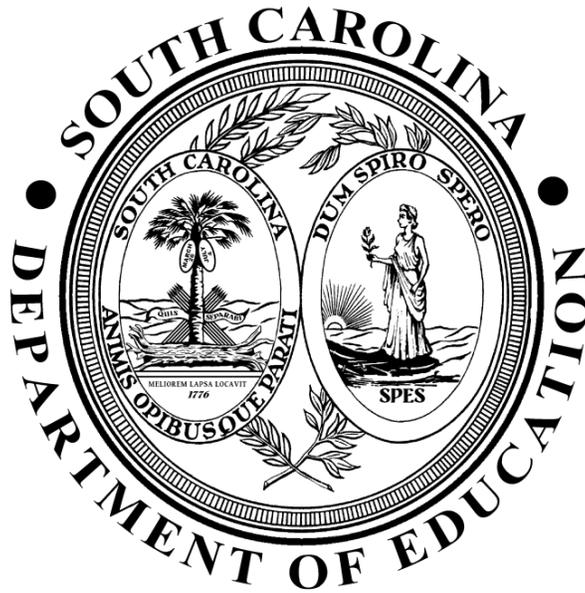


**STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA**  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

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**South Carolina**  
**Accessibility Support Document**  
**January 2019**

**(adapted from the CCSSO Accessibility Manual: How to Select, Administer and Evaluate the use of Accessibility Supports for Instruction of and Assessment of All Students)**

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The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is a nonpartisan, nationwide, nonprofit organization of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions. CCSSO provides leadership, advocacy, and technical assistance on major educational issues. The Council seeks member consensus on major educational issues and expresses their views to civic and professional organizations, federal agencies, Congress, and the public.

### **CCSSO ACCESSIBILITY MANUAL: HOW TO SELECT, ADMINISTER, AND EVALUATE USE OF ACCESSIBILITY SUPPORTS FOR INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT OF ALL STUDENTS**

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## Section I: Background

The Council of Chief State School Officers' (CCSSO's) *Accessibility Manual: How to Select, Administer, and Evaluate Use of Accessibility Supports for Instruction and Assessment of All Students* establishes guidelines for states to use for the selection, administration, and evaluation of accessibility supports for instruction and assessment of all students, including students with disabilities, English learners (ELs), ELs with disabilities, and students without an identified disability or EL status. **Accessibility supports discussed herein include both embedded (digitally-provided) and non-embedded (non-digitally or locally provided), universal features that are available to all students as they access instructional or assessment content, and accommodations that are generally available for students for whom there is documentation on an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 accommodation plan.** Approaches to these supports may vary depending on state or assessment consortium contexts as well as nature of assessments – be they content assessments, English language proficiency (ELP) assessments, or alternate assessments.

Recent educational reforms have brought about many changes in approaches to accessibility. These new approaches provide an opportunity for students who may not have received accommodations in the past to now benefit from needed accessibility supports employed in instruction and on assessments due to rapidly developing technologies. This manual has been customized to reflect current South Carolina state-level accessibility policies and practices that support students with diverse needs and characteristics and account for instructional and assessment implications, particularly when differentiating among content, ELP, and alternate assessments.

This manual does not establish specific accessibility policies, but rather summarizes current body of knowledge on accessibility supports and highlights a decision-making process that can be used for effective selection, administration, and evaluation of various accessibility features and accommodations.

*The CCSSO Accessibility Manual: How to Select, Administer, and Evaluate Use of Accessibility Supports for Instruction and Assessment of All Students* represents the best thinking up to the point of publication. We continue to learn more about the effective education of all students every day, and we expect these materials to evolve and improve continuously.

The state of South Carolina allows appropriate accommodations on statewide assessments, so long as they do not interfere with the construct being measured. Local school districts must ensure that procedures are in place to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities in statewide and district-wide assessments. The participation of students with disabilities in these assessment programs should lead to improved teaching and learning. Participation in assessment goes hand-in-hand with access to the general education curriculum.

## Intended Audience and Recommended Use

*The South Carolina Accessibility Support Document: How to Select, Administer, and Evaluate Use of Accessibility Supports for Instruction and Assessment of All Students* is intended for general, English as a second language (ESL)/bilingual, and special education teachers, school administrators, test administrators, school coordinators, and related services personnel to use in administering accessibility supports for those students who need them. The manual is also intended for assessment staff and administrators serving all students who currently have the potential to benefit from these accessibility supports on their paths to college and career readiness.

The manual applies to all students who use accessibility supports (universal supports and accommodations) for instruction and assessment. The manual emphasizes an individualized approach to the implementation of accessibility practices for those students who have diverse needs in the classroom. It recognizes the critical connection between accessibility supports in instruction and accessibility supports during assessment as well as the need to think about accessibility from the start of educational processes.

This manual presents a multi-tier accessibility framework of universal supports and accommodations with an understanding that states or other entities may employ different terms for the multiple tiers or add an additional tier of administrative considerations – practices that are often included in test administration manuals (e.g., minimizing distractions). It should also be noted that the same accessibility support may be considered universal in one system and designated, an administrative consideration, or an accommodation in another system depending on what construct is the focus of instruction or of an assessment. For example, on an ELP assessment, some test items for all ELs might contain a text-to-speech support. Thus, what might be considered to be a specific EL support on a content assessment might be part of the default test items on an ELP assessment. Additionally, some accessibility supports allowable on content assessments may be prohibited on ELP or alternate assessments, or vice versa.

This manual also includes considerations for students who participate in alternate assessments to assist educators with the process of including this population of students in meaningful educational practices.

The manual outlines a five-step decision-making process for administering accessibility supports. **Figure 1** highlights the five steps discussed in the manual.

**Figure 1. Five-step Decision-making Process for Administering Accessibility Supports**



### **Recognizing Accessibility Needs for All Students**

In the context of new technology-based instruction and assessments, various accessibility supports are available for students to meet their individualized needs and preferences. These new individualized approaches to accessibility place greater responsibility on educator teams and individuals who make decisions about which students need and should receive specific supports among a variety of accessibility choices. Even those features that are universally available for all students may not be effective supports for some students if the support has proven to be distracting in instruction and/or on assessments. Educators should also ensure that students have ample opportunity to practice using accessibility supports or accessing assessment content without certain supports if they are only available in instruction.

Several organizations developed educational standards and principles informing the process of fair and reliable educational approaches. The *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* jointly developed by the American Educational Research Association, the American Psychological Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education represents guidance on valid, reliable, and fair assessments, as well as operational implications and testing applications. The *Operational Best Practices for Statewide Large-scale Assessment Programs*

developed by the Association of Test Publishers and the Council of Chief State School Officers addresses both technology-based and paper-based assessments, and covers many areas including program management, item development and banking, delivery, administration, and scoring and reporting. The *Principles and Characteristics of Inclusive Assessment Systems in Changing Assessment Landscapes* developed by the National Center on Educational Outcomes discusses inclusion of all students, assessment accessibility, high-quality decision making, implementation fidelity, public reporting, and continuous improvement of educational practices. States often rely on these documents when developing effective educational programs.

For the purposes of this manual, the following definitions are used:

*Students with disabilities* are students who are eligible to receive services identified through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

*English learners (ELs)* are students whose native language is not English and who do not yet possess sufficient English language proficiency to fully access curriculum that is in English.

*English learners with disabilities (ELs with disabilities)* are students whose native language is not English, who do not yet possess sufficient English language proficiency to fully access content that is in English, and who have disabilities under the IDEA or Section 504.

*General education students* are students who do not have an identified disability or EL status. Although we understand that students with disabilities, ELs, and ELs with disabilities are also general education students, we use this term as a simple way to refer to students who do not have a disability, are not identified as an EL, or who are not identified as an EL with a disability.

## **Section II: Universal Design Approach to Accessibility**

This section highlights the Universal Design approach to accessibility currently employed by many states and consortia: universal supports and accommodations. Educators should be mindful that other terms sometimes are used to describe these tiers (e.g., universal tools – supports for all students) or additional tiers (e.g., administrative considerations) that may be used in their district. Tool 1 (the tools are provided at the end of this document) includes examples of administrative considerations. It is important to note that, in some instances, the same accessibility support may belong to different tiers or be prohibited depending on state policies and instructional/assessment implications. Tools 2-3 include universal features, and accommodations currently used in South Carolina and federal laws, court cases and federal guidance on student participation.

