

Important Update — Word-to-Word Dictionaries for ACT Aspire

Note: This update is being sent to District Test Coordinators (DTCs) only. Please share the information in this update with all appropriate district and school personnel.

As indicated in the ACT Aspire *Accessibility User's Guide*, bilingual word-to-word dictionaries are permitted as an accommodation for English language learners on the ACT Aspire Writing, Mathematics, and optional Science tests. Appendix D of the *Accessibility User's Guide* provides lists of approved word-to-word dictionaries in tables D1 and D2 and states that the “use of any dictionary other than those listed in tables D1 and D2 is prohibited on all ACT Aspire tests.”

In response to requests from districts and schools, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) has sought ACT Aspire staff approval for word-to-word dictionaries that are not currently listed in Appendix D of the *Accessibility User's Guide*, but which meet the state's definition of an allowable bilingual dictionary for state testing (e.g., see page D-3 of the spring 2015 SCPASS *Test Administration Manual*). As a result, ACT Aspire staff have provided the SCDE with the following statement.

State Approval of a Word-to-Word Dictionary for use by an English Language Learner:

It is understood that the list of ACT-approved word-to-word dictionaries is not and likely cannot be exhaustive in representing all resources that could meet the required criteria. Therefore, if the state governing educational authority determines that a student *is already using and is familiar with* an appropriate word-to-word dictionary that is NOT listed in the ACT-approved dictionaries list, the state may choose to approve the use of that word-to-word dictionary for use during those ACT Aspire content area tests where word-to-word dictionaries are otherwise allowed. “**Appropriate**” here is defined to mean that the dictionary meets all of the following three criteria:

The word-to-word dictionary:

1. must be in paper form (non-electronic);
2. provides only and strictly word-to-word translation; and
3. does not provide any definitions, pictures, examples, nor thesaurus for the word entries.

The state authority is requested to also provide ACT Aspire staff with a copy of the title and ISBN number for any state-approved dictionary.

ACT Aspire and SCDE staff have agreed to implement this newly-proposed state-approval process for bilingual word-to-word dictionaries for the spring 2015 ACT Aspire administration in South Carolina. Any requests for the use of word-to-word dictionaries not currently listed in Appendix D of the *Accessibility User's Guide* must be submitted to the SCDE prior to the ACT Aspire state testing window. The request should be sent, via e-mail, from the DTC to Anne Mruz (amruz@ed.sc.gov) in the Office of Assessment, and copied to Crystal Fields (cfields@ed.sc.gov) in the Office of Federal and State Accountability. The request must include the following information: title of the proposed bilingual dictionary, ISBN for the dictionary, and a statement verifying that the dictionary is currently being used for instructional and assessment purposes and that the dictionary meets all three criteria in the ACT Aspire statement above.