

# Urban Pathways K-5 College Charter School

## Board of Trustees Policy

### ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS POLICY

The Board of Trustees of the Urban Pathways K-5 College Charter School (“Charter School”) approves that the CEO or designee shall ensure that all children with disabilities are included in all general state and district-wide assessment programs, including the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (“PSSA”), with appropriate accommodations or alternate assessments where necessary and as indicated in their respective IEPs.

An assessment is a valid and reliable measurement of a student’s performance on a set of academic standards in a subject area that captures the students understanding of the set as a whole and the central concepts, knowledge and skills of each content area. As part of the regulations in place since March 1, 2014, Pennsylvania’s Core Standards offer a set of rigorous, high-quality academic expectations in English Language Arts and Mathematics that all students should master by the end of each grade level.

In compliance with Chapter 4 (22 Pa Code §4.11), the PA Core State Standards are a set of identified learning skills in English Language Arts and Mathematics written by Pennsylvania educators to meet the needs of Pennsylvania’s students. They set the benchmarks and guidelines for what a student should learn and master at the end of each grade level. The PA Core Standards are similar to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Students in grades 3 through 8 will continue to be assessed through the PSSA, which will include material aligned to the PA Core Standards as of 2015.

The Keystone Exams are given in Algebra 1, Literature and Biology and replace the grade 11 PSSA for accountability purposes. The keystones have also been aligned to the PA Core Standards. Therefore, all students with disabilities, except those students taking the PASA, are required to take the Keystone Exams no later than 11<sup>th</sup> grade. Pennsylvania has developed an alternative means for some students to demonstrate proficiency on the PA Core Standards, if needed.

The Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA) is a statewide alternate assessment designed for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Specifically, it is intended for those who are unable to participate meaningfully in the PSSA even with accommodations. By administering the PASA to students with severe disabilities, schools achieve compliance with federal laws and the Pennsylvania School

Code that require that all students participate in the statewide accountability system.

Students who meet the eligibility criteria for the alternate assessment as determined annually by the IEP team take PASA in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 11. The PASA is an individually administered test given each spring to students by their teacher or another certified Test Administrator who knows the student well. Test administration can be adapted so that even students with the most severe disabilities can participate in the assessment and receive a score. Like the PSSA, the PASA is designed to take a snapshot of student's typical performance on a small sample of academic skills derived from the PA Core Standards.

The PASA will only include items related to the Alternate Eligible Content. The educational decisions about content rests with the Charter School IEP team and the decisions are based on individual educational needs and involvement and progress in the general education curriculum. The Alternate Eligible Content is located on the PaTTAN website under Initiatives – Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities.

The Charter School must maintain information regarding the number of children who: participate in regular assessments; were provided accommodations in order to participate in those assessments; and participate in alternate assessments.

The CEO or designee is directed to develop procedures to ensure that students with disabilities participate in the PSSA or PASA and the Keystone Exams to the extent consistent with applicable law.

The CEO or designee is directed to monitor student participation in statewide assessment to foster participation.

The CEO or designee is directed to provide training opportunities to personnel regarding statewide assessment participation in PSSA, Keystone Exams and PASA requirements.

The CEO or designee is directed to make Pennsylvania's guidelines regarding statewide assessments available to personnel.

The CEO or designee is directed to develop procedures to prepare students in test-taking techniques prior to test administration.

The CEO or designee is directed to review assessment data and use data to drive any needed program changes. The CEO or designee is directed to report to the Board what changes are recommended and needed.

The CEO or designee must maintain information regarding the performance of children with disabilities on regular assessments and on alternate assessments.

IEPs must include a description of benchmarks or short-term objectives for children who take alternate assessments aligned to alternate achievement standards. IEPs must, if the IEP team determines that the child shall take an alternate assessment on a particular statewide or school-wide assessment of student achievement, provide a statement of why the child cannot participate in the regular assessment, and why the particular alternate assessment selected is appropriate for the child.

IEPs must also include a statement of any accommodations that are necessary to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the child on statewide and district-wide assessments consistent with law. Under Chapter 4, IEP Teams will determine successful completion of graduation requirements for students with disabilities. Students with disabilities may attain the academic standards by completion of their IEPs under the IDEA and/or Chapter 4.

**TO THE EXTENT THAT ANYTHING IN THIS  
POLICY COULD BE CONSTRUED TO CONFLICT WITH THE SCHOOL'S  
CHARTER OR APPLICABLE STATE AND/OR FEDERAL LAWS, THE  
APPLICABLE STATE AND/OR FEDERAL LAWS AND/OR CHARTER CONTROL.**