

VALLEY STREAM UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT TWENTY FOUR

DISTRICT-WIDE AND STATE-WIDE ASSESSMENTS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES OR 504 ACCOMMODATION PLANS

Policy 5420

The Board of Education recognizes the importance of offering access and appropriate testing accommodations to eligible students so that they can participate in assessment programs on an equal basis with their nondisabled peers. Two elements that contribute to an effective assessment program are proper use of accommodations and use of universal design principles in developing and administering tests.

Testing Accommodations

Testing accommodations provide an opportunity for students with disabilities to:

- participate in the instructional and assessment program;
- 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.

Testing accommodations are changes made in the administration of the test in order to remove obstacles to the test-taking process that are presented by the disability without changing the constructs being tested. Testing accommodations include, but are not limited to: flexibility in scheduling/timing; flexibility in the setting for the administration of the test; changes in the method of presentation and changes in the method of response. Testing accommodations are neither intended nor permitted to: alter the construct being measured or invalidate the results, provide an unfair advantage for students with disabilities over students taking the test under standard conditions or substitute for knowledge or abilities that the student has not attained.

The Committee on Special Education, the Subcommittee on Special Education or the Committee on Preschool Special Education is responsible for recommending the appropriate test accommodations and including those recommendations on the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individualized Education Services Program (IESP). The 504 multidisciplinary committee will include the appropriate test accommodations as part the 504 plan. If it is determined that a student should participate in alternative assessments instead of the standard statewide or District-wide tests, the CSE must indicate the reasons for doing so on the IEP or IESP.

The recommendations will be reviewed annually by the CSE, CSE subcommittee, CPSE or 504 team. The Board of Education acknowledges the importance of integrating the assessment program with the instructional program and, to that end, encourages effective communication among School District staff so that implementation is consistent and fair. The goal is to provide effective assessments that allow students to benefit from their educational program.

In some situations, a building principal may authorize the use of testing accommodations in accordance with this policy. Those instances are limited to cases where a regular education student incurs a disability, such as, but not limited to, a broken arm, without sufficient time for

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the CSE, CPSE and/or Section 504 Committee to make a recommendation prior to a test. They do not include cases where the student is already being evaluated to determine his or her eligibility for status as a student with a disability. In exercising this authority, the building principal will rely on his or her professional judgment. He or she also may confer with CSE, CPSE and/or Section 504 Committee members.

Universal Design Principles in District-wide Assessments

The Board of Education recognizes the benefits of using the principles of universal design to further the goal of providing equal access to District-wide assessments and to provide the most accurate measure of the performance of all students. The Board of Education directs the Superintendent of Schools, in consultation with appropriate school staff, to examine how universal design principles can be incorporated into the School District's assessment program, and to facilitate its use to the extent feasible. Any steps taken in this regard will be consistent with this policy and applicable State Education Department policy and/or guidance on the use of universal design principles.

At a minimum, the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee will explore how School District assessments can be:

1. made more usable by students with diverse abilities.
2. designed to better accommodate a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.
3. made more understandable.
4. made to communicate necessary information to students more effectively.
5. designed to minimize adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.
6. used more efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of student fatigue.

Cross-ref: Policy 5400 Programs for Students with Disabilities *et seq.*

Ref: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 20 USC §§1401(35); 1412(a)(16)(E);
34 CFR §§ 300.44
Assistive Technology Act, 29 USC 3002(19)
8 NYCRR §§200.1(jjj); 200.2(b)(13,14); 200.4(d)(2)(vi)
§ 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

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