

THE USE OF UNIVERSAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES IN DISTRICT ASSESSMENTS

The Board of Education acknowledges its goal and its obligation to include the widest range of students, including students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency, in standardized assessments. To further this goal of ensuring equal access to districtwide assessments and to ensure that assessments provide the most accurate measure of student performance of all students, the District, to the extent feasible, will use universal design principles in developing and administering any districtwide assessment program.

“Universal design” is an approach to designing and delivering course instruction and materials to be usable to students of all learning styles without adaptation or retrofitting. The Board of Education shall incorporate the following universal design principles into the development and administration of district wide assessments:

1. **Inclusive Assessment Population.** Tests designed for state, district or school accountability shall include every student, except those in the alternate assessments, and be designed to meet the demands of increased diversity amongst students.
2. **Precisely Defined Constructs.** The specific constructs tested must be clearly defined so that all non-construct cognitive, sensory, emotional, and physical barriers are removed.
3. **Accessible, Non-Biased Items.** Accessibility will be built into items from the start, and bias review procedures will ensure that quality is retained in all items and that a lack of sensitivity to disability or cultural differences does not influence results.
4. **Amenable to Accommodations.** The test design shall be compatible with and facilitate the use of needed accommodations.
5. **Simple and Clear, Instructions and Procedures.** All instructions and procedures will be simple, clear, and presented in understandable language.
6. **Maximum Readability and Comprehensibility.** A variety of readability and plain language guidelines will be followed (e.g., sentence length and number of difficult words are kept to a minimum) to produce readable and comprehensible text.
7. **Maximum Legibility.** Characteristics such as type size, spacing, font and paper size will be, to the extent practicable, easy to decipher in text, tables, figures, illustrations and response formats.

4321.6(a)

Legal References: No Child Left Behind Act of 2001
8 N.Y.C.R.R. §200.2(b)(14)

1st Reading June 19, 2007

2nd Reading & Adoption July 9, 2007