### **Universal Supports**

*Universal supports* are accessibility supports that are either embedded or provided digitally through instructional or assessment technology (e.g., answer choice eliminator), or non-embedded and provided non-digitally at the local level (e.g., scratch paper). Universal supports are available to all students as they access instructional or assessment content. Tool 2 includes embedded and non-embedded universal supports currently used.

### **Making Decisions About Universal Supports**

Although universal supports are generally available to all students, educators may determine that one or more might be distracting for a particular student, and thus might indicate that the feature should not be used for the administration of the assessment to the student. Educators may need to pay special attention to non-embedded universal supports to ensure that they are available to meet individual student needs.

### **Additional Accessibility Features**

*Some* accessibility features are available for use by any student for whom the need has been indicated by an educator (or team of educators including the parents/guardians and the student if appropriate) who is familiar with the student's characteristics and needs. Embedded accessibility features (e.g., color contrast) are provided digitally through instructional or assessment technology, while non-embedded accessibility features (e.g., magnification device) are provided locally. Accessibility features must be assigned to a student by trained educators or teams using a **consistent process**.

## **Making Decisions About Accessibility Supports**

Educators (or teams of educators also including parents/guardians and the student if appropriate) who are familiar with the student’s characteristics and needs should make decisions about accessibility supports. Decisions should reflect those supports that the student requires and uses during instruction and for assessments. Student input to the decision, particularly for older students, is recommended.

For students with IEPs or 504 accommodation plans, their IEP or Section 504 teams should make decisions on what accessibility supports need to be provided. Districts and schools can use such planning tools as an Individual Student Assessment Accessibility Profile (ISAAP), a Personal Needs Profile (PNP), or other similar tools to document which supports (and accommodations, if applicable) need to be made available to that student.

## **Accommodations**

*Accommodations* are changes in procedures or materials that ensure equitable access to instructional and assessment content and generate valid assessment results for students who need them. Embedded accommodations (e.g., text-to-speech) are provided digitally through instructional or assessment technology, while non-embedded features (e.g., scribe) are provided locally. Accommodations are generally available for students for whom there is a documented need on an IEP, 504 accommodation plan, or ELL accommodation plan. Tool 3 includes embedded and non-embedded accommodations currently used in South Carolina as well as their descriptions and recommendations for use.

## **Making Decisions About Accommodations**

EL teams, IEP teams, and Section 504 plan teams make decisions about accommodations. For ELs with disabilities, for example, these teams should include an expert in the area of English language acquisition. These decision makers provide evidence of the need for accommodations and ensure that they are noted on the IEP, EL, or 504 plan. Tool 5 provides sample student profiles to assist in determining needed accommodations. Tool 6 highlights the do’s and don’ts when selecting accessibility supports.

### **Section III: Five-step Decision-making Process**

This section describes a five-step process that can be used to make optimal accessibility decisions for those students who need accessibility supports in the classroom. The five steps follow:

- Step 1: Expect Students to Achieve Grade-level Standards
- Step 2: Learn About Accessibility Supports for Instruction and Assessment
- Step 3: Identify Accessibility Supports for Instruction and Assessment
- Step 4: Administer Accessibility Supports During Instruction and Assessment
- Step 5: Evaluate Use of Accessibility Supports in Instruction and Assessment

#### **Step 1: Expect Students to Achieve Grade-level Standards**

Education is a basic right for all children in the United States. With legislation aimed at the inclusion of all students comes the drive to ensure equal access to grade-level standards. Academic standards are educational targets outlining what students are expected to learn at each grade level. Teachers ensure that students work toward grade-level standards by using a range of instructional strategies based on the varied strengths and needs of students. For some students, accessibility supports are provided during instruction and assessments to help promote equal access to grade-level content.

Individual educators or teams of educators who are familiar with all characteristics and needs of students should make instructional and assessment decisions for them. Educators are responsible for developing, implementing, and improving accessibility practices for students. The following are the types of educators who may be involved in making accessibility decisions:

- special education teachers or 504 Plan committee representatives
- language educators and facilitators (ESL/bilingual teachers, other ESL/bilingual/migrant teachers or EL administrators, language acquisition specialists, interpreters)
- assessment officials (test administrators, test coordinators, guidance counselors, reading specialists)
- general education teachers (classroom/content teachers)
- bilingual special education practitioners
- school administrators (principals, school/district officials)
- parents (parents/guardians)
- students (if appropriate)

To accomplish the goal of equal access in education:

- every educator must be familiar with standards and accountability systems at the state and district level;
- every educator must know where to locate standards; and

- all general, special, and language educators, as well as other educational stakeholders must collaborate for successful student access.

All students can work toward grade-level academic content, ELP, or alternate assessment standards, and should be expected to achieve these standards when the following three conditions are met:

1. Instruction is provided by teachers who are qualified to teach in the areas addressed by state standards and who know how to differentiate instruction for the diverse/specific population of students they are serving;
2. Individualized approaches to instruction and assessment are in place, and individualized plans are developed for those students who need them; and
3. Appropriate accessibility supports are provided to help students access instructional and assessment content.

South Carolina College- and Career-Ready State Standards and state-wide assessments that are based on those standards present an unprecedented opportunity for educators to accomplish the goal of meaningful inclusion of all students in academic content.

### **Including All Students in State Assessment Systems**

Federal and state laws, legal cases, and federal guidance require that all students be administered assessments intended to hold schools accountable for the academic performance of students. Educators must actively engage in a planning process that addresses:

- assurance of the provision of accessibility supports to facilitate student access to grade-level instruction and state assessments;
- use of alternate assessments to assess the achievement of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities; and
- use of different assessment formats to assess the achievement of beginner ELs and these assessments are tailored specifically for ELs at varying developmental, language proficiency, and academic levels and are aligned with content and achievement standards, curriculum, and instruction.

### **Federal and State Laws, Legal Cases, and Federal Guidance Requiring Student Participation**

To effectively support all students in the classroom, educators should be familiar with federal and state laws, current guidelines, and legal cases that regulate student participation in the educational processes. These documents are particularly important when serving students with disabilities, ELs, and ELs with disabilities. Several important laws require the participation of

these students in standards-based instruction and assessment initiatives. Some of these laws address solely students with disabilities; others regulate educational policies and practices exclusively for ELs. Educators should consider both sets of laws when it comes to instruction and assessment of ELs with disabilities. Tool 4 highlights federal laws, legal cases, and federal guidance regulating student participation in educational processes.

### **Equal Access to Grade-level Content**

Inclusion of all students in large-scale assessments and grade-level standards is mandated by both federal and state laws. Educators ensure that students work toward grade-level standards by using a range of instructional strategies based on the varied strengths and needs of students. Accessibility supports are provided for students during instruction and assessments to guarantee equal access to grade-level content. To meet this goal of equal access, educators must be familiar with standards and accountability systems at the state and district levels as well as locations of these standards and their updates.

All students can work toward grade-level academic content standards. They will be able to achieve these standards when instruction is provided by teachers who are qualified to teach in the content areas addressed by state standards and who know how to differentiate instruction for diverse learners. Meaningful access of grade-level content by diverse students is also made possible by appropriately selected accommodations. Additionally, to secure successful student access to grade-level content, ESL/bilingual educators, special educators, and their general education counterparts must collaborate when making accessibility decisions.

### **Current Practice and Beyond**

Decisions regarding the methods of assessing students with disabilities must be made on an individual basis by a student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) team or 504 Accommodations Plan team and must be documented in the IEP or 504 Plan. The IEP or 504 Plan team, which includes the parent as an equal participant, is responsible for determining *how* individual students with disabilities participate in statewide and district-wide assessment programs, *not whether* they will participate.

To determine if an accommodation is required for the student to demonstrate what he or she knows without the interference of the disability, the IEP or 504 Plan team should carefully review the student’s present level of performance, IEP goals and objectives, teacher-collected data on the impact of accommodations that are used in the classroom, and reports from general and special education teachers.

