

## **Session D-1: Monitoring Test Administration, Including Special Populations**

**Panelists: *Dan Farley, Tammy Howard, Sharon Hall***

**Moderator: *Mario Nunez, U.S. Department of Education, Office of State Support***

Peer reviewers on this panel discussed evidence that supports a state's demonstration of effective test administration monitoring—both for general test administration and for special populations. Multiple types of evidence that demonstrate monitoring were described, as well as suggestions for the states on capturing evidence of monitoring. This session addressed critical elements 2.4 (page 42) and 5.4 (page 64).

Mr. Nunez opened the meeting, described the session, and introduced the panelists. He noted that critical elements 2.4 and 5.4 can't be separated and noted that good evidence consists of a statement about how monitoring was conducted. Was it by regional centers, by LEAs, or a combination? Explain existing documentation on procedures for monitoring across the state, the cycle for this selection, and the training to conduct monitoring to be sure that assessments are administered with fidelity. He asked several questions to guide the discussion.

### ***What have you seen as a peer reviewer that state submissions do well? Why was it done well?***

Mr. Farley said a good approach to monitoring carries across the entire program. It connects assessment, ELP, and test administration. Test selection policies and procedures are clear and defensible. It includes a comprehensive test administration manual. All guidance documents should be comprehensive and centralized. The states and ED need to speak the same language—that's why these meetings are important. There has to be correspondence to LEAs because they do most of the test monitoring and must be given guidance on it. The parts of test administration and monitoring are how to do it, with whom you do it, whether it happened, and what did you do with the results. This should include test irregularities, such as LEAs you hear from or do not hear from. Mr. Farley said he doesn't expect a specific thing in any review. Schools have contingencies, such as not enough students, so they explain how they dealt with that. To do on-site monitoring well, get the state education agency staff into the schools. For monitoring results, have clear expectations and policies. Then report what was found and what was done with those results. The shift to consortia has changed some things. If you have a TAC, that person could review your documents.

Ms. Hall said it's helpful to look at the framework of what states did before, during, and after the review. States develop policies on participation guidelines, accommodations permitted, and how those are selected, implemented, and monitored. Training must occur prior to assessment. How do you know that everyone who was supposed to be trained actually was trained? During the assessment, you will have a paper review, especially with special education students. The IEP explains the accommodations the students are supposed to have. She said to use 5.4 as a guide. You need to show evidence that the monitors were trained and that they have a way to record observations. The length of time the test was open and available to the students should be noted—was the test compromised? In the pre-test period, document instructions on how to administer accommodations. Both read-aloud and scribe are at risk of unintentionally indicating the answers.

Ms. Howard said monitoring involves a plan, a process, and a discovery. The peer review submission is a reflection of what happened. You may see pieces missing and a lack of coherence. To decide whom to monitor, look at data from the test administration to see who is using accommodations and who has

more irregularities than expected. Audit graduation rates. The goal is to eventually visit every school. The summary is important. It should end with what we want to do, how we will change, and how we will share information. Monitoring before graduation implies that some students may be sent back. On the peer review submission, this must be well thought out, intentional, and have outcomes over the long term that will improve test administration.

***What kind of challenges are there for states to follow proper monitoring for special education students?***

Mr. Farley said the elephant in the room is sufficiency. How many years will it take to review every school in your system? How many schools each year? Provide a rationale for that. Are there strategies for a rationale for sufficiency? You don't have to see them all, but you must see some. But which ones? Some states don't provide a summary for monitoring. The question "So what"? is rarely answered. Anomalies in a system should be noted. Some states look at growth to find those anomalies.

