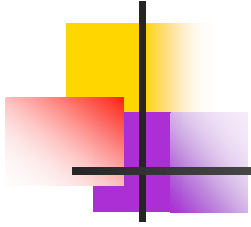


High School Diplomas for Youth with Disabilities

Options and Alternate Routes

Jane Krentz and Martha Thurlow
University of Minnesota



Overview of Topics

- **Diploma Options**
- **Graduation Tests**
- **Alternative Routes to Standard Diplomas**



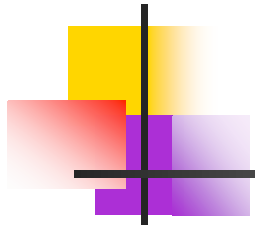
All Content is Highly Changeable!

States are frequently changing their policies, practices, and start dates related to these topics. Thus, important to know when information was collected.

Options – 2002

Exit Exams - 2002

Alternative Routes – 2003/2004



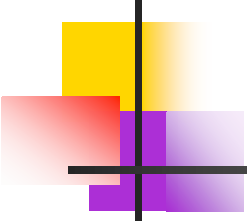
Hierarchy of Diplomas

- **Honors Diploma**
- **Standard Diploma**
- **Special Diploma**

Okay!

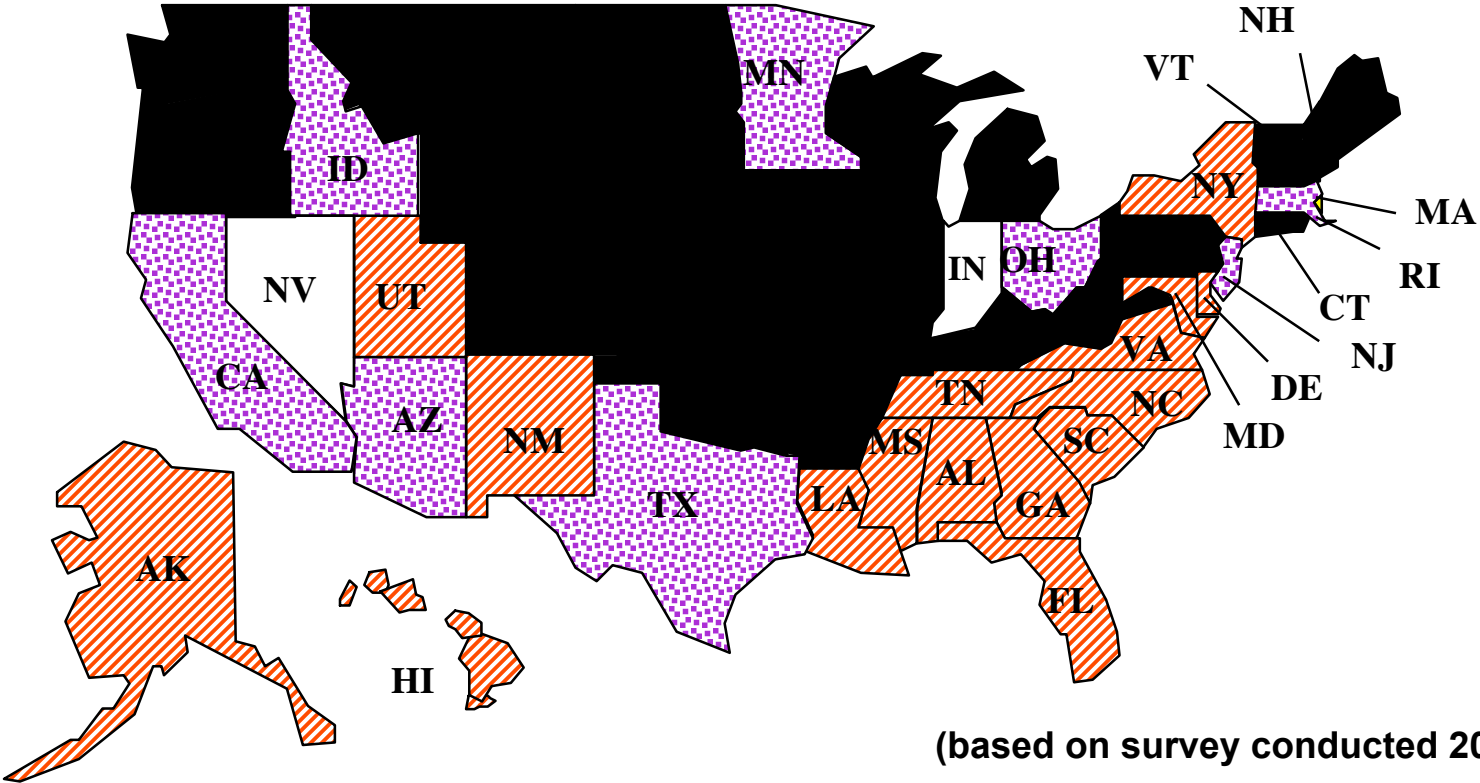





**Not so
sure!**

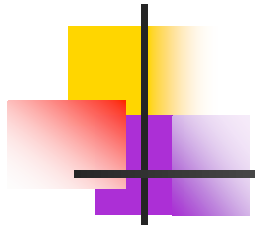


Status of Diploma Options

(in states with state exit exams)



-  Standard Diploma Only
-  Several Diploma Options, Including Special Education Diploma Options
-  No Response to this question



Diploma Options Have Many Names

Graduation certificate

High school certificate

Advanced studies diploma

Alternate completion diploma

Pre-GED/skills option certificate

Certificate of completion

Modified diploma

Modified standard diploma

and more!

States with Exit Tests

Survey Completed in 2002:

26 states (plus the District of Columbia = 27) have “active” or “soon to be active” graduation exams (effective anywhere from 1983 to 2008)

