

HIGH-STAKES TESTING OF STUDENTS  
WITH DISABILITIES

by

Kristi Marie Teed

A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the  
Master of Science Degree  
With a Major in

School Psychology

Approved 2 Semester Credits

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Investigation Advisor

The Graduate School  
University of Wisconsin-Stout  
August, 2001

# High-Stakes Testing of Students with Disabilities 1

The Graduate School  
University of Wisconsin-Stout  
Menomonie, WI 54751

## ABSTRACT

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Teed	Kristi	M.
(Writer) (Last Name)	(First)	(Initial)

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High-Stakes Testing of Students with Disabilities  
(Title)

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School Psychology	Scott Orme, Ph. D.	August 2001	34
(Graduate Major) (Research Advisor)		(Month/Year)	(No. of Pages)

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Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Fifth Edition  
(Name of Style Manual Used in this Study)

The proposed study consists of a literature review on the topic of high-stakes testing and the implications of those tests on students with disabilities. The study will touch on subtopics such as the premise of high-stakes testing, test validity issues, advantages and disadvantages of including students with disabilities in high-stakes exams, and teacher roles in ensuring that high-stake exams are fairly administered to students with disabilities. The purpose of this paper is to propose a study examining teacher knowledge of appropriate testing accommodations for students with disabilities.

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## Chapter One

### *Introduction*

Beginning in the 2002-2003 academic school year, schools in Wisconsin will begin administering high school graduation exams that students are required to pass in order to receive a diploma (Wisconsin State Statute 118.30). Like many other states, Wisconsin will require students to prove that they have mastered basic skills required for receipt of a high school diploma by passing a basic competency exam.

Tests such as those that determine mastery of academic standards required for graduation are known as high-stakes tests. The term high stakes implies that gains or losses can be derived from test performance (Cochran-Smith, 2000). Tests that are part of graduation requirements can be thought of as high stakes because the outcome of an individual's performance may mean the gain or loss of a high school diploma.

Much of the support for high-stakes testing is a result of a political push for accountability and measurement of standards in education. During the 1990s many states developed specific standards for skills that they wanted students to accomplish, as well as instruments to measure if these standards were being met (Barksdale-Ladd, 2000).

Much of the opposition with high-stakes testing is not the opposition of high standards, but how those standards are measured. Many experts feel that using a single test score as a decision basis is unacceptable because standardized tests can be limited in what they test and the results can be too easily misinterpreted (Miller, 2001).

One of the education populations that have the most difficulty with high-stakes tests, and that suffer the most negative consequences of these tests, are special education students (Donlevy, 2000). These students already have difficulty in mastering the basic standards of regular education and consequently also have difficulty passing high-stakes tests that are designed for regular education students.

The requirements of the 1997 revisions to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandate that students with disabilities be included in statewide assessments. The problem with this requirement is that many students with disabilities will have difficulty passing high-stakes tests because the test will be more of a measure of their disability rather than a measure of their mastery of basic skills.

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IDEA's solution to making the tests valid and fair to students with disabilities is to include accommodations for testing in a child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Even though this is presented as an easy solution to a complex problem, the actual problem is that many of the teachers who are writing IEPs have limited knowledge of assessment, and of allowable testing accommodations (Hollenbeck & Tindal, 1998). In fact, most teacher education programs have been found to be deficient in their training requirements of assessment and measurement (Hollenbeck & Tindal, 1998). This will likely have significant impact on the validity and outcome of student's test scores, if teachers are not adequately prepared to provide appropriate accommodations. In the case of a high-stakes decision, such as the award of a high-school diploma or grade promotion, an invalid test score can mean detrimental consequences for the student, such as the denial of the previously mentioned awards.

Because appropriate accommodations can have a great impact on the validity of the test score of a student with disabilities, it is crucial that teachers are knowledgeable in which accommodation is most appropriate for each situation, which accommodations are allowable, and how to implement the best accommodation. When teachers are not knowledgeable about testing accommodations, it is unlikely that appropriate accommodations will be made for students with disabilities. Therefore, test scores may be invalid, causing students with disabilities to suffer unfair consequences (Siskind, 1993). As such, it is necessary to assess what teachers know about testing accommodations in order to make sure that they have the knowledge to make decisions that will provide the student with the most appropriate opportunity to participate in state mandated tests.

