



**T**EST **A**CCCESS  
& **A**CCOMMODATIONS  
for Students with Disabilities

**Tools to Guide Decision-Making**

**The University of the State of New York  
The State Education Department  
Office of Vocational and Education Services  
for Individuals with Disabilities  
October 2003  
Updated August 2004**



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF  
NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

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October 29, 2003

Dear School Personnel and Parents:

Many students with disabilities 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.

The purpose of this guidebook is to provide members of the Committee on Special Education/Section 504 Multidisciplinary Team, principals, teachers, parents and students with a variety of tools and suggestions for consideration when determining appropriate testing accommodations for individual students with disabilities. This document is intended to be used in conjunction with the following policy documents:

- 1995 *Test Access and Modifications for Individuals with Disabilities* manual, <http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/policy/testacce.txt>
- February 2002 field memorandum *Changes in Allowable Testing Accommodations for the Elementary and Intermediate-level State tests, Effective September 2002*, <http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/policy/changeaccom.htm>,
- School Administrator's Manuals distributed by the Office of State Assessment for:
  - *Elementary and Intermediate-Level Tests* <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/osa/elintgen.html>
  - *Regents Examinations, Regents Competency Tests, and Proficiency Examinations* <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/osa/hsgen.html>

Please contact your Regional Office of Special Education Quality Assurance listed in the appendix or the Special Education Policy Unit at (518) 473-2878 if you have any questions regarding testing accommodations.

Sincerely,

Lawrence C. Gloeckler



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## **CONSIDERATIONS IN MAKING DECISIONS:**

Testing accommodations are changes in the standard administration of a test including testing procedures or formats that enable a student with a disability to participate in assessment programs on an equal basis with their non-disabled peers. Testing accommodations can change the way in which test items are presented to the student, the student's method of responding, the setting in which the test is administered, and the timing and scheduling of the assessment. Testing accommodations do not alter the construct of the test being measured or invalidate the results.

When developing the student's IEP or Section 504 Accommodation Plan, the responsibility of the Committee on Special Education (CSE)/504 Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) is to recommend testing accommodations that will:

- provide students with disabilities access to the assessment program;
- enable students to demonstrate their strengths, knowledge and skills without being restricted by their disability; and
- provide an accurate measure of the standards being assessed so that appropriate instruction and services can be provided.

In making appropriate decisions, the CSE/504 MDT should consider the following:

- the student's individual strengths and needs;
- the instructional accommodations provided to the student;
- the types of testing accommodations; and
- the type and purpose of the tests.

## **Questions to Consider To Guide Decision-Making:**

The following general questions and variables to consider may be used as a first step in determining appropriate testing accommodations for individual students.

Given the student's unique needs:

- ✓ Is the student able to participate in the standard administration of the assessment?
- ✓ In order to participate, does the student need an accommodation in any of the following aspects of test administration?
  - Location/Setting
  - Scheduling/Timing
  - Presentation (i.e., format)
  - Response

- ✓ To what extent does the student’s disability impede his or her demonstration of the knowledge and/or understanding required by the test?
- ✓ What instructional accommodations, if any, are provided to the student in the classroom?
- ✓ What accommodation(s) will focus on removing the obstacles to equal participation that are a result of the student’s disability?
- ✓ What accommodation(s) will facilitate participation that enables the student to be as independent as possible?

### **Information That May Be Considered When Making Decisions:**

#### **□ Know the Student**

Decisions must be made by individuals who know the student’s individual strengths and needs. In making its decisions, the CSE/504 MDT should review all available information including:

- recent evaluations;
- classroom observation reports;
- school records; and
- results of State and districtwide assessments.

Information from general and special education teachers, parents and the student, as appropriate, should be obtained to assist the CSE/504 MDT in making decisions based on the student’s individual needs.

<p><b>Decisions should not be based upon a student’s classification or placement (e.g. “all students with learning disabilities receive extended time”).</b></p>
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#### **□ Know the Instructional Accommodations Provided to the Student**

Of particular importance is knowledge about the types of instructional accommodations the student uses in the classroom in order to learn. Whenever possible, there should be a direct link between the instructional accommodations used in the classroom and the testing accommodations provided during assessment. For example, if a student needs learning materials in large type, they will need a testing accommodation that provides testing materials in large type. Teachers, parents and students can provide important information about instructional accommodations that the student needs to access and participate in the general education

curriculum. Instructional accommodations must also be discussed at the IEP/504 MDT meeting and indicated on the IEP/504 Plan. Instructional accommodations may include:

- changes in the presentation of materials and assignments such as alternative formats, decreased length of assignments and/or fewer assignments, breaking assignment into smaller parts and presenting information in a variety of ways;
- changes in setting such as adaptive furniture or small group instruction;
- changes in timing and scheduling such as extended time to complete assignments; and
- changes in methods of student's response such as use of word processor and providing answers orally rather than in writing.

