

Student Group N-Size

ESSA requires states to make assessment data for all students and all student groups public. Each state has to decide the minimum number of students needed in a group to report assessment scores and the minimum number of students needed to make accountability determinations about schools. This number of students—or N-size—could be the same or different for reporting and accountability. Vermont is using an N-size of **11 for reporting** student data to the public and **25 for accountability** determinations. Appropriate school staff will be able to see student data for groups fewer than 11.

Student Privacy and Public Reporting



Privacy of identifiable student information is a both a legal and ethical priority of the state. It is also a priority to share as much data with the public as possible.

To meet both of these obligations the AOE suppresses all aggregate counts of confidential student information that are fewer than 11, the number identified to ensure student protection consistent with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Accountability Determinations

In setting a N-size for accountability determinations, the AOE had to balance competing desires. Our small schools suggest that a low N-size is more feasible. A larger N-size is more statistically reliable and less prone to influence by the achievement of a few outlying students.

In setting our accountability N-size at 25, we sought the insights of stakeholders across the state. Many desired a smaller N to include more data. Many sought a larger N for more statistical reliability. Based on this feedback, we moved our N-size for accountability from 40 to 25 students.

Historically Marginalized Student Group

Due to the small size of many Vermont schools, student group data is often suppressed and communities lack the data to support the achievement of many student groups this law was intended to support (racial/ethnic groups, students with disabilities, English learners, and students in poverty).

To address the problem, Vermont has added a “Historically Marginalized Student” (HMS) group to student groups measured. HMS is the aggregation of all student groups historically underserved by educational institutions and exists to measure how well schools meet the needs of these students.

