

AVAILABILITY OF ALTERNATIVE FORMAT INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The Board of Education recognizes its responsibility to ensure that all the instructional materials used in the district's schools are made available in a usable alternative format for students with disabilities in accordance with their individual educational needs and course selection at the same time as those materials are available to non-disabled students. In accordance with applicable law and regulations, any such alternative format procured by the district will meet the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard.

For purposes of this policy, alternative format will mean any medium or format for the presentation of instructional materials, other than a traditional print textbook, that is needed as an accommodation for a student with a disability enrolled in the school district, including but not limited to Braille, large print, open and closed captioned, audio, or an electronic file. An electronic file must be compatible with at least one alternative format conversion software program.

The Superintendent will develop a plan to ensure the availability of alternative format materials in accordance with the timeliness requirements of this policy. Such a plan will provide for:

1. Preference to vendors who agree to provide instructional materials in alternative formats, and to reflect this requirement in the bidding specifications used for the procurement of instructional materials. The same preference will be given to vendors of instructional materials ordered for the school library.
2. Consultation with appropriate school personnel regarding how students will access electronic files. The district's technology staff will be notified of any need to convert electronic files into an accessible format such as Braille, large print, audio, or alternative display.
3. The availability of hardware and/or software a student with disabilities in need of alternative format materials might require to access the instructional material.
4. The yearly review of the district's ordering timelines for the purchase of instructional materials to ensure sufficient lead time for obtaining needed alternative format materials.
5. Notification to appropriate school personnel by the CSE, CSE subcommittee, CPSE and Section 504 Committee Chairperson whenever it is determined that a student needs instructional materials in alternative format. Such notice also will identify the particular alternative format needed, and any assistive technology devices or services the student might need to access the alternative format materials.

6. Notification by classroom teachers of the books they will be using in class and any list of required readings with sufficient lead time in anticipation of the district's timelines for the purchase of instructional materials.
7. Consultation with the school librarian to make sure that specific library resources required by a student in need of alternative format materials to participate and progress in his or her selected courses are made available to the student in an accessible format.
8. Timely request of state assessments in alternative format.

Cross-ref: 6700, Purchasing

Ref: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 20 USC §§1474(e)(3)(B)
Education Law §§1604(29-a); 1709(4-a) 1950(4-a); 2503(7-a); 2554(7-a);
3602(10)(b)
8 NYCRR §§200.2(b)(10)
State Education Department, Office of Vocational and Educational Services for
Individuals with Disabilities (VESID), Policy 02-05 Amendment to Section 200.2
of the Regulations of the Commissioner Implementing Chapter 377 of the Laws
of 2001: Plans to Provide Instructional Materials in Alternative Formats for
Students with Disabilities, May 2002, available electronically from the VESID
website www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/policy/alterformat502.htm

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AVAILABILITY OF ALTERNATIVE FORMAT INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES REGULATION

The district will ensure that every student with a disability who needs his/her instructional materials in an alternative format will receive those materials at the same time that they are available to non-disabled students. “Alternative format” is defined to mean any medium or format for the presentation of instructional materials, other than a traditional print textbook, that is needed as an accommodation for a disabled student enrolled in the school district. It includes but is not limited to Braille, large print, open and closed caption, audio, or an electronic file in a format compatible with alternative format conversion software that is appropriate to meet the needs of the individual student.

Identification of the Needs of Students Residing in the District

Teachers will assure the availability of instructional materials in alternative formats by anticipating that there may be students in their classes who will require instructional materials in alternative formats. Advance planning in the selection and ordering of books, developing lists of required reading and providing these lists in advance will help ensure that students with disabilities attending their classes receive their instructional materials at the same time as other students in the classes.

If the Committee on Special Education (CSE) determines that a student needs his or her instructional materials in an alternative format, the individualized education program (IEP) will specify the accommodations for the individual student and any related instruction and/or assistive technology devices needed for the student to access the alternative format materials. If the student needs instructional and assessment materials in alternative formats, the CSE should review the following considerations:

- What alternative format is needed?
- What instruction is needed for the student to use the alternative format materials?
- What assessment technology devices or services are needed for the student to access the alternative format materials?
- What supports for school personnel may be needed related to the alternative format(s) recommended?
- What assistance do the parents need to help them acquire skills necessary to support the child/s use of the instructional materials and/or related assistive technology devices?
- What testing accommodations might a student need related to the alternative formats?

Access to and Conversion of Electronic Files

Instructional materials provided in electronic files can offer many flexible options for a student with a disability to access the curriculum when the files are used with a variety of technology and tools such as computer screens using highlighted or enlarged text, screen readers or Braille printers. Students will have access to appropriate software and hardware in order to provide these materials in an alternative format. This would include but not be limited to computers, printers, scanners, alternative keyboards, Braille note takers, tape recorders, screen readers, speaking browsers, screen magnification devices, scan and read, and Braille translation. The district will also access appropriate agencies and resource centers to assist in the conversion of materials into Braille format.

Ordering Timelines

Braille and large-type test booklets will be obtained from the State Education Department for the Intermediate State assessments and each Regents Examination and Regents Competency Test. The Braille and large-type test booklets requested will be included in the regular shipment to the school. These tests will be ordered at the same time that tests are ordered for non-disabled students. If reproduction and/or reformatting of test booklets are required, written advance permission of the State Education Department will be obtained in sufficient time as to administer the test at the same time as administered to non-disabled students. If Braille or large print conversions are requested, the district will request this conversion at least three months in advance of the exam.

The district will inquire of publisher sales representatives about available formats. If the instructional materials needed by the student cannot be purchased in alternative formats, the district will make reasonable efforts to adapt or convert the materials or provide substantially equivalent materials to the student in a format he or she can access. Consideration will be given as to sufficient time to convert these materials so that the student will be able to participate and progress in the general curriculum.

Selection and Procurement of Instructional Materials

The district utilizes a textbook selection committee when considering the purchase of new textbooks or materials. The committee will be informed of the need to give preference to those vendors who agree to provide materials in alternative formats.

When the district selects any new instructional materials for a course, consideration will be given, as one factor, if such materials are available from the vendor in the alternative format(s) needed by the student. Where different textbooks meet the district's criteria for a particular subject matter, the district will give preference to the vendor that agrees to provide materials in alternative formats. If competitive bidding is required for the purchase of instructional material, bid specifications will be drafted to

allow the district to select the bidder who can provide materials in an alternative formats in a timely fashion by making alternative format availability a specification of the bid.

Procedures for New Entrants During the School Year

When a new student enters the district, the CSE will review the student's previous IEP to determine if the IEP has specified the need for materials to be provided in an alternative format. If the IEP indicates that the student requires an alternative format, the district will immediately either provide the necessary software or hardware necessary for the conversion or contact the appropriate agency to either purchase or convert the materials.

If a student requires additional materials in an alternative format, the special education teacher or school psychologist will be responsible to provide this information to the Director of Special Services. The Director will be responsible for arranging the provision of materials in an alternative format.

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