Assessing teacher's current knowledge of accommodations gained from existing training and experience will determine what further training is needed to ensure that teachers have the knowledge they need to give students with disabilities the most fair and appropriate chance to complete high-stakes exams. This is especially important in the state of Wisconsin due to the imminent high-stakes testing graduation requirement.

Research shows that most teachers have little knowledge of what accommodations are allowable on state-mandated tests for students with disabilities and that they have inadequate training in assessment and measurement (Hollenbeck & Tindal, 1998). Current literature also shows that regular education teachers seem to have no better knowledge of assessment and test accommodations than special education

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teachers who may receive more exposure to test accommodations in special education teacher training programs (Siskind, 1993). Consequently, it is important to determine what knowledge Wisconsin teachers have regarding testing accommodations for students with disabilities and to determine if there is a difference in test accommodation knowledge between regular education and special education teachers.

### *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of this study is to describe selected issues of high-stakes testing. The study will focus on how these issues affect students with disabilities. This study will focus on the following objectives:

1. To explain the premise of high-stakes testing.
2. To identify validity issues concerning high-stakes testing
3. To identify the legal requirements and ramifications of high-stakes testing on students with disabilities.
4. To identify the advantages and disadvantages of including students with disabilities in high-stakes testing.
5. To identify teachers' roles in ensuring that students with disabilities are tested properly.

### *Significance of the Study*

The significance of this study relates to the importance of understanding the implications of high-stakes testing on students with disabilities. Given that the state of Wisconsin has adopted the practice of high-stakes testing for the purposes of grade promotion and graduation, it is essential that educators understand the effects of these tests on all students, especially those with disabilities who may need accommodations. Teachers must understand what accommodations are appropriate and allowable for students with disabilities in order to ensure that those accommodations are included in individual education plans so that those students have a fair chance of passing those tests that have high-stakes consequences.

*Definitions of Terms*

*High-stakes educational decisions for students.*

A regulation, rule, practice, or other activity that does not appear to be discriminatory. A neutral practice may be found in violation of federal law if the practice results in significant differences in the distribution of benefits or services to persons based on race, national origin, sex or disability without a substantial legitimate educational justification or there are equally or comparably effective alternative practices available that meet the institution's goals with less desperate impact (Office for Civil Rights, 2000).

*Accommodation.*

A change in how a test is presented, in how a test is administered, or in how the test taker is allowed to respond. This term generally refers to changes that do not substantially alter what the test measures. The proper use of accommodations does not substantially change academic level or performance criteria. Appropriate accommodations are made in order to level the playing field, i.e., to provide equal opportunity to demonstrate knowledge (Office of Civil Rights, 2000).

*Modification.*

"A change in the test (how it is given, how it is completed, or what construct is being assessed) and work across the board for all students with equal effect. Because lack of interaction between group and change in test, the modification itself does not qualify as an accommodation" (Hollenbeck & Tindal, 1998, p. 2).



## Chapter Two

### *Review of Relevant Literature*

The review of literature discusses the current issues and concerns of high stakes testing of students with disabilities including: premise of high-stakes testing, validity issues, legal implications, advantages and disadvantages of including students with disabilities in high-stakes assessment, and teachers' roles in ensuring that students with disabilities are tested appropriately. The literature dealing with high-stakes testing is broad and includes issues of testing non-disabled students because many of the issues are relevant to all students.

#### *Premise of High-stakes Testing*

In order to understand the implications of high-stakes testing, it is first necessary to understand why high-stakes exams have become a prevalent trend. There are various reasons to explain the recent push in high-stakes testing, including international competition in education, and a means for providing motivation for students to learn (NEA Today, 1999). Other factors influencing the increase in state-mandated exams include reform for higher standards and measurement of teacher performance and accountability (Smith & Fey, 2000).