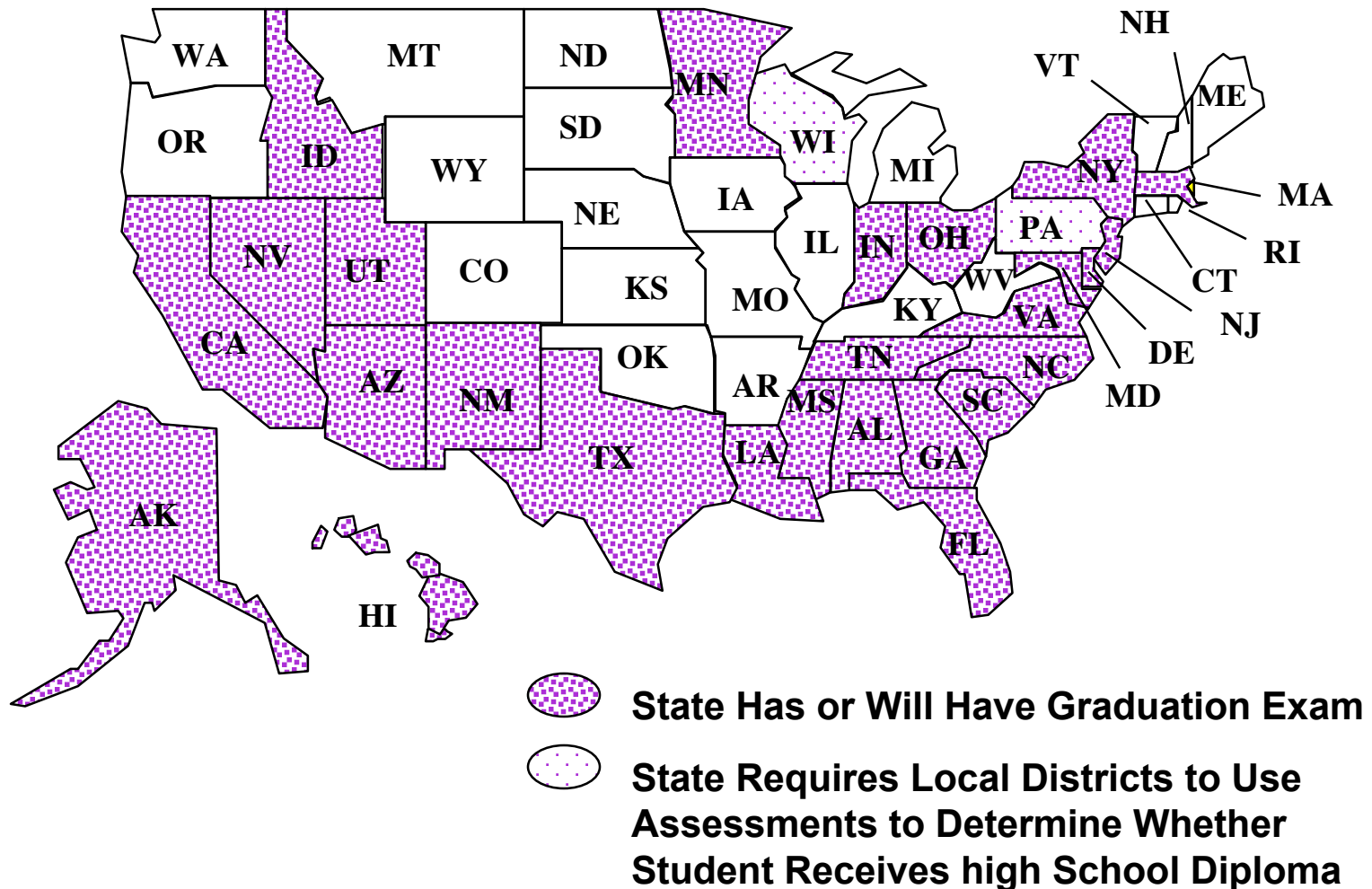


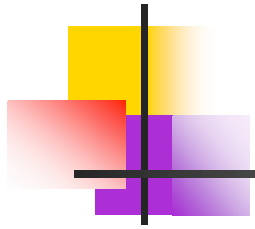
How students with disabilities factor into the exit exams requirements and the nature of diploma options are very –

Variable!

Status of Graduation Exams

Based on Survey Conducted in 2002





Active Now or Soon?

Already Doing

Alabama (1985)
Florida (1983)
Georgia (1994)
Indiana (2000)
Louisiana (1989)
Maryland (1988)*
Minnesota (2000)
Mississippi (1988)
Nevada (1999)
New Jersey (1993)
New Mexico (1987)
Ohio (1990)*
South Carolina (1986)
Texas (1987)*

Just Started

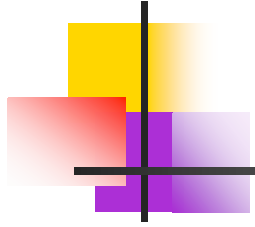
Massachusetts (2003)
North Carolina (2003)
Tennessee (2002)

In the Future

Alaska (2004)
Arizona (2005)
California (2004)**
Delaware (2004)
Hawaii (2008)
Idaho (2005)
New York (2004)
Utah (2005)
Virginia (2004)
DC (2004)

