- Must have access to grade-level content.

The National Center on Educational Outcomes and five states formed the Multi-State GSEG Toward a Defensible Alternate Assessment Based on Modified Academic Achievement Standards (AA-MAS). This consortium investigated the characteristics of low performing students. Since the AA-MAS is an optional assessment states need to have a clear understanding of these students when they make decisions. This poster presents the findings of a longitudinal analysis of three years of student-level demographic and performance data for four states (Alabama, Hawaii, South Dakota, Wisconsin)*. Data were from the 2004-05, 2005-06, and 2006-07 school years.

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**Figure 1: Percentage of Students with Selected Demographic Characteristics: All Students and Persistently Low Performing (PLP) Students, Reading, Grades 5 and 8**

1. **Male Students**

2. **Minority Students**

3. **Free-Reduced Lunch**

4. **Special Education**

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**Figure 2. Percentage of Low Performing (LP) Students Who Stay or Move Out of Low Performing (LP) Across Three Years**

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**Implications for Instruction and Assessment**

The findings indicate that male students, minority students, and students from low socio-economic backgrounds were more likely to be persistently low performing (PLP). PLP students included both students who qualified for special education services and general education students. Also, many low performing students do not become PLP, and student age did not seem to affect likelihood of becoming PLP. In some cases states may have an accommodations or instructional issue rather than an assessment issue. Some low performing students may not have had access to grade-level content which is another requirement of the federal regulations. Focusing on ensuring that students are being taught well should be a top priority.

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**Definitions**

**Persistently low performing (PLP):** Students who scored at the 10th percentile or below on the statewide assessment for three consecutive years.

**Low performing (LP):** Students who scored at the 10th percentile or below in any one of the three years.

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*Tennessee is the fifth member of the GSEG consortium. Four states' data are presented because full population data was not available for Tennessee when this analysis was conducted.*