

THE SPECIAL EDUCATION MUCKRAKER

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NYS EDUCATION DEPARTMENT FINALLY TO ISSUE DISABLED STUDENT DATA

In a Report to the State Board of Regents put up today, <http://www.oms.nysed.gov/comm/2003/reg403.htm>, New York State Education Department's Commissioner Richard Mills announced that his agency has finally decided to announce its new disabled student outcome numbers. Mills' announcement followed his April 10 release of No Child Left Behind information for all required sub-groups *except* disabled kids. The omission resulted in disabled student parent protests and queries from federal officials.

Since 1998, the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act has required that state education departments release disabled student data at the same time and in the same form as nondisabled kids' numbers. Mills' Report to the Regents gave no reason for his failure to publish disabled kids' numbers on time. An e-mail to an outraged parent from Mills' chief numbers cruncher, Martha Musser, claims that "the amount of data released this year was too great to be discussed in one press conference, the Commissioner chose to save the special education data for a second press conference to be held in conjunction with the Regents meeting on April 28."

NOTE: THE SPECIAL EDUCATION MUCKRAKER does *not* believe that there were too many numbers for our readers' pretty little heads. We posit that Mills wanted to save himself the headache of having to explain why numbers for disabled kids are so dismal in comparison with those for the other No Child Left Behind sub-groups.

STILL TO COME: Will Mills release all the data required by No Child Left Behind and IDEA on April 29? **THE SPECIAL EDUCATION MUCKRAKER** doesn't think so. Historically, the NYS Education Department has failed to make public a substantial amount of information on disabled kids' scores and high school exits, and never did announce *last year's* scores for disabled students on the mandated 8th grade math test. [We mucked about and discovered there was a 9% disabled kid passing rate.] So **THE SPECIAL EDUCATION MUCKRAKER** doesn't think that any State-wide charts will be handed out comparing last year's and this year's disabled student 8th grade scores.

What other information do the muckrakers think State Ed. won't release for disabled student outcomes on the 29th?

- * For each regular "mandated" test, the number of disabled kids who were supposed to be tested and the number of disabled kids whose scores were reported;

- * The number of kids who were supposed to be given IEP-mandated alternate assessments for severely disabled students and the number of such kids who had their alternative assessment test scores reported.

* Graduation and dropout information for each of the 91 publicly-operated all-special education schools in New York. These are operated mostly by the NYCDOE and 38 Boards of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES) around the State.

* The number of disabled kids who graduated with any high school credential whatsoever *and* the number of disabled kids who were put into the "moved, known to continue" category - New York State's fastest growing category for disabled high school-age kids that the feds require to be reported.

Reporters and scholars - take heed: government agencies withhold bad news, *not* good news. Beware the spin. The proportion of disabled kids passing some Regents exams decreased significantly in past years.

THE SPECIAL EDUCATION MUCKRAKER is now online at:
<http://www.specialeducationmuckraker.com>. We'll post alerts and studies as quickly as possible: check regularly to see what's new. **MUCK COMING UP :** The Internet Survey of Special Education Documentation Falsification, Alteration and Forgery - Final Report, *and* a **MUCKRAKER SPECIAL** on US public school district Medicaid fraud - reimbursement for related services not really provided to disabled kids in school. And a note about the Senator who got Medicaid to call off its audit of his State's schools' Medicaid claims *and* US Attorney investigations of potential public school criminal Medicaid fraud.

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