*** Tests or standards have changed**

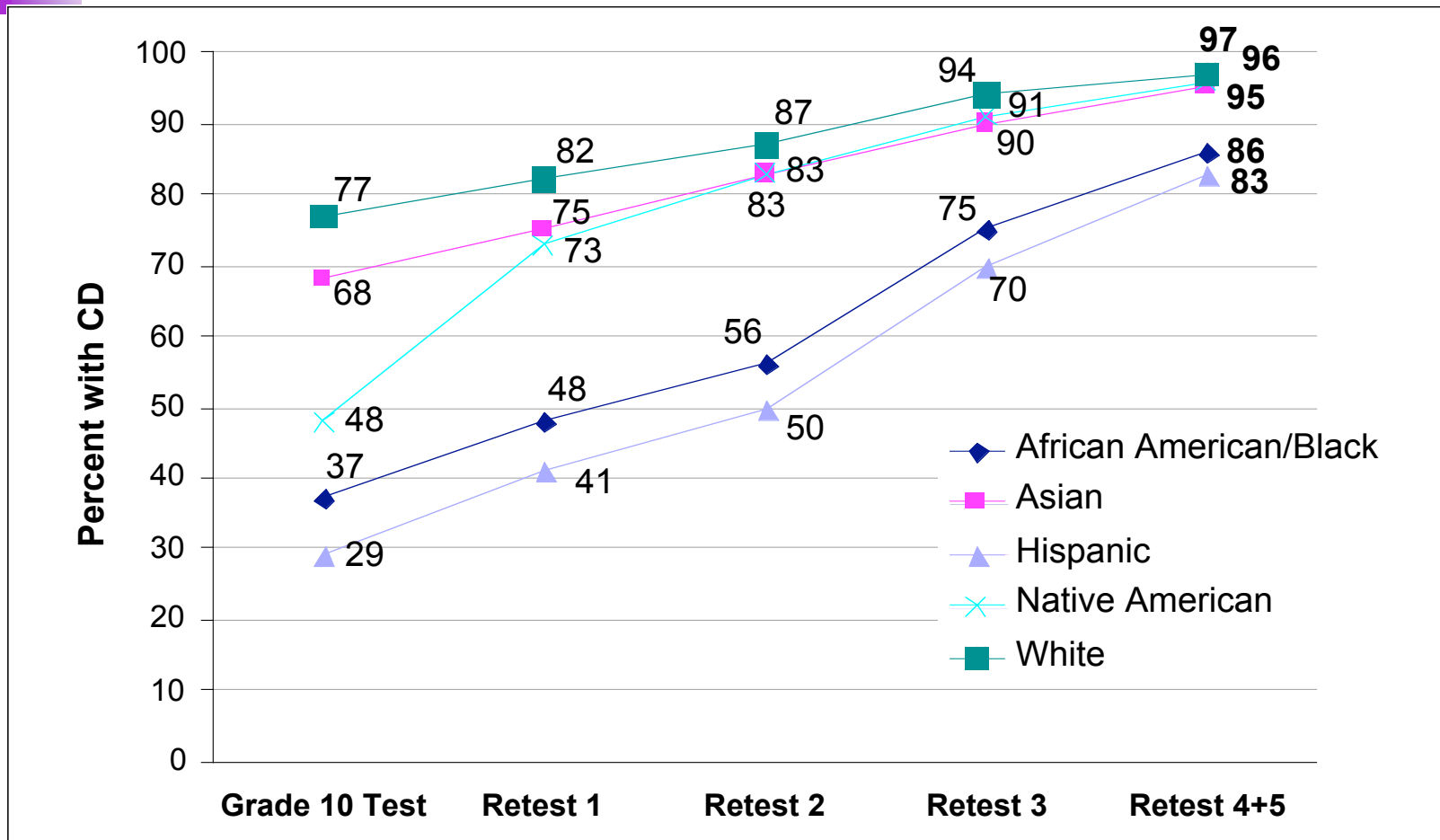
**** Dates have changed since 2002 survey**