As the first option, the IEP or 504 plan team should consider the statewide or district-wide assessment without accommodations.

Decisions about accommodations and alternate assessment must be made on an individual student basis, not on the basis of category of disability or administrative convenience.

Teams should review the accommodations that the student currently uses to access the general curriculum and determine if some or all of these accommodations are necessary for the student to participate in the statewide or district-wide assessment. It is also important to review teacher - collected data to document the effectiveness of these accommodations and whether they have had a positive impact on both student access to the curriculum and student achievement.

Testing accommodations should be those *typically used* to access the general curriculum during routine instruction. The team should be aware that if an accommodation is unfamiliar to a student, recommending its use may result in the assessment of the student's ability to use the accommodation rather than the assessment of his or her knowledge and skills.

It is important for teams to be aware that some instructional accommodations may not be appropriate for state standardized assessments as they may change what is tested resulting in invalid scores.

IEP Teams must be familiar with the Test Administration Manuals (TAMs) for each South Carolina state assessment in order to determine if an instructional accommodation may be used with the assessment. Each TAM includes an Appendix C with information on standard and non-standard accommodations and specific procedures for using accommodations on the assessment.

The above referenced TAMs may be accessed on the SCDE website at:  
<https://ed.sc.gov/tests/assessment-information/>

## **Step 2: Learn About Accessibility Supports for Instruction and Assessment**

Current technology enables educators to introduce computer-based instruction and assessment accessibility supports that facilitate individualized educational processes. The purpose of these supports is to reduce or eliminate the effects of students' barriers that prevent them from demonstrating what they know and can do. **Accessibility supports provided in the classroom do not reduce expectations for learning.** The Universal Design approach – universal supports and accommodations – empower students with a multitude of choices, enabling them to access instructional and assessment content effectively.

Accessibility supports provided to a student during state assessments, such as universal supports (e.g., highlighting tools) or accommodations (e.g., oral administration), must also be provided during classroom instruction, classroom assessments, and district assessments; however, some instructional accessibility supports may not be appropriate for use on certain statewide assessments. In other cases, accessibility supports provided on assessments may be slightly

different from those provided in the classroom (e.g., digital notetaking on an assessment). It is important that educators help students become familiar with the supports provided through the technology platform so that students are not using these tools for the first time on test day.

It is critical that educators become familiar with state policies about the appropriate use of accessibility supports during assessments. **In the age of technology-mediated educational practices, accessibility supports facilitate instruction and assessment of students effectively if they are selected and used properly.**

Typically, accessibility support use may not begin and end in the school setting, but this may vary depending on the individual. Also, some universal support features may not be needed for some students if they interfere with student performance. As students become more proficient in instructional content, their need for some accessibility supports may decrease. For instance, ELs may not need native language supports as their English language proficiency increases. Accessibility supports for instruction and assessment are integrally intertwined.

When determining accessibility supports for ELP assessments, it is important to remember that ELP assessments and content area assessments measure different constructs, and therefore, different accessibility supports may be allowed for each. This approach is also true for alternate assessments.

### **SOUTH CAROLINA STATE ASSESSMENTS**

The test administration manuals for each of these assessments are available on the SCDE Web site. Appendix C of each manual provides details regarding standard and non-standard accommodations for the assessments and procedures for using accommodations on the assessment. Educators should refer to the Test Administration Manual for each specific assessment for the administration procedures.

#### South Carolina College-and Career Ready Assessment (SC READY)

The South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Assessment is a statewide assessment that includes tests in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics administered to students in grades 3-8. All students in grades 3-8 are required to participate in the SC READY, except those who qualify to participate in the Alternate Assessment. SC READY test items are aligned to the South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards for English language arts and for mathematics.

#### South Carolina Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (SCPASS)

The South Carolina Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (SCPASS) is a statewide assessment administered to students in grades four, six and eight in science and grades five and seven in social studies. All students in these grade levels are required to take the SCPASS, except those who qualify to participate in the Alternate Assessment.

### End-of-Course Examination Program (EOCEP)

The End-of-Course Examination Program (EOCEP) is a statewide assessment program for high school in English/language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. To meet state and federal accountability requirements, the EOCEP in English/language arts, mathematics, and science must be administered to all public school students, including those students as required by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) and by Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The EOCEP scores count 20 percent in the calculation of the student's final grade in the course. High school EOCEP courses currently include English 1, Algebra 1, U.S. History and the Constitution, and Biology. These assessments are also used for state and federal accountability. All students must take the EOCEP or the alternate assessment, as specified by the IEP team.

### ACCESS for ELLs

All students in grades K-12 who are determined to have limited English proficiency—based upon the completion of a Home Language Survey and the initial assessment of their English proficiency—must take ACCESS for ELLs during the annual testing window. Students must continue to take ACCESS for ELLs until they have scored at least 4.4 Overall and at least a 4.0 in each domain assessed (Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing).

### South Carolina Alternate Assessment (SC-ALT)

The SC-Alt is the state alternate assessment on alternate achievement standards (AA- AAS). This assessment is administered to students who meet the participation criteria as determined by their IEP team.

The assessment is linked to the state grade- level content standards at a less complex level. These linkages are described in the Prioritized Standards, which are the foundation for the assessment and instruction.

Student performance is included in the district calculations for state accountability (Report Card).

The IEP team may decide that an alternate assessment is appropriate if the student meets the criteria for alternate assessment. To document that alternate assessment is appropriate for an individual student, the IEP team should review all important information about the student over multiple school years and multiple instructional settings (e.g., school, home, community) and determine that the student meets all of the following criteria:

- the student demonstrates a significant cognitive disability and deficit in adaptive skills, which result in performance that is substantially below grade-level achievement expectations even with the use of accommodations and non-standard accommodation;
- the student accesses the state approved academic standards at less complex levels and with extensively modified instruction;

- the student has current adaptive skills requiring extensive direct instruction and practice in multiple settings to accomplish the application and transfer of skills necessary for application in school, work, home, and community environments;
- the student is unable to apply or use academic skills across natural settings when instructed solely or primarily through classroom instruction;
- the student's inability to achieve the state grade-level achievement expectations is not the result of excessive or extended absences or social, cultural, or economic differences.

### National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is designed to measure what students know and can do in various subject areas both on a national and state level. State-level results tell us about student achievement in South Carolina and allow for comparisons with other states and the nation. Individual and school-level scores are not generated, results are reported at the national and state level for populations and demographic groups within those populations.

The selection, administration, and evaluation of accommodations for instruction and assessment are the focus of this document. Since assessment and instructional accommodations must be the same for individual students, guidelines for selecting accommodations for instruction and assessment are the same. However, this document provides complete guidelines only for administering and evaluating the effectiveness of assessment accommodations.

Meaningful collaboration among classroom teachers, school administrators, assessment officials, parents, and students can work to guarantee beneficial instruction and assessment of students. Educators should coordinate their accessibility approaches in the classroom through ongoing interaction and collaboration with each other.

### **Universal Design Implications**

Universal design principles address policies and practices that are intended to improve access to learning and assessments for all students. Universal design principles are important to the development and review of instructional and assessment content because some ways of presenting content make it difficult for some students to show what they know. When educators employ universal design techniques, they can gain a more accurate understanding of what students know and can do. Universal design techniques should be applied consistently in instruction and assessments. In contrast to retrofitting, these techniques are integrated in instruction and assessment from the start. Educators should consider the following principles of universal design:

- inclusion of diverse student populations;

- precisely defined instructional and assessment constructs;
- maximally accessible, non-biased content;
- compatibility with accommodations;
- simple, clear, and intuitive instructions and procedures;
- maximum readability and comprehensibility; and
- maximum legibility.

Universally-designed instructional and assessment content may reduce the need for accommodations and for alternate assessments. Nevertheless, universal design cannot completely eliminate the need for accommodations or for alternate assessments. Universal design can provide educators with more valid inferences about the achievement levels of all students.

Universal design of assessments does not simply mean that instruction and assessments are carried out in a computer-based environment. With greater implementation of technological solutions, thinking about accommodations and universal design may change. Traditionally, educators have thought of universal design as coming first, and accommodations being applied during instruction and assessment. With current technology, educational stakeholders can build some accommodations into the design of instructional and assessment content itself and redefine some accommodations as universal supports to empower greater numbers of students with optimal accessibility options.