Even though the practice of using tests to make high-stakes decisions such as those for graduation and grade promotion are a current trend, the notion of testing is not. Concepts of measurement have been around since Babylonian times and formalized testing was used in China since 2000 B.C. (Ittenbach, Esters, & Wainer, 1997). Individuals are subjected to many other high-stakes exams besides those for graduation and promotion. For example, a driver's license exam or college entrance exams yield high-stakes decisions.

Government and policy makers in the United States use high-stakes tests as a measurement tool to describe the performance of the education system. President George W. Bush's "No Child Left Behind" plan proposes that every student in grades three through eight are assessed annually in math and reading (Bush, 2001). President Bush's plan explains that assessment has several purposes including: information for parents on their child's performance in school as well as information indicating how well the school is educating children. The plan also proposes that assessment results will reward those schools who make

progress with additional funding, and enforce consequences in the form of less funding for schools that fail to show progress on the basis of test scores (Bush, 2001).

### *Validity Issues*

Many opponents of high-stakes assessments oppose the president's rationale behind punishing or rewarding schools based on test scores. Those opponents claim that the problem with making judgments based on high-stakes tests lie in the questionable validity of the tests and in the misinterpretation of test scores. It has been argued that standardized tests do not assess what skills are most important, such as higher order thinking (Kohn, 2000).

The issues of validity involve what the test is measuring and how the results are being used. The National Research Council Committee on Appropriate Test Use adopted three criteria to determine if a test is appropriate. The 1999 report edited by Heubert and Hauser state these criteria as:

- (1) measurement validity-whether a test is valid for a particular purpose, and whether it accurately measures the test taker's knowledge in the content area being tested;
- (2) attribution of cause-whether a student's performance on a test reflects knowledge and skill based on appropriate instruction or is attributable to poor instruction or to such factors as language barriers or disabilities unrelated to the skills being tested; and
- (3) effectiveness of treatment-whether test scores lead to placements and other consequences that are educationally beneficial.

The National Research Council Committee on Appropriate Test Use makes the point that if a school is using a test for a specific purpose then it should be valid for that purpose. Heubert and Hauser (1999) report that "Tests that are valid for influencing classroom practice, "leading" the curriculum, or holding schools accountable are not appropriate for making high-stakes decisions about individual student mastery unless the curriculum, teaching, and the test(s) are aligned." (p. 13).

Opponents also claim that factors influencing test scores such as teaching to the test, and the numbers of disadvantaged and disabled students taking the test are not considered in the analysis of a school's scores (Kohn, 2000). Teaching to the test has become a significant part of student's classroom instruction, forcing teachers to focus on teaching discrete facts that will be asked about in state exams, and

forcing them to spend less time on teaching students how to analyze and problem solve (Jones, et al., 1999).

In fact, the stakes of state-mandated exams have become some great that many teachers feel extreme pressure to have their students pass the tests. One study found that 76% of teachers participating felt their jobs were more stressful than before state-mandated tests were implemented and that the program was not improving the quality of education in their schools (Jones, et al., 1999).

Students also feel pressure from taking high-stakes exams. Jones and colleagues (1999) report that test-related stress includes worry over anticipation of testing and emotionality after the test is complete. Test anxiety is a frequent complaint of students and can result in lower test performance.

Decisions regarding grade promotion and graduation should not be based solely on one test score. In fact, many education professionals feel that students need to have more options and alternatives for meeting graduation and grade promotion requirements than passing state-mandated graduation exams (The Education & Research Network, 2000). The Eau Claire Area School District in Eau Claire, Wisconsin has done just that. Eau Claire's new graduation policy as reported in the June/July issue of the School News, students must still meet the 22 credit requirement regardless if they are regular education, at-risk, or special education students. The new options apply to a point system in which students must earn four points from various areas in order to graduate. This policy takes makes the graduation requirements more flexible, and not based solely on the graduation test. Table 1 provides an explanation of point options.

Table 1. Eau Claire Area School District Graduation Policy Point Options.