**Many instructional accommodations provide important information in making decisions regarding testing accommodations. However, not all accommodations used during instruction are appropriate for use during State assessments. Example: The use of word banks for classroom assignments are not allowed for State examinations.**

#### □ **Know the Types of Testing Accommodations**

Members of the CSE/504 MDT should be knowledgeable about the types of testing accommodations. Testing accommodations are often organized into five categories: flexibility in setting; flexibility in scheduling/timing; method of presentation; method of response; and "other" (see Appendix A). Members of the CSE/504 MDT should not be limited by the list in Appendix A, as these may not be the only accommodations appropriate for an individual student. Members of the CSE/504 MDT should also consider how particular testing accommodations might affect the validity of the results of particular tests depending on the purpose of the test and the skills it is intended to measure.

#### □ **Know the Purpose and Requirements of the Tests**

The CSE/504 MDT should be familiar with the examinations the individual student is expected to participate in based upon the grade level the student is in and/or the courses he/she is taking during the school year. The conditions or types of tests should be considered in the formulation of recommendations for testing accommodations. Such conditions may include the length of the test, the purpose of the test, how test items are presented and how the student is expected to respond.

To answer these questions, members of the CSE/504 MDT should have the following information about the tests:

- content areas covered by the test (what standards/skills the test is measuring);
- grades/level tested;
- how the test is administered (length of sessions, setting);
- presentation format (reading passages, listening passages);
- response format and nature of test items (multiple choice, short answer, or essay);

- decisions that will be made based on the scores (i.e., academic intervention services (AIS)); and
- state guidelines on the use of testing accommodations and what may be allowed/disallowed on State examinations.

Once this information is obtained, the CSE/504 MDT should take a second look at the student's need for testing accommodations in consideration of the following:

- ✓ What is this test asking the student to do?
- ✓ What is this test measuring? What are sections of the test measuring?
- ✓ How does the student's disability affect his/her performance on this test?
- ✓ What accommodations does the student need to meaningfully participate?
- ✓ Are accommodations needed due to particular conditions of this test (length, format, etc.)
- ✓ Will the testing accommodation needed affect the validity of this particular test?

For example: a student with a motor impairment may need a scribe for tests requiring extensive writing such as essay writing, but not for multiple-choice tests; a student may need breaks at certain intervals for tests longer than an hour but not for 40 minute classroom tests.

### **Review of the Use of Testing Accommodations**

The testing accommodations that a student may need must be reviewed at least annually by the CSE/504 MDT. Accommodations needed by students early in their school career may not be needed as they gain more skills, knowledge and experience. As they get older, students themselves will also participate more fully in the decision-making as to the types of testing accommodations that are needed.

### **Documentation**

Information on documentation of testing accommodations on the IEP can be found on pages 73-74 of the *Sample Individualized Education Program (IEP) and Guidance Document*:

#### **PAGES 73-74 SAMPLE IEP AND GUIDANCE DOCUMENT**

The IEP must indicate the needed individual testing accommodations, if any, to be used consistently by the student:

- in his or her recommended education program;
- in the administration of districtwide assessments of student achievement; and
- consistent with Department policy, in State assessments of student achievement that are needed by the student to participate in the assessment.

Testing accommodations must be clearly stated to ensure a consistent understanding by the Committee, school principal, teacher(s), paraprofessionals, student and the student's parents. Specific testing accommodations (e.g., use of word processor) should be indicated, not generic test accommodation categories (e.g., answers recorded in any manner).

It is appropriate to indicate the conditions or types of tests that will require testing accommodations. Such conditions may include the length of the test, the purpose of the test, presentation of test items and the method of response required by the student. As examples: a student with a motor impairment may need a scribe for tests requiring extensive writing such as essay writing, but not for multiple-choice tests; a student may need breaks at certain intervals for tests longer than an hour in length but not for 40 minute classroom tests.

A particular test accommodation may also be needed due to and in conjunction with the provision of another accommodation. For example, separate setting may be needed when the student has the use of a scribe. In such instances, both accommodations must be indicated on the IEP and qualifying conditions would be indicated as appropriate.

If it is determined that the student needs a particular testing accommodation for all tests, then qualifying conditions are not indicated or would indicate “all tests.”

When documenting the following accommodations, the following specifications should be included

- When documenting extended time, specify the amount of extended time (e.g., time and a half, double time).
- When documenting breaks, specify the duration of break and at what intervals (e.g., ten-minute break every 40 minutes).
- When documenting directions read or signed or listening passages read or signed more than the standard number of times, specify the number of times (e.g., directions read two more times than the standard number of times provided for all students as per Department directions).
- When documenting separate setting, specify individual or small group.
- When documenting adaptive furniture, special lighting or acoustics, specify type (e.g., study carrel).

Qualifying terms such as “as appropriate” or “when necessary” should not be used on the IEP.

