



Test Access & Accommodations

for Students with Disabilities

Policy and Tools to Guide
Decision-Making and Implementation [PDF](#) (578KB)

The University of the State of New York
The State Education Department
Office of Vocational and Education Services
for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID)

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Dear School Personnel and Parents:

All students, including students with disabilities, are expected to learn and achieve high standards. To meet this goal, students with disabilities must have access to general education curriculum courses, electives and required assessments. This was affirmed in 1997 when the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was amended to require that students with disabilities, including students with severe cognitive disabilities through the development of a State alternate assessment, participate in State and districtwide assessments. IDEA 2004 further strengthened this requirement by adding several new provisions that will ensure that students have access to State tests and that test results are valid and reliable. These provisions include the requirement that State and local districts develop guidelines for the provision of appropriate testing accommodations and, to the extent feasible, use universal design principles in developing and administering State and districtwide tests. These efforts are also consistent with the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which requires each State to implement a system of accountability for schools and districts that is designed to ensure that all children perform at or above proficiency on state academic achievement standards and state assessments.

Many students with disabilities will require testing accommodations in order to participate in testing programs on an equal basis with their nondisabled peers. Such accommodations provide students with the ability to demonstrate mastery of skills and attainment of knowledge without being limited or unfairly restricted due to the effects of a disability.

This manual provides information and tools to assist Committees on Special Education (CSEs) and Section 504 Multidisciplinary Teams (MDT) in making appropriate decisions for determining needed testing accommodations for individual students with disabilities. The manual also provides policy and guidelines for documenting and implementing testing accommodations for classroom, districtwide and State assessments. This document is intended to be used in conjunction with the following documents:

- **School Administrator's Manuals distributed by the Office of State Assessment for:**
 - *Elementary and Intermediate-Level Tests* - <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/apda/>
- *Regents Examinations, Regents Competency Tests, and Proficiency Examinations* - <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/apda/>

Please contact the Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID), Special Education Policy and Partnerships at (518) 473-2878 or your Regional Office of Special Education Quality Assurance listed in the Resource section of this manual if you have any questions regarding testing accommodations.

Sincerely,

James P. DeLorenzo

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/policy/testaccess/manual506.pdf>