Option	Possible Points	Procedure
High School Graduation Test	1 point per area	Meet or exceed the standards for each area of the test (Mathematics, Social Studies, Reading/Language Arts, Science)

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Academic Performance	1 to 3 points depending on GPA	GPA equal or greater than 3.5 = 3 points GPA of 2.0 to 3.49 = 2 points GPA of 1.0 to 1.99 = 1 point
Teacher Recommendations	Up to 4 points	Recommendation committee of a minimum of one administrator and two certified staff consider evidence such as: portfolios, projects, community service, work-based learning, and a variety of other student activities.
Individualized Education Plan (IEP)	Up to 4 points	Points awarded based on satisfactory completion of district approved IEP or at-risk program

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*Note.* From “ECASD Graduation Policy”, (2001), *The School News*, 5, p.1.

### *Legal Implications*

One of the major concerns of high-stakes testing of students with disabilities are legal implications. Although Wisconsin State Statute 118.30 states that students may be exempted from state-mandated tests, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act revisions of 1997 calls for the inclusion of all students with disabilities on state-wide tests, and that if accommodations are needed they are to be included in the child’s IEP. In addition, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act also ensure appropriate testing accommodations be made for students with disabilities.

Case law regarding high-stakes testing has ruled that high-stakes tests are nondiscriminatory measures and are acceptable to be used when evaluating students with disabilities. The case *Brookhart v. Illinois State Board of Education* (1983) was filed on behalf of a special education student who was denied a high school diploma based on failure of a minimum competency test, which was a component of the state’s graduation requirements. The court ruled it lawful that students with disabilities be required to meet the same graduation standards as regular education students (*Brookhart v. Illinois State Board of Education*, 1983).

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Important precedents of high stakes testing of students with disabilities were also derived from the Brookhart case. One of these precedents include giving students sufficient notice of future state-mandated tests that would enable them to prepare and learn the skills measured by the test. Another important precedent was the requirement of proper accommodations in testing that would give students a fair opportunity to participate.

### *Advantages and Disadvantages of Including Students With Disabilities*

One advantage of including students with disabilities in statewide high-stakes assessments is providing students with disabilities the same opportunities as regular education students. Before the 1997 revisions to IDEA students with disabilities did not have to participate in assessments designed for regular education students. Consequently, students with disabilities were frequently left out of these assessments in order to ensure that the school average would not be affected.

By leaving students with disabilities out of statewide testing they were missing out on experience and instruction that regular education students received. Regular education students were receiving instruction specific to test subject matter, and special education students were not included in that instruction because they were excluded from testing (Thurlow and Johnson, 2000). As a result, students with disabilities were not being held to high standards to learn and demonstrate their knowledge like the regular education students because of testing (Thurlow and Johnson, 2000).

Children in special education already face numerous personal challenges as well as other challenges that are out of their control (e.g., supervision by uncertified staff and a lack of funding for programs to assist them in their challenges [Donlevy, 2000]). These children should be held to high expectations but without appropriate resources to meet those standards students with disabilities are at a disadvantage. Without adequate instruction these students face difficulty in meeting rising academic standards that are not proportional to the services received. Students with disabilities often face added pressure and higher rates of failure, resulting in higher dropout rates (Donlevy, 2001).

There are several implications of high stakes testing on graduation requirements in terms of the adverse effects that students with disabilities may experience from not receiving a standard high school diploma. Thurlow and Johnson (2000) list many alternate diplomas, but note that some of these options, such as a special education diploma identify and label recipients as having been in special education. It

was also noted that certificates not equivalent to a high school diploma might hinder an individual from continuing with higher education and obstruct them from some employment opportunities. Table 2 lists diploma options that may affect students with disabilities.

Table 2  
Advantages and Disadvantages of Different Diploma Options

Diploma options	Advantages	Disadvantages
Standard diploma or better, single criterion	Provides students opportunity for postsecondary institutions and employment.  Meaning of earning a diploma is clear because there is only one set of criteria.	Does not recognize the different learning styles of students with disabilities.  May result in numerous students not receiving any kind of exit document from high school.
Standard diploma or better, multiple criteria	Recognizes that students have different learning styles that may not align with typical graduation criteria.  Ensures more students will get a diploma than would with a single criterion.	Reduces quality control on the knowledge and skills of students leaving school.  Results in nonstandard sets of knowledge and skills among students, all of who have the same diploma.

Table 2 (continued).