### **Considerations for Use of Accommodations in Instruction and Assessment**

Accommodations are practices and procedures that ensure that educators, as well as students and parents, have a valid measure of what students with disabilities know and can do. Accommodations use begins in the classroom. In addition, students with IEPs, students with 504 Accommodation Plans, and EL students may also be provided with assessment accommodations. Accommodations do not reduce expectations for learning.

Accommodations provided to a student during state assessments must also be provided during classroom instruction, classroom assessments, and district assessments. However, some instructional accommodations may not be appropriate for use on certain statewide assessments. It is critical that educators become familiar with South Carolina policies about the appropriate use of accommodations during assessments.

Accommodations are intended to reduce or even eliminate the effects of a student's disability; they do not reduce learning expectations. The accommodations provided to a student must be the same used routinely in classroom instruction, classroom assessments, and district/state assessments. There may be consequences for the use of some accommodations during state assessments. IEP and 504 teams should determine the accommodations a student needs (for access) as opposed to ones which provide benefit (increasing already passing scores).

Typically, accommodations use does not begin and end in school. Students who use accommodations will generally also need them at home, in the community, and as they get older, in postsecondary education and at work.

### Description of Accommodations Categories

Accommodations are commonly categorized in five ways: presentation, response, setting, timing, and scheduling.

**Presentation Accommodations:** A student may require that the test be presented in a different manner such as oral administration, Braille, or sign language.

**Response Accommodations:** A student may require an alternative method of responding to a test question, such as the nonverbal indication of multiple-choice questions.

**Setting Accommodations:** A student may require that the statewide assessment be administered in a setting appropriate to the student's individual needs, such as an individual administration.

**Timing:** Most South Carolina statewide assessments are not timed tests. A student may take as long as needed to complete each test during the school day when possible. To maintain security, a monitor in addition to the test administrator is required when a student is receiving any timing accommodation.

**Scheduling:** A student may take portions of the statewide assessments over several days, as long as all testing is completed by the last day of make-up testing. Students may not go back to previously completed sections of the test.

### Who is Involved in Accommodations Decisions?

IEP and 504 Plan teams must make assessment and accommodation decisions for students based on individual need in accordance with state and federal guidelines. Students with IEPs and 504 Plans must be provided accommodations based on individual need as long as the accommodations do not invalidate the assessment. Accommodations must be documented in IEPs and 504 Plans.

### IEP Team Considerations for Instructional Accommodations

To ensure that all students are engaged in standards-based instruction and assessments, every educator must be knowledgeable about the state and district academic standards and assessments. Effective decision making about the provision of appropriate accessibility supports begins with making appropriate instructional decisions. In turn, optimal instructional decision making is facilitated by gathering and reviewing reliable information about the

student's access needs, disability, English language proficiency, and present level of performance in relation to local and state academic standards.

IEP team decisions regarding accommodations should be based on individual characteristics and student needs. Making blanket decisions for groups of students at particular language acquisition levels or with particular disabilities is not appropriate. When individualized accessibility decisions are made thoughtfully, they can advance equal opportunities for students to participate in the general education curriculum.

The IEP team should consider the following decision-making process for providing accessibility supports which should include consideration of at least these three factors:

1. **Student characteristics** – Category of disability, level of language proficiency, accessibility supports used in classroom instruction/assessments to access and perform on academic standards and state tests.
2. **Classroom instruction and assessment tasks** – Knowledge about what tasks are required in instruction and on state assessments and ways to remove physical and/or other barriers to a student's ability to perform those tasks.
3. **Accessibility policy** – Accessibility policy for an assessment or for part of an assessment and consequences of decisions.

For both instruction and assessment, some administrative resources and strategies, such as testing at the time beneficial to a student, should be allowable for all students, and therefore often are not classified as accessibility features or accommodations, although some states and consortia classify some of these considerations (e.g., breaks) as universal features. These administrative considerations are often addressed in test administration documents and should be used whenever possible for all students. Tool 1 includes administrative considerations available in South Carolina.

### **Non-Standard Accommodations or Modifications in Instruction and Assessment**

Accessibility supports (Universal supports and accommodations) do not reduce learning expectations. They meet specific needs of students in instruction and assessment and enable educators to know that measures of a student's work produce valid results.

*Standard accommodations* are available to students with a documented disability and based on need. Standard accommodations do not reduce learning expectations or alter the construct that is being assessed.

*Non-standard accommodations or modifications* refer to practices or materials that change, lower, or reduce state-required learning expectations. Non-standard accommodations or modifications may change the underlying construct of an assessment. Examples of non-standard accommodations or modifications include

- requiring a student to learn less material (e.g., fewer objectives, shorter units or lessons, fewer pages or problems),
- reducing assignments and assessments so a student only needs to complete the easiest problems or items,
- using an accessibility support that invalidates the intended construct,
- revising assignments or assessments to make them easier (e.g., crossing out half of the response choices on a multiple-choice test so that a student only has to pick from two options instead of four), or
- giving a student hints or clues to correct responses on assignments and tests.

Providing non-standard accommodations or modifications to students during classroom instruction and classroom assessments may have the unintended consequence of reducing their opportunity to learn critical content. Nevertheless, non-standard accommodations or modifications can be used in instruction as long as students do not expect that these non-standard accommodations or modifications will transfer to a state assessment. If students have not had access to critical, assessed content, they may be at risk for not meeting graduation requirements. **Providing a student with a non-standard accommodations or modifications during a state accountability assessment may constitute a test irregularity, invalidate test scores, and result in an investigation into the school’s or district’s testing practices.**

The State Board of Education Regulations 43-100 (2015) state that **not providing accommodations** (to include customized test forms) as specified for students with IEPs or 504 Plans or **providing more accommodations** than specified are considered breaches of professional ethics that may jeopardize the validity of the inferences made on the basis of test data. As such, these actions are viewed as security violations that could result in criminal prosecution and/or disciplinary action to an educator’s professional certificate.

**In the event of a test security violation involving testing accommodations for students with disabilities, the DTC must report the test security violation in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Test Administrator Manual (TAM). In addition, the school/district must convene the IEP/504 Plan team to review the test security violation.**

During the meeting of the IEP/504 Plan team, the team may consider only the testing accommodations as written in the IEP/504 Plan and may not change the accommodations specified in the plans. The IEP or 504 Plan team must address the test security violation as follows:

- **If a student received a non-standard accommodation** that is not specified in the IEP/504 Plan, the team must **invalidate** the test administration.
- **If a student received a standard accommodation** that is not specified in the IEP/504 Plan, the team must determine if the unauthorized accommodation would cause the test score to be invalid.
- **If a student did not receive a standard or non-standard accommodation** that is specified in the IEP/504 Plan, the team must determine whether the test score would be valid without the specified accommodation and/or non-standard accommodation.

If the IEP/504 Plan team determines that the test administration is:

- **valid**; the test is to be scored.
- **not valid**; the school/district must invalidate the score.

Refer to the assessment specific Test Administrator Manual (TAM) for additional information, located on the South Carolina Department of Education website at:

<https://ed.sc.gov/tests/assessment-information/>

## **Instructional Accessibility Supports**

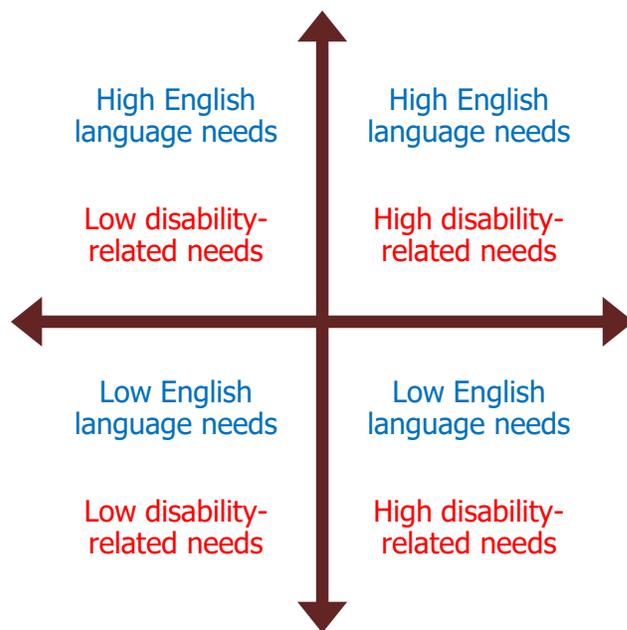
To optimize students' educational experiences, educators should hold regular meetings to coordinate their instructional approaches. Every educator needs to be familiar with state policies. Educators should consider

- Student characteristics and needs;
- Instructional tasks expected of students to demonstrate proficiency in grade-level state standards; and
- Consistency between accessibility supports used for classroom instruction and those used on assessments.