Testing accommodations should not be indicated in a test-specific manner (e.g., “calculator with fraction capability,” not “calculator with fraction capability on Regents examination in mathematics”).

**Example:**

<b>Testing Accommodation</b>	<b>Conditions</b>	<b>Specifications</b>
Use of Scribe	For tests requiring essay writing	
Separate setting	When using a scribe	Individual
Directions read	All tests	2 additional times
Breaks	For tests longer than 30 minutes in length	5 minute break every 30 minutes

## **IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES:**

The school must take steps to ensure a student's IEP is implemented as recommended by the Committee, including but not limited to:

- providing copies of the student's IEP, as appropriate; and
- informing each individual of his or her IEP implementation responsibilities.

For a student whose IEP/504 Plan indicates testing accommodations, building principals must ensure that testing accommodations are consistently administered by appropriately trained or qualified individuals for all classroom, districtwide assessments and, consistent with Department policy, State assessments. Careful planning prior to the scheduled testing date will assure that accommodations are appropriately implemented as specified on the student's IEP or 504 Plan. Among the considerations in this planning process are identification and training of all individuals responsible for implementing the testing accommodations, preparation of specialized materials/locations and arranging for assistive technology.

To assist in this planning, it is recommended that the Committee meeting include discussion and documentation of the steps necessary to ensure implementation of the student's IEP, including, but not limited to:

- identifying staff who will be responsible to provide the recommended testing accommodations in accordance with the IEP;
- designating an individual who is knowledgeable about the student's disability and program to inform staff of their IEP responsibilities;
- planning how resources and materials necessary to implement the testing accommodations will be obtained (e.g., tests in alternative formats; assistive technology devices ordered, training of staff to implement accommodations such as a scribe); and
- arranging, as appropriate, for testing accommodations (e.g., separate setting).

Especially important in this planning process is the training of all individuals (teachers, teacher assistants, teacher aides, test proctors) responsible for implementing the testing accommodations. It is important that testing accommodations be provided consistently for all tests and staff are trained in appropriate procedures for providing certain accommodations such as use of a scribe and tests read.

Testing accommodations must be provided across all placement settings (i.e. special class, general education class) and are not restricted to the traditional school year. Students receiving extended school year services or students with disabilities participating in general education summer school programs must be provided the testing accommodations indicated on their IEP/504 Plan. The school district operating the extended school year or general education summer school program is responsible for the continued implementation of testing accommodations included on the student's IEP or 504 Plan.

## **Use of Scribe or Tape Recorder**

The following procedures may be used to implement the testing accommodations “use of a scribe.” Unless the IEP or 504 Plan waives spelling, punctuation and/or paragraphing requirements, the student must provide all information, including spelling of difficult words, punctuation, paragraphing, grammar, etc. (For the elementary and intermediate State English language arts tests, deletion of spelling, punctuation and/or paragraphing requirements is not permitted and students must provide all information, including spelling of difficult words, punctuation, paragraphing, and grammar for the writing sections of the tests.)

- Scribes must record word-for-word what the student dictates or records, leaving out punctuation and capitalization and circling all words that are difficult to spell.
- Lined paper should be used and the scribe should write on every other line.
- When dictation/tape transcription is completed, the scribe should ask the student to spell aloud any difficult words and the scribe writes the student’s spelling above the circled words. Difficult words are those words at or above the grade level of the test.
- The scribe shows the student the written response and asks him or her to indicate where capitalization, punctuation and paragraphing should be used.
- The student reads the completed dictation/transcription and indicates if there are any further changes to be scribed on the skipped lines.
- The scribe must then transfer the student’s completed response into the test booklet, and staple the student’s dictation to the test booklet.

The accommodation “use of scribe” generally necessitates an alternate location and extended time in order for its implementation to be workable. These additional accommodations must also be specified on the IEP or 504 Plan to be provided. If “extended time” and “separate location” are needed only when use of scribe is required, that must be indicated so that the accommodations are not provided during other times when not appropriate.

Scribes may be teachers, teacher aides, teacher assistants or other school personnel who are appropriately trained and qualified. Whenever possible, the student should have the same scribe for State examinations as they have had for classroom tests or other classroom instruction. In all cases, the scribe must have an understanding of how to record responses using procedures described and be familiar with the test including knowledge of the vocabulary used in the test.

## **Test Read**

(Note: Beginning with the 2002-03 school year, this testing accommodation is not permitted for use on sections of the State Grade 4 and Grade 8 English language arts tests that measure reading comprehension. See February 2002 memo “Changes in Allowable Testing Accommodations on Elementary and Intermediate-level Tests – Effective September 2002” which can be accessed at: <http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/policy/changeaccom.htm>.)

