



Deputy Commissioner  
Office of Instructional Support

February 2017

To: District Superintendents  
Superintendents of Public Schools  
Principals of Public, Nonpublic and Charter Schools  
Superintendents of State-Operated and State-Supported Schools  
Executive Directors of Approved Private Schools  
Public School Administrators  
Charter School Administrators  
Nonpublic School Administrators  
Directors of Special Education  
Directors of Pupil Personnel Services  
Chairpersons of Committees on Special Education  
Teachers of the Visually Impaired  
Organizations, Parents and Individuals Concerned with Special Education

From: Angélica Infante-Green *A. Infante - Green*

Subject: Timelines for Transition of State Assessments to Unified English Braille

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide information to school personnel regarding the timeline for the transition of State assessments to Unified English Braille (UEB) as well as to provide information on the ordering of textbooks and instructional materials in UEB code.

The New York State Education Department (NYSED), Office of Special Education release a field advisory in October of 2015 detailing background information regarding the transition to UEB, along with training resources and the production of instructional materials in the UEB format. That advisory can be found at:

<http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/special-education/transition-to-unified-english-braille-guidance.pdf>

The Offices of Special Education and State Assessment have been working together to create a transition timeline for both the elementary- and intermediate-level State assessments and Regents Examinations. The timeline presented below ensures that students will have more than two full years of instruction utilizing UEB materials prior to taking State assessments in the UEB format.

## **UEB State Assessment Transition Timeline**

- 2017-18 and 2018-19: No change to State assessment formats. All State assessments will be provided in the traditional English Braille American Edition (EBAE) only.
- 2019-20 school year and thereafter: New York State (NYS) Grades 3-8 English Language Arts and Mathematics Tests and Grades 4 and 8 Science Tests provided in UEB only.
- 2019-20 school year and thereafter: Grades K-8 New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) provided in UEB only.
- 2019-20 school year: NYS Grades 9-12 NYSESLAT will continue to be provided in EBAE only.
- 2019-20 school year: Regents Examinations provided in EBAE only.
- 2020-21 school year: Regents Examinations provided in both EBAE and UEB.
- 2020-21 school year and thereafter: Grades 9-12 NYSESLAT provided in UEB only.
- 2021-22 school year and thereafter: Regents Examinations provided in UEB only.

Information on requesting State assessments in braille formats can be found in the Office of State Assessment's School Administrator's Manuals on the NYSED website at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/assessment/manuals/>.

For many students who are blind and visually impaired, braille is necessary for the development of literacy. These students must receive instruction in reading UEB and have the opportunity to practice and refine this skill prior to their participation in State assessments in the UEB format. To do so, school administrators and teachers of the visually impaired must order textbooks and related core instructional materials in UEB format in a timely manner. Information regarding Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM) and how to obtain materials can be found on the NYSED website at <http://www.nysed.gov/special-education/accessible-instructional-materials-aim>.

Questions regarding this memorandum may be directed to the Special Education Policy Unit at 518-473-2878 or the Office of State Assessment at 518-474-5900. To ensure dissemination to appropriate individuals within a school district, I ask Superintendents to please share this memorandum with individuals such as Directors of Special Education, School Psychologists, Committee on Special Education and Committee on Preschool Special Education Chairpersons, Directors of Pupil Personnel and Parent Teacher Associations.