Educators should ask: What are the student's specific instruction and assessment needs? How might student access to curriculum, instruction, and assessment be supported with the goal of developing student independence? Does the student really not need some universal features? Does the student need any universal support or accommodations? A student may not be receiving an accessibility support he or she really needs or may be receiving too many. Research indicates that more is not necessarily better, and that providing students with accessibility supports that are not truly needed may have a negative impact on performance. The better approach is to focus on a student's identified needs within the general education curriculum.

To ensure that all students are engaged in standards-based instruction, their educators should consider their unique needs and characteristics when making instructional accessibility decisions. For ELs with disabilities for example, IEP team members should consider the degree of each student's language- and disability-related needs. As shown in Figure 2, accessibility decisions should be individualized based on the particular language- and disability-related challenges faced by ELs with disabilities. Students with high English language needs and low disability-related needs will require more language-based supports while their counterparts with high disability-related needs and low English language needs will require more supports that remove disability-related barriers. At the same time, students with high English language needs and high disability-related needs will benefit from more intensive language- and disability-related supports while students with low English language needs and low disability-related needs will require fewer supports that alleviate linguistic and disability-related assessment challenges.

**Figure 2. English Language- and Disability-related Needs Affecting Accessibility Decisions**



Source: Shyyan, Christensen, Touchette, Lightborne, Gholson, and Burton, 2013. Reprinted with permission.

This approach of accounting for varying English language- and disability-related needs for ELs with disabilities was developed to reinforce the idea that students in each of the four sections will require different instructional support. Moreover, variability within each section should be taken into account, and students' individualized needs should be addressed on an individual basis. **This approach also aims to reiterate that educators should fully account for the complexity of both language and disability implications during the instruction and assessment of ELs with disabilities.** See Tool 5 for sample student profiles and related questions associated with each quadrant.

### **Step 3: Identify Accessibility Supports for Instruction and Assessment**

To ensure that all students are engaged in standards-based instruction and assessments, every educator must be knowledgeable about the state and district academic standards and assessments. Effective decision making about the provision of appropriate accessibility supports begins with making appropriate instructional decisions. In turn, optimal instructional decision making is facilitated by gathering and reviewing reliable information about the student's access needs, disability, English language proficiency, and present level of performance in relation to local and state academic standards.

Decisions should be based on individual characteristics and needs. **Making blanket decisions for groups of students at particular language acquisition levels or with particular disabilities is not appropriate.** When individualized accessibility decisions are made thoughtfully, they can advance equal opportunities for students to participate in the general education curriculum.

The South Carolina Department of Education has assessment support guidance that should be used to identify students who may use certain accessibility supports on state-wide assessments. Information can be found at <https://ed.sc.gov/>. Students' needs and preferences are probably the most important criteria that should be considered when making optimal accessibility decisions. However, other academic-related criteria, such as English language proficiency test results, disability needs, oral proficiency in English and other languages, literacy levels in English and native language, implications of special education programs, the kind of education the student received before coming to the U.S. (e.g., evidence of limited or interrupted formal education), the time spent in English speaking schools, the time spent in your state, performance on other assessments, the resources available to students in their native languages, or the student's cultural background may also help educators determine which accessibility supports should be used. It is also important to remember that certain accessibility supports may be used on some types of assessments but are prohibited on other types because they have the potential to invalidate the measured construct. Thus, such linguistic supports as glossaries may be helpful on content assessments but would compromise English language proficiency assessment results.

## **Documenting Accessibility Supports for All Students**

To ensure continuous monitoring and improvement of accessibility approaches, educators should document how students use accessibility supports. Documenting what universal support (if any) are utilized for each particular student and what accommodations are available to this student will enable educators to make more informed decisions based on longitudinal data about accessibility supports. Educators should ensure that there are mechanisms of collecting these data to inform their instruction and assessment practices.

## **Documenting Accessibility Supports Under IDEA**

For ELs with disabilities served under IDEA, determining appropriate instructional and assessment accessibility supports should not pose any particular problems for educators who follow appropriate educational practices. With information obtained from the required summary of the student's Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP), the process of identifying and documenting accessibility supports should be a fairly straightforward event. The PLAAFP is a federal requirement in which team members must state "how the child's disability affects the child's involvement and progress in the general education curriculum" [20 U.S.C § 1414 (d) (1) (A) (i) (I) (aa)].

Depending on the design and overall format of a typical IEP, there are potentially three areas in which accessibility supports can be addressed:

1. “Consideration of Special Factors” [20 U.S.C § 1414 (d) (3) (B)]. This is where communication and assistive technology supports are considered.
2. “Supplementary Aids and Services” [20 U.S.C § 1402 (33) and 20 U.S.C § 1414 (d) (1) (A) (i)]. This area of the IEP includes “aids, services, and other supports that are provided in regular education classes or other education-related settings to enable children with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled children to the maximum extent appropriate.”
3. “Participation in Assessments” [20 U.S.C § 1412 (a) (16)]. This section of the IEP documents accommodations needed to facilitate the participation of students with disabilities in general state and district-wide assessments.

### **Current Special Education Process Guide for South Carolina**

The purpose of the Special Education Process Guide is to provide comprehensive information on State Board of Education regulation 43-243.

This guide provides the South Carolina Department of Education’s interpretation of various statutory provisions and does not impose any requirements beyond those included in federal and state laws and regulations. In addition, it does not create or confer any rights for or on any person.

Please use this Process Guide as a:

- Structured process for implementing special education policies;
- Reference for answering questions;
- Staff development tool; and
- Source for resources of support and assistance.

It is a living document and will be updated on a regular basis as South Carolina receives further guidance from the United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, results of court decisions, and changes in state statute. This document includes a date to help ensure that you are referencing the most recent version. For the South Carolina special education regulations, please consult State Board of Education regulation 43-243 at <https://ed.sc.gov/state-board/state-board-of-education/additional-resources/regulations-table-of-contents/>.

The Special Education Process Guide for South Carolina can be found on the South Carolina Department of Education’s website at <http://ed.sc.gov/scdoe/assets/File/districts-schools/special-ed-services/Special%20Ed%20Process%20Guide%20SEPG-2013.pdf>

## **Documenting Accessibility Supports on a Student’s 504 Plan**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires public schools to provide certain accessibility supports to students with disabilities even if they do not qualify for special

education services under IDEA. The definition of a disability under Section 504 is much broader than the definition under IDEA. All IDEA students are also covered by Section 504, but not all Section 504 students are eligible for services under IDEA. Section 504 states

No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. [29 U.S.C. § 794]

Examples of students who may receive accessibility supports or accommodations based on their 504 accommodation plan include students with

- allergies or asthma;
- attention difficulties;
- communicable diseases (e.g., hepatitis);
- drug or alcoholic addictions, as long as they are not currently using illegal drugs;
- environmental illnesses; or
- temporary disabilities from accidents who may need short term hospitalization or homebound recovery.

## **Decision-making Process**

The decision-making process for providing accessibility supports should include consideration of at least these three factors:

1. Student characteristics – disabilities, language proficiency, accessibility supports used in classroom instruction/assessments to access and perform on academic standards and state tests.
2. Classroom instruction and assessment tasks – knowledge about what tasks are required in instruction and on state assessments and ways to remove physical and other barriers to a student’s ability to perform those tasks.
3. Accessibility policy – accessibility policy for an assessment or for part of an assessment and consequences of decisions.