When test items are to be read as a result of a testing accommodation, the entire test must be read including reading passages, questions, multiple choice items, etc. Such content may be read more than once in accordance with the individual student’s IEP or 504 Plan. Students who have difficulty with auditory processing may need content read more than once. To accommodate the individual student’s pace, this accommodation is best administered individually rather than in a group setting. Individual or group setting would need to be noted on the student’s IEP or 504 Plan. Content must be read in a neutral manner, without intonating, emphasizing or otherwise

drawing attention to key words and phrases. Passages and items must be read word for word, with no clarification, explanation, reordering or rewording. The only exception to this may be tests and quizzes that are teacher developed and administered. In these instances, test questions and items may be clarified at the discretion of the teacher because the teacher, having developed the assessment, is best able to determine whether, and the extent to which, any clarification may be provided without compromising test validity. (Any clarification of a question or item on teacher-developed tests is permissible only if it can also be provided to all other students without nullifying the results.) Readers should be trained in how to administer this accommodation in the appropriate manner and should be familiar with the content and vocabulary of the subject being assessed including the pronunciation of words on the test.

### **Revised Test Format**

If the student's IEP/504 Plan requires a revised test format, the principal is responsible for implementing this accommodation. Changes in test format such as fewer items on a page (large-print edition has this feature), increased spacing between items, changing size or shape or location of space for answers, etc. can be made by the school.

For State assessments, any reproduction and/or reformatting of test booklets require the advance written permission of the Office of State Assessment. A request to open the test earlier to make these changes needs to be submitted to the Office of State Assessment. The request must be faxed by the principal and must indicate that permission is needed to revise the format based on the student's IEP/504 Plan. The fax number of the Office of State Assessment is (518) 474-1989.

### **Revised Test Directions**

Revision of test directions is an accommodation that is limited to oral or written instructions provided to all students that explain where and how responses must be recorded; how to proceed in taking the test upon completion of sections; and what steps are required upon completion of the examination. The term "test directions" never refers to any part of a question or passage that appears on a State assessment.

### **Flexibility in Setting**

Setting accommodations can include:

- changes in the *conditions* of the setting, such as special lighting or adaptive furniture, or
- changes in the *location itself*, accomplished by moving the student to a separate room.

Separate setting means a student is administered the test in a separate room apart from the standard setting being used to administer the test. The student can be administered the test individually or in a small group. This must be specified on the IEP. In all instances, the special location should be one that is comfortable and appropriate for test administration. The CSE/504 MDT should note on the IEP/504 Plan the location and the conditions that will address noise and distraction issues.

## **Signing of Listening Passages for English language arts Tests for a Student Who is Deaf or Hearing Impaired**

Students should be given many instructional opportunities to practice listening passages. The following procedures may be utilized only if required by the IEP/504 Plan:

- The listening comprehension section may be repeated more than two times (the specific number of times must be indicated on the IEP/504 Plan).
- The exam should be administered in a separate location. Features required in the location may be specified on the IEP/504 Plan (e.g., minimal visual distractions).
- Passages within the section may be broken into segments for ease in signing, for retention and comprehension purposes and to allow the student to take notes.
- The entire passage may be signed the first time without note taking to assist the student in understanding the total meaning of the passage before it is signed in segments.
- Students may use any form of sign language. (“Language communication” rather than “English communication” is the “receptive” language skill being measured.)

## **Multiple-Day Administration of State Examinations**

(Note: Implementation of this test accommodation requires prior approval from the State Education Department. For information on application procedures see page 17 in the *Test Access and Modification for Individuals with Disabilities* manual at <http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/policy/testacce.txt>)

Important considerations and procedures associated with this test accommodation are:

- Each secondary-level examination must begin on the date scheduled by the Office of State Assessment for its general administration. At the elementary and intermediate levels, the assessment must begin during the testing period determined by the Department on the same day as the general education students’ assessment of the same title begins. In the event the student has two tests scheduled on the same day, both tests must begin on that day.
- Students with accommodations indicated on the IEP/504 Plan that permit extended time or to whom the multiple-day accommodation is made available may begin no more than two State assessments on any single day. Students with either of those accommodations who have more than two State assessments scheduled to begin on the same day must postpone one until the next regularly scheduled examination period (January, June or August) at the earliest.
- The student must receive the amount of extended time indicated on his or her IEP/504 Plan to complete the examination or section(s) administered during a given day.
- Just prior to beginning a multiple day administration, the school must separate the examination into clearly defined sections or parts.
- Students may be given individual sections to complete one at a time and may be permitted to start additional sections only if they are expected to complete all of those sections on that day. This ensures that there will be no advance knowledge of upcoming sections and content of the test not completed on an individual day.
- Students who do not complete a section on the day it is begun are not permitted to complete that section on the following day. (Students may be given a photocopy of previous sections they have begun so that they have access to information in these

sections, but no changes may be made to student responses provided on any section begun on an earlier day or session.)

