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Bureau of Special Education FY'19 Memo #7

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To: Superintendents of Schools  
Administrators of Special Education

From: Office of the Commissioner  
Division of Educational Improvement  
Bureau of Special Education

RE: New Hampshire State Assessment System (NHSAS) and Accommodations

The New Hampshire Department of Education (NHDOE), Bureau of Special Education is providing guidance regarding the New Hampshire State Assessment System (NHSAS) relative to access supports for students.

Similar to the Smarter Balanced Assessment, NHSAS offers three types of supports to help students access the assessment. The available supports may only be used in a manner consistent with assessment guidelines to ensure that participation in the assessment meets the requirements of the ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act). Please see the link on page 2 of this memo for more information on assessment guidelines. The following is a brief description of each support type:

1. Universal tools: are available to all students. Students may access the universal tools as they prefer. The assessment provides these tools automatically. For example, a student may choose access to a calculator. This could be the embedded, on-screen or a physical calculator.
2. Designated supports: are available to students if they are identified by a team of educators and approved ahead of the assessment. An example of a designated support is allowing a student to adjust the computer screen background or change the font color. To access these supports, school personnel must select them for students on an individual basis. For students with IEPs, the IEP team will be the entity that is the decision-making team for students with disabilities and the IEP will be the plan that documents the need for students with disabilities to access the designated supports.
3. Accommodations: are available only to students for whom there is documentation of the need for accommodations. These are identified as necessary for students with disabilities to use in order to access the NHSAS as authorized by the IEP team and included in the student's IEP. If the IEP team decides to add or delete accommodations in the NHSAS, the IEP will need to be amended. These accommodations should be consistent with day-to-day accommodations that are used by the student during classroom instruction and assessment. For example, text to speech either through embedded technology or a human reader.

Please note that to maintain the validity of the assessment tool, the NHDOE has created an approved list of accommodations which may be found here:

[http://nh.portal.airast.org/core/fileparse.php/2173/urlt/NH-SAS-Accommodations-Guide\\_Summative\\_v3.0.pdf](http://nh.portal.airast.org/core/fileparse.php/2173/urlt/NH-SAS-Accommodations-Guide_Summative_v3.0.pdf)

IEP teams are advised to review student IEPs in advance of the assessment to compare the accommodations with those allowed by NHSAS to ensure that they are in agreement.

To assist in appropriately utilizing the supports, the NHDOE has developed the NH SAS 17-18 Accommodations Guide which addresses the selection and administration of universal tools, designated supports and accommodations when administering NHSAS. The guidelines may be found at: <http://nh.portal.airast.org/resources/test-administration-and-systems-manuals-nhsasta/>

#### NHSEIS Revisions

The Bureau of Special Education is currently making revisions to the New Hampshire Special Education Information System (NHSEIS), which will now identify NHSAS as the New Hampshire State Assessment. The designated supports and accommodations that can be found in NHSAS are being uploaded into NHSEIS under *General Accommodations*. This change is scheduled for release on August 9, 2018.

If an IEP is currently being developed or revised, and the draft is completed prior to the revisions in NHSEIS taking effect, the finalized IEP may still include the old assessment tool name. In this case, there would be no need to amend the IEP since designated supports and/or accommodations are primarily the same.

For questions regarding this memo, please contact Rebecca Fredette [Rebecca.Fredette@doe.nh.gov](mailto:Rebecca.Fredette@doe.nh.gov) or 603-271-3294.