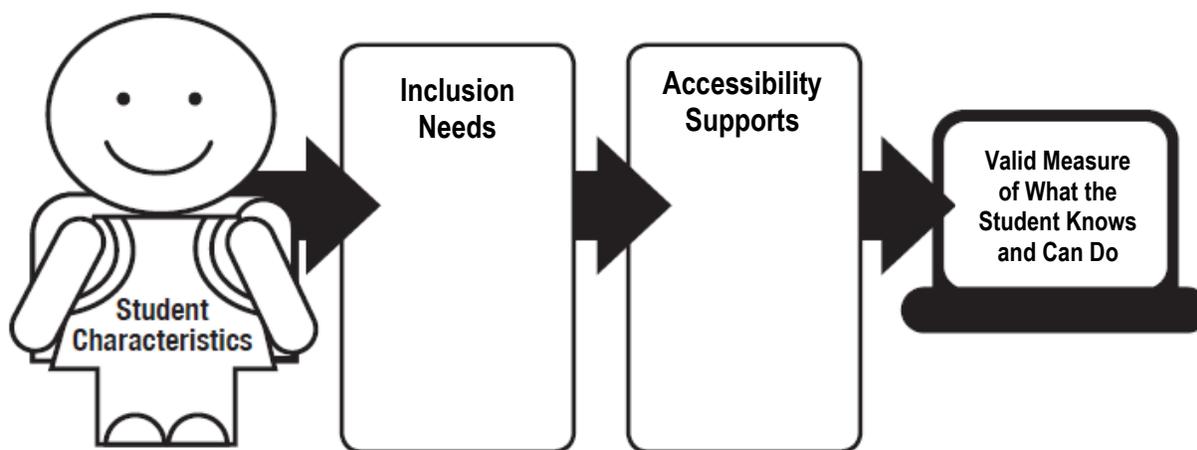
If multiple accessibility supports are employed by a student, educators should also be cognizant of the possible interactions of these accessibility supports. For instance, the highlighter might change colors if the color contrast is turned on.

## Student Characteristics

Selecting accessibility supports for instruction and assessment is the role of a student’s educator or a team of educators who are familiar with the student’s needs and characteristics.

Accessibility supports should be chosen based on the individual student’s characteristics and the student’s need for the accessibility supports (see Figure 3). After considering the student’s individual characteristics, educators should identify inclusion needs that require accessibility supports. When these accessibility supports are used according to the plan, the student will be able to demonstrate what he or she knows and can do for both instruction and assessments.

**Figure 3. Accessibility Selection Process**



The following questions can be used to guide the selection of appropriate accessibility supports for students assigned such supports for the first time and for students currently using such supports:

- What are the student’s language learning strengths and areas of further improvement (applicable to all students, not just ELs)?
- How do the student’s learning needs affect the achievement of grade-level standards?
- What specialized instruction (e.g., learning strategies, organizational skills, reading skills) does the student need to achieve grade-level standards?
- What accessibility supports will increase the student’s access to instruction and assessment by addressing the student’s learning needs? These may be new supports or supports the student is currently using.
- What accessibility supports are regularly used by the student during instruction and assessments?
- What are the results for assignments and assessments when accessibility supports are used and not used?
- What is the student’s perception of how well an accessibility support “worked”?
- Are there effective combinations of accessibility supports?

- What difficulties does the student experience when using accessibility supports?
- What are the perceptions of parents, teachers, and other specialists about how the accessibility support worked?
- Should the student continue to use an accessibility support, are changes needed, or should the use of the accessibility support be discontinued?

When matching accessibility supports with students’ needs, educators should consider the following:

- the student’s willingness to learn to use the accessibility support,
- opportunities to learn how to use the accessibility support in classroom settings, and
- conditions for use on state assessments.

### **Involving Students in Selecting, Using, and Evaluating Accessibility Supports**

It is critical for students to understand their needs and learn self-advocacy strategies for success in school and throughout life. Some students have had limited experience expressing personal preferences and advocating for themselves. Speaking out about preferences, particularly in the presence of “authority figures,” may be a new role for students, one for which they need guidance and feedback. Educators can play a key role in working with students to advocate for themselves in the context of selecting, using, and evaluating accessibility supports, making sure that the right number of supports is selected, and avoiding employing too many or too few supports.

The more involved students are in the selection process, the more likely they are to use the selected accessibility supports, especially as they reach adolescence. Their desire to be more independent increases as well. Self-advocacy skills become critical here. Students need opportunities to learn which accessibility supports are most helpful for them, and then they need to learn how to make certain those supports are provided in all of their classes and wherever they need them outside of school. For instance, students with significant cognitive disabilities, many of whom do not have sophisticated expressive communication systems, can show teachers whether they prefer certain supports. It is important to not limit the option of student feedback and student self-advocacy for those who cannot communicate those preferences easily.

### **Prior Use of Accessibility Supports**

Students are most successful with testing accessibility supports when they have used them prior to the test. Educators are encouraged to implement accessibility supports in instruction to make sure these concerns are addressed before the state assessment is administered. Accessibility supports should not be used for the first time on a state test. Instead, it is important to address these concerns ahead of time:

- Plan time for students to learn new accessibility supports.
- Be sure that students know how to use embedded and non-embedded accessibility supports. For embedded supports, there may be practice or sample items or tutorials for students to experience prior to test administration.
- Plan for evaluation and improvement of the use of accessibility supports.

## **Accessibility Supports for Instruction and Assessment**

In some cases, accessibility supports used in instruction may not be allowed on a test because they would invalidate the results of the test. This means that the performance no longer reflects what the test was designed to measure. In these instances, teachers should be sure to allow students ample opportunities to perform on classroom tasks and assessments without the use of the accessibility support.

On some assessments, accessibility supports may be presented in a way that is different from their variations used during instruction. To facilitate effective assessment processes, teachers should make sure students are informed of these changes and have a chance to practice the different accessibility supports prior to the test. This is particularly important for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities whose instruction often happens offline but who have to be prepared for taking online assessments.

If the accessibility support is considered a necessary step in scaffolding grade-level content instruction, having some practice without the support during classroom work would be an expected strategy to gauge student progress independent of the support and would also provide students opportunities to practice not using a support before the state assessment. If the instructional accessibility support is more permanent in nature and is not permitted on a state assessment, decision makers should consider whether the accessibility support alters what the test measures. If, after considering these steps, the appropriateness of using an accessibility support is not clear, educators should contact district or state personnel about its use.

## **Individual Test Characteristics: Questions to Guide Selection of Accessibility Supports**

After considering student characteristics, it is important to look at the task students are being asked to do on the state or district assessment. The following questions may guide decision making:

- What are the characteristics of the test my student needs to take? Are the test tasks similar to classroom assessment tasks or does the student need to have the opportunity to practice similar tasks prior to testing?

- Does the student use an accessibility support for a classroom task that is allowed for similar tasks on the state or district tests?
- Are there other barriers that could be removed by using an accessibility support that is not already offered or used by the student?

### **State Accessibility Policies: Maintaining Validity of Assessment Results**

When selecting accessibility supports for state assessments, it is important to keep in mind both the accessibility policies set to maintain the validity of the results of an assessment and to know the consequences of the decisions. If educators determine that a student should use a certain accessibility support during an assessment but the student refuses to use the support, the validity of the assessment results may be compromised.

Consideration of longer term consequences is important as well. For example, as students begin to make post-secondary choices, these may factor into the nature of accessibility choices open to them. Educators may want to discuss whether or how this affects decisions about accessibility for assessments. Educators should also be aware that validity implications are different for ELP assessments than for content assessments. Accessibility supports, therefore, should be selected in accordance to whether language proficiency or content area knowledge is being tested.

For South Carolina state assessments, the term non-standard accommodation refers to a change in the testing environment, procedures, or presentation that may alter the construct that a test measures or change the meaning of the test scores which results in scores that are not comparable and does not provide information on how the student performed on grade-level standards. **The student's permanent record and any other school documents that contain scores from a non-standard administration must state that the student used non-standard accommodations.** Additionally, the use of non-standard accommodations has implications for both state and federal accountability calculations.

Details about universal supports, standard and non-standard accommodations for students with disabilities are available in Appendix C of the Test Administration Manuals (TAM) of each state testing program.