Ms. Howard said the biggest challenge is the capacity to do the monitoring. The second challenge is to do it. A change in personnel can mean "drift" of purpose, i.e., when someone leaves, the task is no longer done. To be sustainable, an action must be consistent throughout the system. Look for true intent and effort to have a plan, process, and summary. Understand the challenge. We started with desk monitoring and moved beyond that. Expect some on-site monitoring within the capacity of your state. Provide the context in your state. North Carolina has a transformation staff, but those individuals didn't want to help monitor because they wanted to be seen as a resource. That type of thing needs to be explained. It's important to explain where you want to go and how you intend to get there.

Ms. Hall noted that it's not helpful when all the evidence for 5.4 is thrown into the second column without an indication of what the evidence applies to. In the middle column, add headers that are associated with the bullet. For participation guidelines, say where special education documents are and what they refer to. Do it in an organized way. The following is *not* helpful: a monitoring protocol of checklists, but no indication of submission; documents, but no indication of implementation; documents from past test years—be sure test documents are current; no evidence that training was provided—a statement isn't sufficient without evidence; no evidence of a plan for monitoring (monitoring was only data validation); and a lack of evidence that permissible types of accommodations were available to the students.

***What evidence could be gleaned from technology-based assessment, and what could improve?***

Ms. Howard said it's useful to look at which accommodations were used, but that can be fraught with human error. Technology is very helpful with this. Ms. Hall said data systems monitor preselected things, e.g., read aloud and scribe. Technology simplifies findings from data reviews, such as anomalies and dates, e.g., whether school was open on a certain day. Mr. Farley said the frequency of accommodation use also may be relevant. Oregon has access to available accommodations, but no data for their use. We're not getting that kind of information. One solution is getting more money to have vendors devise additional ways to accommodate students. He said a challenge is connecting the dots to show that the accommodations the student receives are not novel but are used regularly.

Mr. Nunez concluded by offering two tips for states:

1. Submit evidence in an organized, logical manner, organized by critical element.

2. Include the page numbers of documents.

### Questions and Comments

- Mr. Dan Weiner, Massachusetts Department of Education, said this was confusing because it implied that you seek people to monitor the actual test administration. It would have been helpful if one of the elements talked about looking for a plan for before, during, and after the testing. He said they don't want to disrupt testing. Ms. Howard said there are different types of monitoring, and test administration is only one type. That must be separated from monitoring visits related to accommodations and IT. Capacity is an issue, and scale is the important question. North Carolina has 2,500 schools, and they are not monitoring even 10 percent of them. The intent is what should be explained. Ms. Hall suggested looking at the last bullet (administration with fidelity) within 5.4. Maybe there's a way to do that off-site.
- A participant noted that states should provide evidence clearly, but she asked, "To what degree? Do we need sign-in sheets?" She needed more information about type, degree, and depth of evidence. Mr. Farley agreed that degree is hard to measure, but basically, they need to see the process. Sign-in sheets would be more typical for evidence of training. Ms. Hall said 5.4 (on page 64) gave good examples curated by ED. Examples also can be found in 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3. Working in collaboration with ED is the way to go. She said you can get a great deal of information from online tests that is not available for paper tests, and also from the post-documents.
- Ms. Katherine Altmeyer, Florida, asked, "What about accommodations for computerized supports? How do we track that when schools keep the data?" Ms. Howard replied that the game changer is the technology base, beginning with online systems for IT. For many years, information about accommodations was collected on paper. This comes back to the larger context. Schools need the capability to get the data and track it.
- Ms. Shelley Loving-Ryder, Virginia, said there are potential unintended consequences with the monitoring visits. They used to use contractors to go into schools to monitor online testing. However, the observer must be properly trained, and you have to be careful whom you invite into a school. Mr. Farley said that very few states have figured this out. There are also test security concerns about having local staff conduct monitoring. Her state will work with ED on this.
- Mr. Steve Ferrara, Washington, DC, offered two suggestions: (1) Because there are limited resources for monitoring, work through your highest security threats and then design a monitoring program around that; and (2) Because states often do not include data on the test administrator, if you find an irregularity, you have to go to the school and look at all the administrators. This issue needs to be worked out.