Diploma Options	Advantages	Disadvantages
Certificate options	Maintains integrity of the requirements for earning a standard	May possibly produce students with diploma options who may not be knowledgeable

	diploma.	enough for postsecondary schooling or
	Provides other exit options for	employment.
	students not meeting the	
	requirements for a standard diploma.	
Special education	Recognizes that students with	Identifies those students who received
diploma	disabilities may be working on	special education services, which may lead
	different standards than other	to stigmatization.
	students.	

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*Note.* Adapted from “High-stakes testing of students with disabilities,” by M. L. Thurlow and D. R. Johnson, 2000, *Journal of Teacher Education*, 51, p. 309.

### *Teachers’ Roles in Ensuring Appropriate Testing*

Ethical and legal problems may arise concerning competency of educators to adequately prepare students with disabilities for the graduation exam. The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services verified in a September 24, 2000 memo to state directors of special education regarding district-wide assessments that it is the responsibility and authority of the IEP team to make decisions about what modifications are necessary for students with disabilities to participate in state-wide assessments such as those that determine promotion and retention. It is essential to understand the requirements concerning accommodations in order to ensure the student with the most valid participation in high-stakes exams.

Teachers must be knowledgeable about allowable accommodations because those accommodations included or left out of an IEP influence the validity of a child’s test score. Table 3 provides a list of allowable accommodations. IDEA requires that when appropriate, accommodations are written in individual education plans for students with disabilities in order to provide the most valid measure of the student’s abilities. It is the responsibility of the IEP team to ensure that the appropriate

accommodations are included. However, most teachers who write IEPs have been found to have little knowledge of allowable testing accommodations (Siskind, 1993; Hollenbeck & Tindal, 1998).

Hollenbeck and Tindal (1998) found that of the teachers they surveyed regarding accommodations “Results showed that teachers’ knowledge of allowable accommodations was limited enough to jeopardize the validity of score interpretation” (p. 180). Overall, Hollenbeck and Tindal (1998) discovered that teachers taking their survey reported actually using only 44.7% of the possible accommodations. This may be limiting student performance by not providing them all possible opportunities needed to succeed. They also found that special education teachers have no more knowledge of appropriate accommodations than regular education teachers.

In addition, an invalid score due to the application of inappropriate accommodations or the absence of accommodations may not have merit for appeal because the IEP is a legal document that courts refer to when determining if a student’s due process has been violated. Research indicates that teachers’ lack of knowledge regarding accommodations is so large that the validity of test scores of students with disabilities is questionable (Hollenbeck & Tindal, 1998). This may indicate that some test scores of students with disabilities have been invalid and those students have been disadvantaged due to the implementation of improper test accommodations.

A study by Siskind, (1993) looked at teacher knowledge of allowable test modifications for students with disabilities. The study found that overall, teacher knowledge of accommodations was low. According to the study only 12 of the 60 teachers surveyed would have passed if the survey were scored as a test. The study also found that overall, there was no difference in amount of accommodation knowledge between special education and regular education teachers.

Teachers taking the Siskind study, however, were fairly knowledgeable of accommodations that involved test setting and test scheduling. Participant responses did not show high knowledge of revised test format accommodations or of revised test directions items.

Investigation of Wisconsin teacher knowledge of test accommodations is necessary in order to ensure the validity of forthcoming graduation exam scores of students with disabilities. In order to comply with IDEA requirements teachers need to be trained in how to implement appropriate accommodations that maintain test validity (Huefner, 2000).



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Having an idea of current teacher knowledge will guide teacher training programs in assessment and test measurement requirements. According to an August 24, 2000 memorandum from the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services most state directors of special education found the lack of test measurement training to be one of their greatest challenges regarding the implications that poor test interpretation has on students.

Knowing teachers' current level of accommodation knowledge can also guide the department of education in developing appropriate inservice training for teachers on how to write appropriate accommodations in IEPs. The state of Wisconsin recently implemented a training program that teaches teachers how to assess proper inclusion of students with disabilities in statewide testing and how to properly determine if a child requires accommodations, and which are appropriate.

