



December 11, 2008

Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond
President-Elect Barack Obama's Education Transition Team



Dear Dr. Darling-Hammond:

On behalf of the National Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Task Force, we are pleased to present a set of recommendations as you and your colleagues prepare for the transition and arrival of President-elect Barack Obama as the 44th President of the United States of America. The UDL Task Force is comprised of 26 national education and parent advocacy organizations representing thousands of educational professionals and parents who work together to improve the academic achievement of all students enrolled in regular and special education programs. The names of these organizations appear on the attached list.

As you are aware, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a research-based framework for designing and implementing curricula—including goals, teaching methods, instructional materials, and assessments—that enables all individuals to gain knowledge, skills, and enthusiasm for learning. As a starting point, it promotes and provides guidance for the selection and use of accessible and appropriate materials to improve learning opportunities for all students. Beyond that, UDL provides guidance that leads to improved access, participation and progress in the general education curriculum.

UDL provides flexibility (in activities, in the ways information is presented, in the ways students respond or demonstrate knowledge, and in the ways students are engaged) to reduce barriers, provide appropriate supports and challenges, and maintain high achievement standards for all students, including those with disabilities and limited English proficiency. Additionally, the use of technology is an important component of UDL, which is consistent with other efforts to provide America's students with a 21st century education. We are also pleased to note that the recently reauthorized Higher Education Opportunity Act includes several important provisions on UDL and teacher preparation.

We are excited and welcome President-Elect Obama's vision and strong commitment to education. Additionally, we believe that many of our key concerns are very consistent with his vision. Therefore, we are pleased to offer the following recommendations for implementation of UDL within the U. S. Department of Education:



1. Infuse UDL as it relates to curricula goals, professional development instructional materials and assessments in key education legislation and regulations.
2. Establish UDL as an allowable use of federal funds related to training, materials and other educational initiatives.
3. Designate, and hold accountable, one key office within the U.S. Department of Education (USED) that has agency-wide coordination capabilities to ensure that UDL is considered in USED regulations, national training and technical assistance initiatives and other applicable programs sponsored by the Department.
4. Expand the coverage of existing federal grants to states and local school districts for training and technical assistance to include UDL. Such actions would ensure that UDL is more broadly understood and systemically and strategically embraced nationwide.

The National UDL Task Force very much appreciates the opportunity to offer recommendations and would be pleased to discuss our recommendations in more detail. We also invite you to review the attached Fact Sheet, and to visit our website, www.udl4allstudents.org.

Questions concerning our recommendations or request to meet with representatives from the Transition Team should be directed to Ricki Sabia, Chair of the National UDL Task Force at 301-452-0811, or by e-mail at rsabiandss@yahoo.com

Sincerely,

Ricki Sabia, Chair
Reginald Felton, Advocacy Committee Co-chair
Nancy Reder, Advocacy Committee Co-chair

Patti Ralabate, Communication Committee Co-chair
Myrna Mandlawitz, Communication Committee Co-chair

National Down Syndrome Society
National School Boards Association
National Association of State
Directors of Special Education
National Education Association
Learning Disabilities Association of
America