District of Columbia
Office of the State Superintendent of Education

CONTENT COMMITTEE REVIEW CHECKLIST

DC Science Assessment

March 29, 2021

Table of Contents

Content Committee Review Checklist	
A.	**Stimuli**
Definition	The item cluster presents a phenomenon or design problem that is interesting and engaging. The information presents an engaging, relevant, and compelling scenario for the assessment tasks.
	A puzzling or intriguing phenomenon and/or design problem is present that is based around at least one specific instance, not a topic or generally observed occurrence.
	Content is interesting and engaging creating a "need to know" with a compelling question or observation that needs to be explained.
	The stimulus is sufficiently rich to drive the assessment task and it is explainable using the grade-appropriate NGSS dimensions (DCIs, SEPs, and CCC).
	Content is clear, free of grammatical/spelling errors, and factually correct.
	Concepts and vocabulary are grade-level appropriate (glossing).
	Information in presented in at least two modalities (text, diagram, data table/graph, video, etc.).
	Includes real/well-crafted data.
	Reading load is NOT excessive for the grade level.
B.	**Items**
Definition	The items present students with two or three-dimensional tasks that require students to make sense of phenomena and problems using science and engineering practices, disciplinary core ideas, and crosscutting concepts.
	Content is clear, free of grammatical/spelling **errors, and factually correct.**
	The item scores correctly. (If the item is a constructed response, the three tasks are clear and distinct, and it would take the average student about 5 minutes to complete all three tasks.)
	The key/rationale/rubric/exemplary response is correct and intelligible.
	For constructed response items, the stem text elicits the response provided in the exemplar.
	Multiple choice, multiple response, and technology-enhanced items are aligned to at least two dimensions and constructed-response items are aligned to three dimensions. The PLD documents are used to indicate alignment.
	The students are asked to engage in the dimensions to complete the task and make sense of the phenomenon or design problem.
	Answers to items rely on data from the stimulus and cannot be answered as stand-alone items.
	Assigned cognitive demand level is correct (2, 3 or 4). CR items are at least a 3. Each item should have a cognitive demand level higher than 1.
	Items do not contain bias (ethnic, gender, or geographic) and/or potentially sensitive or disturbing topics.
	Concepts and vocabulary are grade-level appropriate (is glossing needed?).
	There is a logical flow to the items in the set (observing, reasoning, and communicating).

Sensitivity Committee Review Checklist	
Definition	Assessment tasks should be free from any reference or language that might cause a student to have an emotional reaction during the test administration. An emotional reaction is not limited to negative emotions.
	The content is free from unfair assumptions
	The content does not use uncommon language or dialect
	There are no offensive, inappropriate, negative text or graphics
	The subject matter is not controversial or emotionally charged.
	The content is free from topics that may be sensitive in light of current events unless demanded by the academic standard including: disease, illness, death, unemployment, housing insecurity, financial limitations, socioeconomic struggles, and police brutality.

	Universal Design Item Checklist	
A.	**Precisely Designed Constructs**	
Definition	The item construct is clearly defined so that all irrelevant cognitive, sensory, emotional, and physical barriers are removed.	
	The item does not add skills to those being measured (no extraneous skills tested).	
B.	**Language Appropriateness**	
Definition	The item avoids words or phrases that are sexist, racist, or otherwise offensive, inappropriate, or negative to any subgroup. Language should be simple and clear.	
	The item uses commonly used words—simpler is better.	
	The item uses vocabulary appropriate for the grade level.	
	Idiomatic speech and figurative language are avoided unless being measured.	
	The item avoids technical terms unrelated to the content.	
	The item contains no unnecessary words.	
	The sentence complexity contained in the item is appropriate for the grade level.	
	The item avoids ambiguous or multiple-meaning words (e.g., crane—the bird—can easily be confused with crane—heavy machinery).	
	All pronouns have clear referents.	
	The item avoids the use of proper names. (Such names may be unfamiliar or difficult for cultural subgroups.)	
	The item avoids irregularly spelled words.	
C.	**Gender Stereotypes**	
Definition	The item avoids stereotyping as results of associating genders with certain professions or activities. All groups of society should be portrayed accurately and fairly regarding gender.	
	The item is free of content that might offend a gender subgroup.	
	The item is free of content that might unfairly advantage or disadvantage a gender subgroup.	
D.	**Ethnic Stereotypes**	
Definition	The item avoids unnecessary references to and uses the proper reference for ethnic, racial, or cultural groups.	
	The item is free of content that might offend an ethnic subgroup.	
	The item is free of content that might unfairly advantage or disadvantage an ethnic subgroup.	
	The artwork included in an item adequately reflects the diversity of the student population.	
E.	**Cultural Familiarity**	
Definition	Does not rely on an assumed shared experience that is class oriented or native English speaking oriented. Presentations of cultural or ethnic differences should neither explicitly nor implicitly rely on stereotypes nor make moral judgments.	
	The item does not rely on an assumed shared experience that is class oriented or native English speaking oriented.	
	The item is free from content that might offend a socioeconomic subgroup.	
	The item is free of content that might unfairly advantage or disadvantage a socioeconomic subgroup.	
	The item is free from unnecessary cultural references.	
	The item is free from religious references.	

F.	**Geographic Bias**
Definition	All groups of society should be portrayed accurately and fairly regarding geographic setting. A particular geographic setting should not be used repeatedly, and urban, suburban, and rural settings should be represented across items.
	The item is free of content that might offend a geographic subgroup.
	The item is free of content that might unfairly advantage or disadvantage a geographic subgroup.
G.	**Disability Bias**
Definition	All groups of society should be portrayed accurately and fairly regarding disability. Stereotypes related to any particular disability should be avoided. No undue restrictions should exist in the item that would interfere with the ability of a student to comprehend or respond to the item.
	The item is free of content that might offend a disability subgroup.
	The item is free of content that might unfairly advantage or disadvantage a disability subgroup.
	A graphic representation is used in the items, as appropriate. The complexity of the graphic is appropriate to the purpose—simpler is better.
	The item avoids content that depends on sensory knowledge (such as references to movement, sound, smell, etc.) unless this is crucial to the overall item.
	The item could be put into Braille.
	The item avoids using both O and Q.
	Letter pairs can be easily distinguished when read. (S and T are okay; S and X are not).
H.	**Art Supports Text**
Definition	Art is related to the item and supports the reader when possible. Item text and art are legible and accessible, and art is appropriately placed in the item to support the reader. Art does not distract the test taker and provides a scaffold to overall comprehension.
	All pictures relate to items.
	The item is free from pictorial clutter: All pictures are needed to answer the item.
	Graphics are clear and non-fuzzy.
	Any symbols used are highly distinguishable.
	Visual load requirements are reasonable for the grade level.
	Multi-dimensional graphics and complex shading are avoided.
	Tables have replaced any cluttered graphs.
	Labels read clockwise (as is easier for Braille readers).
I.	**Special Populations Considerations**
Definition	Consideration must be given for maximum accessibility to all students including but not limited to English learners, limited sight, hearing impaired, cognitively challenged, etc. These considerations will assist all students.
	The item contains scaffolding techniques to support student understanding of what is being asked in the item.
	Text is replaced with graphic representations, when appropriate.
	The item is written with simplified text load.
	The item is written with simplified sentences.
	The item has as little extraneous information as possible.

	The item provides context, but it is simplified.
	The item uses smaller or less complicated numbers or expressions where not otherwise required.
	The item avoids negative phrasing or questions; for example, questions are not asked in the negative.