Table 3

Test Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Format	Accommodation	
Presentation Format	Braille edition	
	Large-print editions	
	Templates to reduce visual field	
	Short-segment testing booklets	
	Key words highlighted in directions	
	Reordering of items	
	Use of spell check	
	Use of word lists/dictionaries	
	Translated into sign language	
	Administration	Oral reading of questions
Format	Use of magnifying glass	
	Explanation of directions	
	Audiotape directions or test items	
	Repeating of directions	
	Interpretation of directions	
	Videotape in American Sign Language	
	Interpreter signs test in front of classroom/student	
	Signing of directions	
	Amplification equipment	
	Enhanced lighting	
	Accommodation	
	Table 3 (continued)	Special acoustics

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Format	Alone in study carrel
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	Individual administration
	In small groups
	At home with appropriate supervision
	In special education classes separate room
	Off campus
	Interpreter with teacher facing student; student in front of classroom
	Adaptive furniture
	Use place marker
	Hearing aids
	Student wears noise buffers
	Administrator faces student
	Specialized table
	Auditory trainers
	Read questions aloud to self
	Colored transparency
	Assist student in tracking by placing students finger on item
	Typewriter device to screen out sounds
	Extended testing time
	Accommodation
	More breaks
	Extended sessions over multiple days
	Altered time of day that test is administered

Table 3 (continued)

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Format

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Response Format	Mark responses in booklet Use template for recording Point to response Lined paper Use sign language Use typewriter/computer/word processor Use Braille writer Oral response, use of scribe Alternative response methods, use of scribe Answers recorded on audiotape Administrator checks to ensure that student is placing responses in correct area Lined paper for large script printing Communication board
Other	Out-of level testing

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*Note.* From “The Use of Tests as Part of High-Stakes Decision-Making for Students: A Resource Guide for Educators and Policy-Makers” by U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, December 2000.

CHAPTER III

*Methodology*

This chapter will consider the implications of past research as it applies to the purpose and significance of the proposed study. Methods to expand upon past research will then be introduced. Finally, anticipated findings and potential limitations will be addressed.

### *Implications of the Current Literature for Future Research*

Studies of high-stakes testing have traditionally focused on teacher and public perceptions. Few studies have focused on how high-stakes tests affect students with disabilities. In fact, Langenfeld, Thurlow, and Scott (1997) attest that there are less than 30 published studies regarding high-stakes testing, of which five focus on students with disabilities.

The review of literature has noted that overall, teachers seem to have little knowledge of testing accommodations that are afforded to students with disabilities by IDEA '97. It has also been stated that previous studies have not found special education teachers to be significantly more knowledgeable than regular education teachers regarding testing accommodations. However, one hypothesis is that most studies regarding test accommodations for students with disabilities have been conducted previous to the 1997 revisions of IDEA, which require the participation of students with disabilities in high-stakes testing, and also allow for accommodations to be implemented. Consequently, teachers may not have been concerned with these issues since many students with disabilities were left out of high-stakes exams.

It is the intent of this paper to propose a study to expand on the previous research concerning high-stakes testing accommodations for students with disabilities. In light of the new requirements under IDEA 1997 (including inclusion of students with disabilities in high-stakes assessments, test accommodations when applicable and appropriate, and the requirement of both a regular education teacher and a special education teacher on the IEP team) current teacher knowledge needs to be considered. This consideration is also important regarding fair and appropriate participation of Wisconsin students with disabilities who will need to pass the upcoming state mandated high school graduation test in order to graduate. Thus, it is the purpose of this study to determine how knowledgeable Wisconsin teachers are regarding test accommodation for students with disabilities in order to ensure students with disabilities will be appropriately tested to ensure valid test results.

*Proposed Future Study*

*Participants.*

The participants in this study will include regular and special education teachers in the state of Wisconsin. Regular and special education teachers from all grade levels including elementary, junior high, and high school will participate.

*Instrumentation.*

The instrumentation that will be used in this study will be in the form of a survey. The instrument will be similar to the teacher testing accommodation knowledge survey included in a study by Siskind (1993). Appendix A provides a list of survey items used by Siskind. The survey will measure teachers' accommodation knowledge by listing various testing accommodations and having respondents mark if each accommodation listed is allowable/disallowed for students with disabilities while taking Wisconsin state-mandated tests. The instrument will also ask demographic information such as type of teacher (regular education or special education), grade level (elementary, junior high, or high school), number of years of teaching experience, and highest degree held. Additionally, teachers will be asked if they have had any previous training in testing accommodations, and if they have any students with disabilities in their classes.