- On subsequent testing days, the student will be given additional sections to complete. These sections must be provided one at a time.
- In accordance with Department policy and education law, the principal is responsible for the secure handling and storage, and administration of all State examination materials, including overnight storage. Policies governing these aspects of test administration are available in the School Administrator’s Manuals, which may be accessed at:

<http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/osa/hsinfofen/hsinfofenarch/sam2001.pdf>

## SAMPLE FORM

### IEP Implementation Responsibilities

<b>Student:</b>		<b>Date IEP Developed:</b>	
<b>To Do</b>	<b>Assigned to/ Projected Completion Date</b>	<b>Date Completed</b>	
<b>Disseminate copies of IEP to:</b> _____ _____ _____			
<b>Inform staff of IEP implementation responsibilities</b> _____ _____ _____			
<b>Obtain materials or equipment</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Instructional Materials <input type="checkbox"/> Assessment Materials <input type="checkbox"/> Assistive Technology <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____			
<b>Arrange for Testing Accommodations</b>			
<b>Other</b>			

<p><b>QUALITY INDICATORS</b></p>	<p>Recommendations for testing accommodations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Are made by individuals who know the strengths and needs of the student.</li> <li>❖ Are consistent with the instructional accommodations currently used during classroom instruction.</li> <li>❖ Are determined student by student, based on the unique needs and individual learning characteristics of the student.</li> <li>❖ Are not based solely on the student’s classification of disability or program placement.</li> <li>❖ Are routinely provided in the classroom.</li> <li>❖ Are not introduced for the first time during State or districtwide assessments.</li> <li>❖ Include parents (and students, as appropriate) as active participants in decision-making who understand the purpose of testing accommodations.</li> <li>❖ Are made systematically using a standard set of questions or variables to consider in making decisions.</li> <li>❖ Are documented on the IEP or 504 Plan.</li> <li>❖ Are reviewed annually and at reevaluation by the CSE/504 MDT.</li> </ul>
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## **Types of Testing Accommodations and Tools to Guide Decision-Making**

The following tools have been provided in the attached appendices to assist Committees in making appropriate decisions for testing accommodations:

- *Appendix A: Types of Testing Accommodations and Questions to Consider*
- *Appendix B: Examples of Student Characteristics and Possible Accommodations*

Testing accommodations may be organized into five categories: method of presentation; method of response; flexibility in setting; flexibility in scheduling/timing; and “other.” This is not an exclusive list but is one which is most widely used.

**TYPES OF TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS AND  
QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

**FLEXIBILITY IN SETTING**

- Separate location/room – administer test individually
- Separate location/room – administer test in small group (3-5 students)
- Provide adaptive or special equipment/furniture (specify type, e.g., study carrel)
- Special lighting (specify type, e.g., 75 Watt incandescent light on desk)
- Special acoustics (specify manner, e.g., minimal extraneous noises)
- Location with minimal distraction (specify type, e.g., minimal visual distraction)
- Preferential seating

**Examples of questions to ask to determine if setting accommodations are needed:**

- Do others easily distract the student and/or does he/she have difficulty remaining on task?
- Does the student require any specialized equipment or other accommodations which may be distracting to others?
- Does the student have visual or auditory impairments that require special lighting or acoustics?
- Can the student focus on his or her own work in a setting with large groups of other students?
- Does the student exhibit behaviors that may disrupt the attention of other students?
- Does the student require any setting accommodations in the classroom?

## **FLEXIBILITY IN SCHEDULING/TIMING**

- Extended time (specify amount, as in “time and a half”)
- Administer tests with frequent breaks (specify duration, e.g. sessions not to exceed 30 minutes with 10 minute breaks)
- Administer State examinations over successive administrations (permitted for certain RCTs only)
- Administer State examinations over multiple days (requires SED approval)

### **Examples of questions to ask to determine if scheduling accommodations are needed:**

- ❑ Can the student work continuously for the length of time allocated for the standard test administration?
- ❑ Does the student use other accommodations or adaptive equipment which require more time for the student to complete test items (e.g., use of scribe, use of head pointer to type)?
- ❑ Does the student tire easily due to health impairments resulting in the inability to sit for the length of time required to complete the test in one day?
- ❑ Does the student’s visual impairment decrease his or her working rate or result in eyestrain requiring frequent breaks?
- ❑ Does the student’s learning disability affect the rate at which he or she processes written information?
- ❑ Does the student’s motor disability affect the rate at which he or she writes written responses?
- ❑ Does the student take a medication that might require that testing occur during a specific time of day to assure optimal performance?
- ❑ Does the student’s attention span and/or distractibility require shorter working periods and frequent breaks?

## **METHOD OF PRESENTATION**

### **Revised Test Format <sup>1</sup>**

- Braille editions of tests
- Large type editions of tests
- Increased spacing between test items
- Increase size of answer blocks/bubbles
- Reduce number of test items per page
- Multiple-choice items in vertical format with answer bubble to right of response choices
- Reading passages with one complete sentence per line

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<sup>1</sup> For State assessments, any reproduction and/or reformatting of test booklets requires the advance written permission of the Office of State Assessment.