Educators should plan how and when the student will learn to use each new accessibility support. They should be certain there is ample time to learn to use instructional and assessment accessibility supports before an assessment takes place. Finally, they should plan for the ongoing evaluation and improvement of the student's use of accessibility features.

Tools 7-15 provide additional information on this step.

## **Step 4: Administer Accessibility Supports During Instruction and Assessment**

### **Accessibility During Instruction**

Students must be provided selected accessibility supports during instruction that necessitate their use. An accessibility support should **not** be used solely during assessments. Accessibility supports should always be chosen based on a student's individual characteristics in order to help them with accessing content meaningfully and equitably.

As South Carolina moves toward providing assessments on technology-based platforms, educators must make sure that students have opportunities to become familiar with the technological aspects of the assessment process. In addition to taking practice tests using the same testing platform, it is also important for educators to provide opportunities for all students to use technology for learning.

In some cases, teachers may use accessibility supports without realizing that they do, equating these supports to instructional strategies. It is important that teachers be aware of the range of accessibility supports available for their students and use these supports appropriately and consistently in instruction and assessment.

### **Accessibility During Assessment**

Once decisions have been made about providing accessibility supports to meet individual student needs, the logistics of providing the actual accessibility supports during state and district assessments must be mapped out. Students' planning tools (e.g., ISAAP, PNP) should reflect these decisions to ensure that all required accessibility supports are available on the testing day. It is essential for all educators to know and understand the requirements and consequences of district and state assessments, including the use of accessibility supports and related technologies. It is important to engage the appropriate personnel to plan the logistics and provision of assessment accessibility supports on the test day.

Providing accessibility supports through the testing platform can ensure that the provision of accessibility is standardized from student to student and district to district. However, it is important to monitor the provision of accessibility supports on test day to ensure that supports are delivered and the technology is working as it should. Teachers should be in communication with assessment coordinators in a timely manner to ensure that the assessment is properly programmed and verified with the appropriate accessibility supports for a student.

The same accessibility supports cannot always be used on various types of assessments (content assessments, ELP assessments, alternate assessments). For instance, stacked translations may be appropriate on content or alternate assessments but would likely invalidate the measured construct on ELP assessments.

Prior to the day of a test, be sure that test administrators and monitors know what accessibility supports each student will be using and how to administer them properly. For example, test administrators and proctors should know whether a student needs to test in a separate location, so that plans can be made accordingly. Staff administering accessibility supports, such as reading aloud to a student or scribing student responses, must adhere to specific guidelines so that student scores are valid. Tools 16-18 provide read aloud, scribe, translation, and human signer guidelines for non-embedded accessibility supports. Test administrators and proctors should also carefully adhere to state policies that lay out what to do when selected accessibility supports do not work well.

### **Ethical Testing Practices**

Ethical testing practices must be maintained during the administration of a test. Some examples of unethical testing practices are inappropriate interactions between test administrators and students taking the test, allowing a student to answer fewer questions, offering additional information, coaching students during testing, editing student responses, telling a student they may want to review and answer, or giving clues in any other way.

### **Standardization**

Standardization refers to adherence to uniform administration procedures and conditions during an assessment. Standardization is an essential feature of educational assessments and is necessary to produce comparable information about student learning. Strict adherence to guidelines detailing instructions and procedures for the administration of accessibility supports is necessary to ensure that test results reflect actual student knowledge. Test administrators and proctors should also carefully adhere to state policies that lay out what to do when selected accessibility supports do not work well.

### **Test Security**

Test security involves maintaining the confidentiality of test questions and answers, protecting items from theft, employing ethical testing practices and is critical in ensuring the integrity of a test and validity of test results. If non-embedded accessibility supports are used, assessment security can become an issue when other test formats are used (e.g., braille, large print) or when someone other than the student is allowed to see the test (e.g., interpreter, reader, scribe). To ensure test security and confidentiality, test administrators need to (1) keep testing materials in a secure place to prevent unauthorized access, (2) keep all test content confidential and refrain from sharing information or revealing test content, and (3) return all materials as instructed.

Some of the same considerations for test security apply to embedded accessibility supports. For example, ensuring that only authorized personnel have access to the test and that test materials are kept confidential is critical in technology-based assessments. In addition, it is important to guarantee that (1) students are seated in such a manner that they cannot see each other's terminals, (2) students are not able to access any unauthorized programs or the Internet while they are taking the assessment, and (3) students are not able to access any saved data or computer shortcuts while taking the test. In most cases, any special required hardware devices and appropriate applications, such as switches, should be compatible with computer-delivered assessments. Prior to testing, educators should check on device compatibility and make appropriate adjustments if necessary.

**SCDE policy regarding test security and procedures for reporting test security violations can be found in the TAM of each assessment program.**

*South Carolina State Board regulations, 24 SC Code Regs 43-100 (Supp. 2007) (2004) § X. states that [a breach of professional ethics, which may jeopardize the validity of the inferences made on the basis of test data, and as such are viewed as security violations which could result in criminal prosecution and/or disciplinary action to an educator's professional certificate. § O specifies that "not providing accommodations (to include customized test forms and modifications [non-standard accommodations]) as appropriate for students with Individual Education Programs or 504 Plans. This includes providing more accommodations, customization (non-standard accommodation) than appropriate."*

The Test Security Regulations specific instructions regarding test security violations and students with disabilities appear in each Test Administration Manual.

Failure to adhere to these practices may constitute a test irregularity or a breach of test security and must be reported and investigated according to state and local testing policies.

**NOTE:** *The most commonly reported test security violations in South Carolina are the failure to provide accommodations as specified in the IEP or 504 Plan and providing accommodations NOT specified in the IEP or 504 Plan.*

## **Step 5: Evaluate Use of Accessibility Supports in Instruction and Assessment**

Accessibility supports must be selected on the basis of the individual student's needs and must be used consistently for instruction and assessment. Collecting and analyzing data on the use and effectiveness of accessibility supports are necessary to ensure the meaningful participation of students in state- and district-wide assessments. Data on the use and impact of accessibility supports during assessments may reveal questionable patterns of the use of accessibility supports, as well as inform the continued use of some supports or the rethinking of others.

Examination of the data may also indicate areas in which teachers and test administrators need additional training and support. In addition to collecting information about the use of accessibility supports within the classroom, information needs to be gathered on the implementation of accessibility supports during assessment. Observations conducted during test administration, interviews with test administrators, and talking with students after testing sessions will likely yield data that can be used to guide the formative evaluation process at the school or district level and at the student level.

Gathering information on accessibility supports may be easier in a technology-based assessment platform, when these supports are programmed into the system. However, just because information *can* be collected does not automatically indicate that it is meaningful. Educators, schools, and districts should decide in advance what questions should be answered by the collection of accessibility data in order to apply resources efficiently.

Information on the use of accessibility supports can be feasible to collect when it is coded on the test form with other student information.

### **Questions to Guide Evaluation of Use of Accessibility Supports at the School or District Level**

Accessibility information can be analyzed in different ways. Here are some questions to guide data analysis at the school and district level:

1. Are there policies to ensure ethical testing practices, the standardized administration of assessments, and that test security practices are followed before, during, and after the day of the test?
2. Are there procedures in place to ensure test administration is not compromised with the provision of accessibility supports?
3. Was a formal professional development training on accessibility supports conducted for educators?
4. Are students receiving accessibility supports as documented in their planning tools (e.g., ISAAPs, PNPs) or IEP and 504 plans?
5. Are there procedures in place to ensure that test administrators adhere to instructions for the implementation of accessibility supports?
6. How many students are receiving certain accessibility supports?
7. What types of accessibility supports are provided and are some used more than others?
8. How well do students who receive certain accessibility supports perform on state and local assessments? If students are not meeting the expected level of performance, is it due to the student not having had access to the necessary instruction, not receiving the accessibility support, or using ineffective supports?

## Questions to Guide Evaluation at the Student Level

The following questions can be used to formatively evaluate accessibility supports used at the student level and inform the individualized decision-making process.