*Procedure.*

Surveys will be mailed to a random sample of Wisconsin schools. The schools that are randomly selected will be sent surveys for both a regular education teacher and a special education teacher. Each potential participant will receive a packet including the questionnaire, a cover letter describing the nature of the study, and a stamped return envelope.

*Data Analysis.*

Participants' responses to each of the items will be totaled and scored. Descriptive statistics indicating percentage of teachers correctly identifying if each item is an allowable accommodation or not will be indicated. In addition, a comparison between the overall scores of special education teachers and regular education teachers will be compared to determine if there is a significant difference between the test accommodation knowledge of the two groups. A comparison of the two group's performances will be

made using t-tests to determine if there is significant difference between the performance of regular and special education teachers.

### *Anticipated Findings*

It is the intent of the proposed study to improve upon past research of the use of test accommodations for students with disabilities. Past research has looked at teacher knowledge of accommodations, specifically knowledge of what are allowable accommodations. The proposed study will investigate teacher knowledge of allowable accommodations by using a revised version of the Siskind survey. It is anticipated that revisions to the survey will elicit information regarding teachers' past training in test accommodations as well as their current accommodation knowledge. Based on previous research, it is anticipated that special education teachers will be most knowledgeable of allowable test accommodations.

### *Potential Limitations of the Proposed Study*

There are four potential limitations to the proposed study. First, due to the participant pool being limited to Wisconsin teachers the results of the study could not be generalized to teachers outside of Wisconsin, however, the proposed study is specifically looking at Wisconsin teacher knowledge for the purpose of determining how much accommodation knowledge training teachers need in order to make appropriate decisions regarding the newly adopted graduation testing requirement.

Second, the instrument that will be used to measure teacher knowledge of accommodations will be a replicated survey from a previous study. This instrument is non-standardized, so conclusions drawn from the results of the survey need to be cautionary.

Third, due to the nature of how the survey will be administered it will not be possible to control for participants seeking additional knowledge than their previous knowledge in order to better answer the survey items. However, the survey will include a statement asking participants to answer immediately and rely on current knowledge rather than reference materials.

Fourth, there may be inherent bias in gathering information through the use of a survey. Research has shown that those individuals who respond to surveys have a vested interest in the subject matter and are typically more compliant and motivated to participate. It is possible that the survey results may be skewed based on the fact that the survey is voluntary.





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Appendix A

*Siskind (1993) Survey Items*

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Test Setting

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Individual Testing

Small Group Testing

Separate Location

Testing at Home

Special Administrator

Special Lighting

Special Furniture

Special Acoustics

---

Test Scheduling

---

Extended Time

Abbreviated Sessions

Testing at Best Time

---

Revised Test Directions

---

Read Directions Aloud

Repeat Directions

Clarify Directions

Additional Examples

Sign Directions

Separate Directions

Appendix A (continued)

Highlight Verbs

---

Revised Test Format

---

Braille

Large Print

Increased Space

Reduced # Items per Page

Enlarged Answer Bubbles

One Line Sentence

Vertical Choices

Loose Leaf

Video Cassette

Audio Cassette

Omit Questions

Cues (Stop Sign, Arrow)

Mask Test Material

Clarify Items

Test in Sign Language

Read Items Orally

Appendix A (continued)

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Revised Answer Mode

---

Record Answers Booklet

Machine Answers

Dictate Answers

Enlarged Answer Sheet

---

Mechanical and Non-Mechanical Aids

---

Magnification

Amplification

Electronic Readers

Optical/Tactile

Place Markers

Braillewriter

Calculators

Abacus

Arithmetic Tables

Typewriter

Word Processor

Large Grip Pencil

Noise Buffers

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*Note.* From “Teachers’ Knowledge About Test Modifications for Students with Disabilities” by T. G.

Siskind, 1993, *Diagnostique*, 18, p. 150-151.