**Examples of questions to ask to determine if revised test format accommodations are needed:**

- ❑ Are instructional materials used in the classroom provided in a revised format (e.g., non-standard print or spacing)?
- ❑ Does the student have difficulty maintaining his or her place in a standard examination booklet?
- ❑ Does the student have a visual, perceptual or motor impairment that requires large-type or Braille materials?

**Revised Test Directions<sup>2</sup>**

- Directions read to student
- Directions reread for each page of questions
- Language in directions simplified
- Verbs in directions underlined or highlighted
- Cues (e.g., arrows and stop signs) on answer form
- Additional examples provided

**Examples of questions to ask to determine if revised test directions are needed:**

- ❑ Is the student able to read and understand directions?
- ❑ Is this accommodation provided to the student in the classroom?
- ❑ Can the student follow oral directions from an adult or audiotape?
- ❑ Does the student need directions repeated frequently?

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<sup>2</sup> Revision of test directions is an accommodation that is limited to oral or written instructions provided to all students that explain where and how responses must be recorded; how to proceed in taking the test upon completion of sections; and what steps are required upon completion of the examination. The term “test directions” never refers to any part of a question or passage that appears on a State assessment.

## **METHOD OF PRESENTATION** (continued)

### **Use of Aids/Assistive Technology**

- Audio tape
- Tape recorder
- Computer (including talking word processor)
- Listening section repeated more than the standard number of times
- Listening section signed more than the standard number of times
- Masks or markers to maintain place
- Papers secured to work area with tape/magnets
- Test passages, questions, items and multiple-choice responses read to student
- Test passages, questions, items and multiple-choice responses signed to student
- Magnification devices (specify type)
- Amplification devices (specify type)

### **Examples of questions to ask to determine if use of aids are needed:**

- What aids are used for classroom instruction?
- What assistive technology devices are indicated on the student's IEP?
- Has the student been identified as having a reading disability?
- Does the student have low/poor reading skills that may require the reading of tests or sections of tests that do not measure reading comprehension in order for the student to demonstrate knowledge of subject areas?
- Does the student have a hearing impairment and need an interpreter to sign directions and/or a listening comprehension section?

## **METHOD OF RESPONSE**

- Allow marking of answers in booklet rather than answer sheet
- Use of additional paper for math calculations

### **Use of Aids/Assistive Technology**

- Amanuensis (Scribe)
- Tape Recorder
- Word processor

### **Examples of questions to ask to determine if use of aids are needed:**

- Does the student have difficulty tracking from one paper to another and maintaining his or her place?
- Does the student have a disability that affects the ability to record his or her responses in the standard manner?
- Can the student use a pencil or writing instrument?
- What aids are used in the classroom and for homework assignments (e.g., word processor, adaptive writing instruments or dictating to a tape recorder or scribe)?

## **OTHER**

- On-task focusing prompts
- Waiving spelling requirements
- Waiving paragraphing requirements
- Waiving punctuation requirements

### **Use of Aids/Assistive Technology**

- Calculator
- Abacus
- Arithmetic tables
- Spell-check device
- Grammar-check device

### **Examples of questions to ask to determine if use of aids are needed:**

- Has the student been identified as having a disability that affects his/her ability to spell?
- Has the student been identified as having a disability that affects his/her ability to compute or memorize basic math facts?
- Does the student have a visual or motor disability that affects the ability to use paper and pencil to perform computations?
- Does the student have difficulty staying on task?

**Examples of Student Characteristics and Possible Accommodations**

Student Characteristics	Possible Effect on Test-taking	Possible Accommodations
<p>Poor attention/distractibility. Has difficulty remaining on task.</p>	<p>May have difficulty concentrating on test items for extended lengths of time and completing exam in allotted time. May be distracted by other students.</p> <p>May have difficulty following or remembering directions.</p> <p>May have difficulty dividing attention between test booklet and recording answers on a separate answer sheet.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Separate setting free from distractions</li> <li>● On-task focusing prompts</li> <li>● Provide breaks during exam period</li> <li>● Extended time</li> <li>● Directions read more than standard number of times</li> <li>● Directions provided for each page of questions</li> <li>● Directions simplified</li> <li>● Record answers directly in test booklet</li> </ul>
<p>Processes written information at a slow rate.</p>	<p>May not be able to complete exam within standard timeframe.</p> <p>May become fatigued/distracted.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Extended time</li> <li>● Separate setting</li> <li>● Directions read</li> <li>● Tests read orally*</li> </ul>
<p>Poor physical /motor coordination /writing difficulties.</p>	<p>Difficulty or unable to record responses using paper and pencil in standard manner.</p> <p>Difficulty recording answers on a separate answer sheet.</p> <p>Writing tasks completed at a slow rate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use of computer/word processor or other writing aids.</li> <li>● Respond orally to scribe</li> <li>● Separate setting when using scribe</li> <li>● Use of adaptive writing utensils</li> <li>● Record answers directly in test booklet</li> <li>● Allow additional space for writing</li> <li>● Extended time</li> </ul>