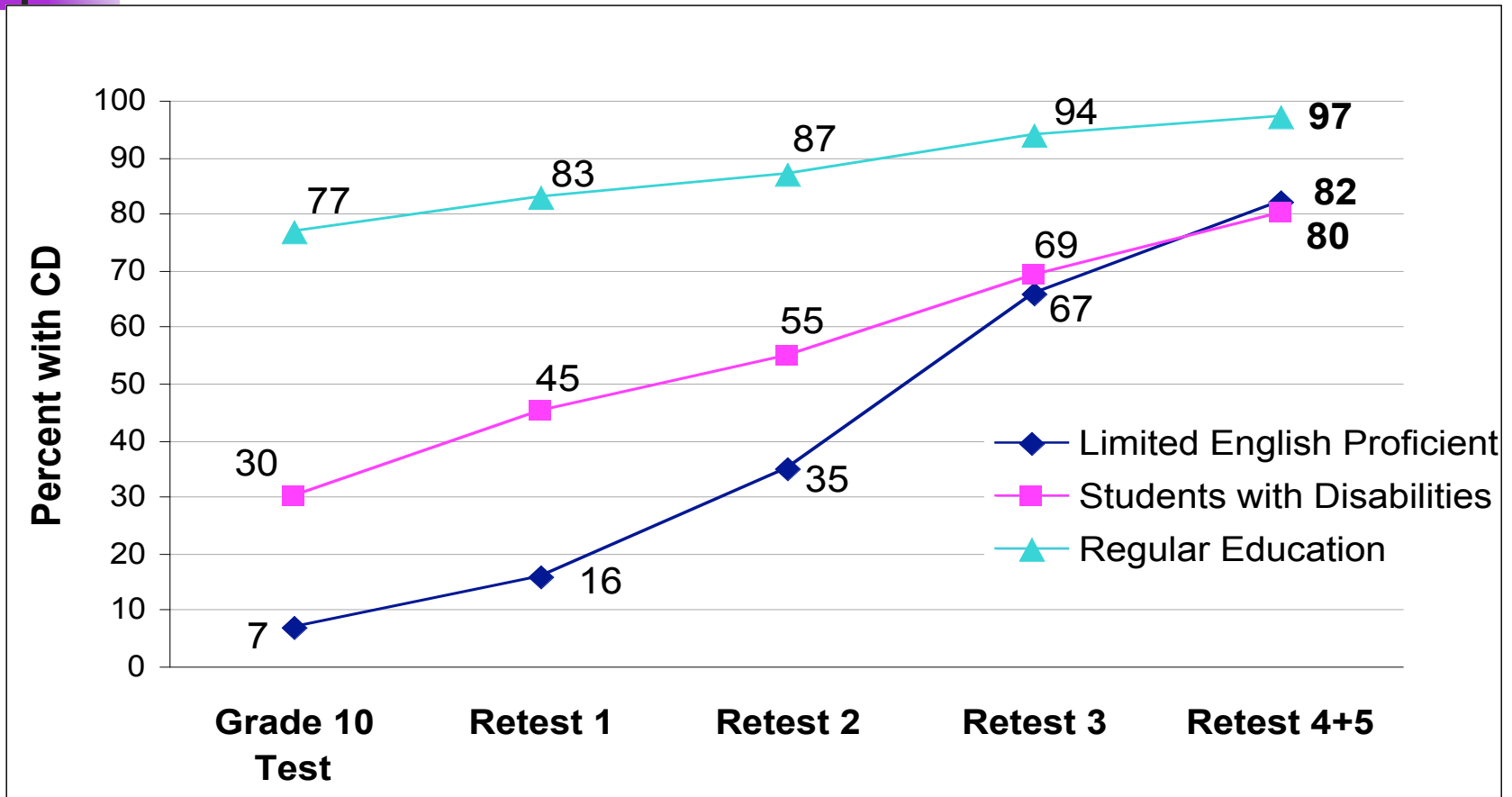
Data on Graduation Tests Show Improvements

For example, Massachusetts:

Percent of Students Attaining the Competency Determination by Race/Ethnicity: Class of 2003



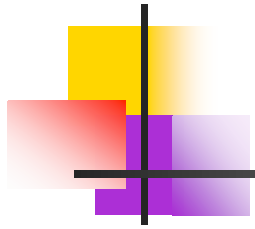
Percent of Students Attaining the Competency Determination by Student Status: Class of 2003





Alternative Routes

Students should have access to other ways to demonstrate that they have mastered the knowledge and skills assessed by exit exams

