

NYSED Plan for Statewide Education 2012-2020

Pg. 16: Universal Design

The Plan indicates that the State's tests will undergo the scrutiny of full Universal Design reviews. There are no details in the Plan itself as to how this will be accomplished, but for the "comprehensive accommodations policies and procedures" that are supposedly already in place. It is important to note that accessibility of any test necessitates assistive technology and staff that are trained in reformatting, which, traditionally, has not been addressed at the high school level. In order to embrace the concept of Universal Design, there must be a commitment on the part of the test administrators to provide better accommodated testing environments, including, but not limited to, assistive technology, reduced distraction testing environments and extended time.

Pg. 27: Remediation:

SUNY's plan to eliminate remedial learning at the secondary level is occurring at the same time as the effort on the part of the NYS Board of Regents to lower the passing rate on Regents exams for students with disabilities. This misalignment serves to widen the already large gap in skills and instruction that is provided to students with disabilities on NYS college campuses, specifically open enrollment college campuses. In layman's language, if a student with a disability scores between a 45 and a -64 on Regents exams other than English and Math, presupposing that all other criteria are met, the student will graduate with a local diploma and may be eligible for admission to any college with open enrollment admissions criteria. The student with a disability has obvious remedial needs, but SUNY has eliminated remediation from the course offerings, thereby creating a learning environment that is functionally defeating for students with disabilities.

Additionally, large numbers of underprepared students presents a financial crisis for open enrollment colleges. According to the Health Resource Center at George Washington University, the number of students with disabilities enrolling in college is steadily increasing, and 50% of those students are enrolled in community colleges. If the students are admitted to the colleges under the low-pass option, these students do not meet the admissions criteria for SUNY operated campuses, which will create a flood of underprepared students to the community colleges. Community colleges, which are not funded by SUNY or NYS to support this need, as are the SUNY operated campuses and the primary education schools, will face a dilemma of . lack of resources to support the need.