Student Characteristics	Possible Effect on Test-taking	Possible Accommodations
	Difficulty or unable to use paper and pencil to solve computations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use of calculator/math tables*</li> <li>● Use of graph paper to align numbers when doing computations</li> </ul>
Difficulty following/understanding directions.	<p>May not understand what the test requires them to do.</p> <p>May have difficulty remembering directions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Directions read orally</li> <li>● Directions simplified</li> <li>● Additional examples of directions provided</li> <li>● Key words or phrases of directions highlighted</li> <li>● Directions reread for each page of questions</li> </ul>
Visual impairments	<p>Unable to or has difficulty accessing test in standard print format and requires tactile or oral means to obtain information.</p> <p>May have low or limited vision and has difficulty with standard print.</p> <p>Unable to use paper and pencil to solve computations</p> <p>Difficulty tracking from test to answer sheet.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Braille</li> <li>● Tests read orally*</li> <li>● Tape recorder</li> <li>● Large type</li> <li>● Magnifier</li> <li>● Tests read when fatigue sets in due to eye strain*</li> <li>● Special desk or book stand to hold materials for easier reading</li> <li>● Extended time</li> <li>● Increase spacing between test items</li> <li>● Fewer items per page</li> <li>● Use of calculator/talking calculator*</li> <li>● Use of graph paper to align numbers</li> <li>● Record answers on test booklet</li> <li>● Templates to reduce visible print</li> </ul>

Student Characteristics	Possible Effect on Test-taking	Possible Accommodations
	May have low or limited vision and has difficulty with detailed visual tasks such as printed material, graphs, charts, diagrams, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Highlighting entire graphs to increase contrast from color of page</li> <li>● Special lighting</li> <li>● Oral description of graphs, charts, etc. presented in a neutral manner</li> </ul>
	<p>Unable to or has difficulty recording responses in standard manner.</p> <p>Difficulty maintaining place in a standard test booklet.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use of scribe to record responses</li> <li>● Braillewriter to take notes</li> <li>● Use of templates to reduce visible print</li> </ul>
Visual-perceptual difficulties	Difficulty focusing on individual items if too many items are presented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Large type</li> <li>● Increase spacing between test items</li> <li>● Fewer items per page</li> <li>● Use of templates to reduce visible print</li> </ul>
Emotional/ Mental Health Impairments	<p>Displays test anxiety.</p> <p>Exhibits inappropriate behavior.</p> <p>Administered medication which may affect the student's physical stamina.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Extended time</li> <li>● Breaks during test</li> <li>● Separate location</li> <li>● On-task focusing prompts</li> <li>● Test administered during optimal times when student is most alert</li> </ul>
Health Impairments/ poor stamina	Unable to sit for extended lengths of time without changing position.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Extended time</li> <li>● Breaks provided for rest periods</li> <li>● Adaptive furniture</li> </ul>
	<p>Unable to complete test within standard time allotted due to fatigue.</p> <p>Increased fatigue as duration of taking test increases.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Multiple day testing</li> <li>● Separate setting</li> <li>● Use of scribe when fatigue affects ability to write</li> <li>● Tests read when fatigue affects ability to read*</li> </ul>

<b>Student Characteristics</b>	<b>Possible Effect on Test-taking</b>	<b>Possible Accommodations</b>
Difficulty with reading	Reading skills below grade level of test.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oral reading of tests or sections of tests that do not measure reading comprehension*</li> </ul>
	Slow reading pace.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Test read orally to student individually in a separate location to accommodate individual student pace*</li> <li>• Extended time</li> </ul>
Hearing Impairments	Unable to or has difficulty accessing oral directions or listening sections of test in standard manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of sign language interpreter for oral directions and listening passages</li> <li>• Listening passages may be signed more than once</li> <li>• Written directions provided</li> <li>• Extended time</li> <li>• Separate setting</li> <li>• Amplification devices</li> <li>• Preferential seating in front of interpreter</li> </ul>
Difficulty with auditory processing	Difficulty remembering and/or understanding oral directions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repeat directions more than standard number of times</li> <li>• Directions simplified</li> <li>• Provide written directions</li> <li>• Preferential seating</li> <li>• Repeat listening section more than standard number of times</li> </ul>
Difficulty with math processing/computations	Unable to memorize basic math facts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of calculator*</li> <li>• Chart of basic math facts*</li> </ul>

**\*Except as disallowed by Department policy on elementary and intermediate ELA and mathematics tests.**

<http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/policy/changeaccom.htm>

## RESOURCES

**Books/Articles**

Elliott, J., Thurlow, M. and Ysseldyke, J. *Testing students with disabilities, practical strategies for complying with district and state requirements*, Corwin Press, Inc., Thousand Oaks, California. (1998)

