

## US DOE Awards Grants to Improve Assessments for Students with Disabilities

Rhode Island is one of 19 states that is part of the National Center and State Collaborative Partnership (NCSC) that has been awarded \$45 million to develop a new generation of alternate assessments for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The grant award was received from US DOE's Office of Special Education Program.

The NCSC partnership is focused on alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards. Alternate assessments are used to evaluate the performance of students who are unable to participate in general state assessments even with accommodations and will be aligned to the common set of college-and career-ready standards that were recently approved by the Board of Regents.

The alternate assessments are expected to align with the assessment systems being developed by the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), recent awardees of the Race to the Top Assessment program grant. The new alternate assessments will be ready for use by the 2014-15 school year.

The National Center and State Collaborative Partnership will be led by the National Center on Educational Outcomes at the University of Minnesota. Its membership is comprised of Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana, Massachusetts, North Dakota, Nevada, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Wyoming and six United States entities in the Pacific Rim.

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