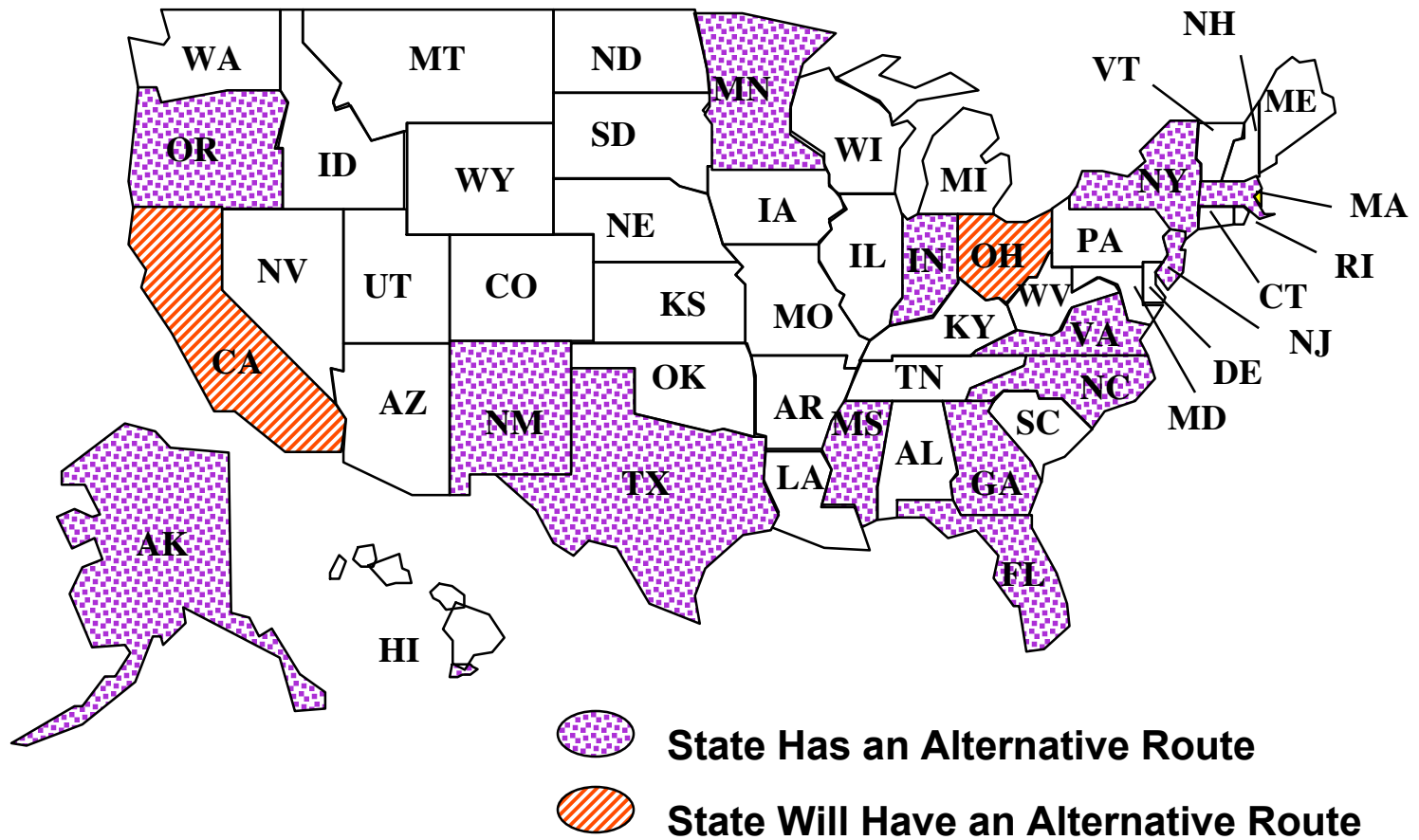


Research Questions

- **Are there alternative routes to a standard diploma available to all students?**
- **What about students with disabilities?**

Alternative Routes to a Standard Diploma

Based on information collected in 2003/2004





Alternative Routes to a Standard Diploma: Available for All Students?

- **Four states have a process in place (or coming on line) for all students (MA, MS, NJ, OR*)**
- **Three states have a process just for students with disabilities (CA, NM, NC)**
- **Nine states have more than one process, one for students with disabilities, and another general alternate route to a standard diploma available for all students (AK, FL, GA, IN, MN, NY, OH, TX, VA)**

***For Certificate of Initial Mastery**



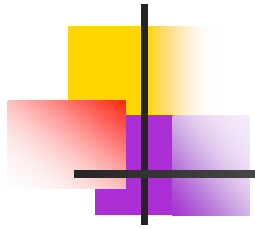
Who Makes the Request for Alternative Route?