Elliott, J., Thurlow, M., Ysseldyke, J., and Erickson, R. (1997) *Providing assessment accommodations for students with disabilities in state and district assessments* (Policy Directions 7), Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.  
<http://education.umn.edu/nceo/OnlinePubs/Policy7.html>

Elliott, J., Thurlow, M., Ysseldyke, J. (1996) *Assessment guidelines that maximize the participation of students with disabilities in large-scale assessments: Characteristics and considerations* (Synthesis Report No. 25) Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.  
<http://education.umn.edu/nceo/OnlinePubs/synthesis25.html>

**Web Sites**

<http://education.umn.edu/nceo/OnlinePubs/onlinedefault.html>

**State Education Department Offices**

Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID)

<http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/>

(518) 473-2878

Office of State Assessment (OSA)

<http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/ciai/assess.html>

(518) 474-5099

Office of Elementary, Middle, Secondary and Continuing Education (EMSC)

<http://www.emsc.nysed.gov>

(518) 474-5915

Special Education Training and Resource Centers (SETRC)

<http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/lsn/setrc.htm>

## **MORE INFORMATION**

Please note that decisions regarding allowable testing accommodations for the General Education Development (GED), Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT), Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) I and SAT II examinations are made by the following applicable offices:

- Information on allowable testing accommodations and application procedures to request testing accommodations for the General Education Development (GED) tests can be obtained from the High School Equivalency Program Office of the New York State Education Department at <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/workforce/ged/home.html>
- Information and registration materials for taking the PSAT, SAT I or SAT II with testing accommodations are available from:

College Board Services for Students with Disabilities  
P.O. Box 6226  
Princeton, New Jersey 08541-6226

For information on SAT call (609) 771-7137  
For information on PSAT call (609) 771-7070  
E-mail address: [ssd@info.collegeboard.org](mailto:ssd@info.collegeboard.org)

**NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
VESID SPECIAL EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE**

**Albany Site**

NYS Education Department  
VESID Special Education Quality Assurance  
Room 1619 One Commerce Plaza  
Albany, NY 12234  
**(518) 402-3353**  
(518) 473-0721 (fax)

**NYC Site**

NYS Education Department  
VESID Special Education Quality Assurance  
55 Hanson Place, Room 545  
Brooklyn, NY 11217  
**(718) 722-4558**  
(718) 722-4793 (fax)

**UPSTATE QUALITY ASSURANCE  
REGIONAL OFFICE**

NYS Education Department  
VESID Special Education Quality Assurance  
Room 1623 One Commerce Plaza  
Albany, NY 12234  
**(518) 486-6221**  
(518) 402-3582 (fax)

**NEW YORK CITY REGIONAL OFFICE**

NYS Education Department  
VESID Special Education Quality Assurance  
55 Hanson Place, Room 545  
Brooklyn, NY 11217-1580  
**(718) 722-4544**  
(718) 722-2032 (fax)

**EASTERN REGIONAL OFFICE**

**Albany Site (One Commerce Plaza)**  
NYS Education Department  
VESID Special Education Quality Assurance  
Room 1623 One Commerce Plaza  
Albany, NY 12234  
**(518) 486-6366**  
(518) 486-7693 (fax)

**Malone Site (VR District Office)**  
NYS Education Department  
VESID Special Education Quality Assurance  
209 West Main Street, Suite 3  
Malone, NY 12953-9501  
**(518) 483-3530**  
(518) 483-3552 (fax)

**WESTERN REGIONAL OFFICE**

**Batavia Site (NYS School for the Blind)**  
NYS Education Department  
VESID Special Education Quality Assurance  
2A Richmond Avenue  
Batavia, NY 14020  
**(585) 344-2002, ext. 420**  
(585) 344-2422 (fax)

## **HUDSON VALLEY REGIONAL OFFICE**

**Albany Site** (One Commerce Plaza)  
NYS Education Department  
VESID Special Education Quality Assurance  
Room 1623 One Commerce Plaza  
Albany, N Y 12234  
**(518) 473-1185**  
(518) 402-3582 (fax)

**Yorktown Heights Site** (PNW BOCES)  
NYS Education Department  
VESID Special Education Quality Assurance  
1950 Edgewater Street  
Yorktown Heights, NY 10598  
**(914) 245-0010**  
(914) 245-2952 (fax)

## **CENTRAL REGIONAL OFFICE**

NYS Education Department  
VESID Special Education Quality Assurance  
State Office Building  
333 East Washington Street, Suite 527  
Syracuse, NY 13202  
**(315) 428-3287**  
(315) 428-3286 (fax)

## **LONG ISLAND REGIONAL OFFICE** (Western Suffolk BOCES)

NYS Education Department  
VESID Special Education Quality Assurance  
The Kellum Educational Center  
887 Kellum Street  
Lindenhurst, NY 11757  
**(631) 884-8530**  
(631) 884-8540 (fax)