- **Student: 4 states (AK, GA, MS, OR)**
- **Parent or Guardian: 7 states (AK, CA, GA, MA, MS, NC, OR)**
- **The student's teacher: 3 states (IN, MA, NC)**
- **School personnel: 1 state (NJ)**
- **IEP committee: 2 states (AK, VA)**
- **District personnel: 1 state (MS)**
- **In Massachusetts, anyone may request an appeal, but only the superintendent of schools or designee may actually file an appeal.**
- **Unclear: 6 states (FL, MN, NM, NY, OH, TX,)- there was no information found on the Web site to indicate how the process was initiated or by whom.**



Who approves Request for Alternative Route?

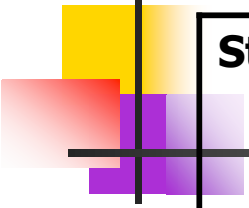
- **Panel of three members appointed by commissioner (AK)**
- **State Board of Education (CA)**
- **State Superintendent (FL, GA)**
- **Conference Committee (IN)**
- **MCAS Performance Appeals Board recommends to Commissioner (MA)**
- **IEP Team/504 Committee (MN, NM, VA)**
- **State Appeals of Substitute Evaluation Committee (MS)**
- **SRA Panel (NJ)**
- **Committee from another school (NC)**
- **Impartial panel of Experts (OR)**
- **Unclear (NY, OH, TX)**



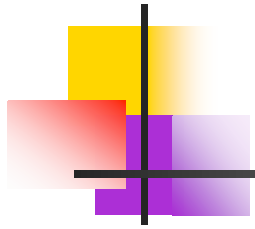
What is the Rigor of the Alternative Routes?

- **Do alternative routes require less rigor than the general route to the standard diploma?**
- **Does the rigor differ for students with disabilities?**

Options for General Education Students- Preliminary Data 04



State	Different test	Different curriculum	Alternative method of demonstrating competency	Waiver
Alaska				✓
Florida	✓			
Georgia				✓
Indiana	✓			
Massachusetts			✓	
Minnesota			✓	
Mississippi			✓	
New Jersey	✓			
New York	✓			
Ohio			✓	
Oregon			✓	
Texas	✓			



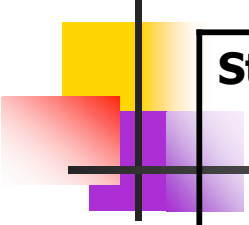
Alternative Methods of Demonstrating Competency – General Education Students

(Preliminary Data, 2004)

- **Different test to demonstrate competency: 5 states (FL*, IN, NJ, NY, TX)**
- **Portfolio Assessment: 2 states (MA, OH)**
- **Comparison with cohort: (MA)**
- **Waiver from exam: 2 states (AK, GA)**
- **District may establish alternative route (MN)**
- **Substitute evaluation with supporting evidence (MS)**

* **By statute allowed only in 2003, currently debating**

Options for Students with Disabilities- Preliminary Data 2004



State	Different test	Different curriculum	Alternative method of demonstrating competency	Waiver
Alaska				✓
California				✓
Florida				✓
Georgia				✓
Indiana				✓
Minnesota	✓			
New Jersey	✓			
New Mexico		✓		
North Carolina		✓		
Ohio				✓
Texas				✓
Virginia			✓	



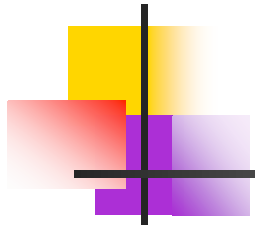
Alternative Methods of Demonstrating Competency – Special Education Students

Preliminary Data 2004

- **Different test to demonstrate competency:
2 states (MN*, NJ)**
- **Different curriculum: 2 states (NM, NC)**
- **Portfolio Assessment: (VA)**
- **Waiver from exam: 7 states (AK, CA, FL,
GA**, IN, OH, TX)**

* **Graduation test may be modified or scores may be lowered**

** **For swd with no means of written communication due to
severe physical disability**



For more information:

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University of Minnesota, 350 Elliott Hall**

75 East River Road

Minneapolis, MN 55455

Phone: 612-624-4073, Fax: 612-624-0879

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