1. What accessibility supports are used by the student during instruction and assessments?
2. What are the results of classroom assignments and assessments when accessibility supports are used versus when they are not used? If a student did not meet the expected level of performance, is it due to not having access to the necessary instruction, not receiving the accessibility supports, or using accessibility supports that were ineffective?
3. What is the student's perception of how well the accessibility support worked?
4. What combinations of accessibility supports seem to be effective?
5. What are the difficulties encountered in the use of accessibility supports?
6. What are the perceptions of teachers and others about how the accessibility support appears to be working?
7. How have the characteristics of the students changed over time to warrant a plan or accessibility support change?

School- and district-level questions can be addressed by a committee responsible for continuous improvement efforts, while the student-level questions need to be considered by educators. It is critical to stress that formative evaluation is not the responsibility of just one individual. Teams of educators should contribute to the information gathering and decision-making processes. Tools 19-20 provide additional information on completing this step.

## Post-secondary Implications

College and career readiness is an important educational outcome for all students. As students plan for their transition to post-secondary settings, it is important for educators to have documented students' use of accessibility supports so that students can continue to use them as needed in their college and career settings. Colleges and universities may allow fewer accessibility supports than are available in K-12 settings, so it is important for students to document their need to use accessibility supports. This may also be true for students who transition into vocational and other workplace settings. Students should be encouraged to research their accessibility needs within the context of each particular education institution or place of employment.

In some instances, standardized assessments are used in states for accountability purposes. These tests may be viewed differently by higher education institutions for college entrance. The same accessibility supports may not be available in some cases. Schools should communicate with the test vendors to ensure that appropriate guidelines are followed.

## Resources

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## **Tools**

### **Tool 1: Administrative Considerations**

Adaptive furniture  
Carrel  
Encourage student  
Help student navigate/place answers correctly  
Individual administration  
Light/acoustics  
Minimize distractions  
Non-embedded amplification  
Repeat/re-read directions  
Seat location/proximity  
Separate room  
Slant board/wedge  
Small group  
Student's home/hospital/incarceration  
Test at a time beneficial to student

## Tool 2: Universal Supports

**Note:** The accessibility supports included in these tables may, in some cases, belong to different tiers or be prohibited depending on state policies and assessment types. In several instances, similar supports are grouped for the sake of clarity.

### Universal Supports Available to All Students

Universal Supports	Description
Audio Aids	<p><b>A tool that the students can use to amplify or diminish sound. Audio Aids include amplification devices, noise buffers, non-Bluetooth headphones, noise canceling headphones (non-Bluetooth) or ear plugs.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student uses an amplification device typically used during instruction.</li> <li>• The student uses a noise buffer (e.g., headphones, earbuds, ear plugs) to minimize distraction or filter external noise during testing. Any noise buffer must be compatible with the requirements of the assessment.</li> </ul>
Calculator	<p>An embedded on-screen digital calculator can be accessed for <b>calculator-allowed</b> items when students click on the calculator button. When the embedded calculator, as presented for all students, is not appropriate for a student (for example, for a student who is blind), the student may use the calculator offered with assistive technology devices (such as a talking calculator or a braille calculator).</p>
Colored Overlay	<p><b>A tool that the student can use that changes the contrast between the text and the background color.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online test: students can select this tool from menu</li> <li>• Paper/Pencil test: students can use full page or partial page semi-transparent colored overlay (provided by the school), that is used during regular instruction.</li> </ul>
Digital Sticky Notes	<p>The student uses this feature as virtual scratch paper to make notes or record responses.</p>
Highlighter	<p><b>A tool that the student can use to mark specific text in the test booklet.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online test: student can select highlighter tool from menu</li> <li>• Paper/pencil: student may use their preferred writing tool to mark specific text in test booklet only, not on the answer document.</li> </ul>
Low Vision Aids	<p>A tool that the student can use to guide his or her eyes while reading text on the screen or test booklet or a tool that the student can use to increase the size of the graphics and text.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online Test: students may select the magnifier tool or the line guide tool from menu</li> <li>• Paper/pencil: students may use a low vision device[e.g., hand-held magnifier, magnification device (must not require internet access for use) blank line ruler or blank tracking device, non- calibrated ruler].</li> </ul>
<b>Mark for review/Flag for review</b>	The student is able to flag items for future review during the assessment.
<b>Scratch Paper</b>	<p>A tool that the student can use for notes, drafts, and diagrams.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The paper can be a blank sheet, grid paper (without the axis labeled), wide-ruled paper, braille paper, abacus, raised-line paper, bold-lined paper, raised-line grid paper (without the axis labeled), blank number line (absent of pre-printed numeric or algebraic notation) or colored paper.</li> <li>• The use of scratch paper is considered secure test material. Test administrators much collect used scratch paper. Used scratch paper must be handled in accordance with state test security policy.</li> <li>• Scratch paper should be available to students upon request</li> </ul>
<b>Ergonomic or Corrective Writing Tools</b>	<p>A tool that the student can use to add in ease of writing or typing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tools used during regular instruction including pencil grips, large diameter pencils, non-traditionally shaped pencils.</li> <li>• The writing tool used on the paper and pencil answer document must be a number 2 pencil. The appearance, size, or shape of the pencil is irrelevant.</li> <li>• The student may use any writing tool on scratch paper, it does not have to be a number 2 pencil.</li> </ul>
<b>Silent Breaks</b>	<p>A tool that refers to planned, short breaks during testing based on a student’s specific needs (e.g., fatigues easily, overly anxious, sensory needs).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students may take breaks as needed.</li> <li>• Students must remain in the testing environment for silent breaks and engage in activities that will not disturb or distract other test takers.</li> <li>• There should be minimal interactions with other students.</li> </ul>
<b>Repeated Directions</b>	<p>A tool that allows for a TAs to reread or sign directions from the TAM or script as requested by students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow students to ask questions about directions and procedures; you may not answer questions about test items.</li> <li>• Each student should hear all of the administration directions for each test. Do not allow administration directions to be read over a public address system.</li> </ul>

### Tool 3: Accommodations

**Note:** The accessibility supports included in these tables may, in some cases, belong to different tiers or be prohibited depending on state policies and assessment types. In several instances, similar supports are grouped for the sake of clarity.

#### Accommodations Available with an IEP or 504 Plan

Accommodation	Description	Recommendations for Use
American Sign Language (ASL)	Test content is translated into ASL video. ASL human signer and the signed test content are viewed on the same screen. Students may view portions of the ASL video as often as needed.	Some students who are deaf or hard of hearing and who typically use ASL may need this accommodation when accessing text-based content in the assessment. The use of this accommodation may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment. For many students who are deaf or hard of hearing, viewing signs is the only way to access information presented orally. It is important to note, however, that some students who are hard of hearing will be able to listen to information presented orally if provided with appropriate amplification and a setting in which extraneous sounds do not interfere with clear presentation of the audio presentation in a listening test.
Bilingual word-to-word dictionary	A bilingual/dual language word-to-word dictionary is provided to the student as a language support.	For students whose primary language is not English and who use dual language supports in the classroom, use of a bilingual/dual language word-to-word dictionary may be appropriate. Students participate in the assessment regardless of the language. The use of this feature may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment.
Oral Administration	The student has test content that is provided by an audio file in a computer-based test, read by a qualified human reader.	Students who use the paper-and-pencil version of the test can have the same test content read aloud that is supported through audio in a computer-based version. If a human reader is selected, that person must have appropriate experience providing read aloud support and must sign a document verifying adherence to state policy or practice to ensure test security and ethical practices.

<b>Accommodation</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Recommendations for Use</b>
Setting	Test location is altered so that the student is tested in a setting different from that made available for most students.	Students who are easily distracted (or may distract others) in the presence of other students, for example, may need an alternate location to be able to take the assessment. The separate setting may be in a different room that allows them to work individually or among a smaller group or to use a device requiring voicing (e.g., a Whisper Phone). Some students may benefit from being in an environment that allows for movement, such as being able to walk around. In some instances, students may need to interact with instructional or test content outside of school, such as in a hospital or their home.
Student reads test aloud	The student reads the test content aloud. This feature must be administered in a one-on-one test setting.	Students who are beginning readers may need to hear themselves read in order to comprehend text. Students who tend to rush through assessments and not read text fully may need to read the test aloud.

**Accommodations Available with an IEP or 504 Plan**

<b>Accommodation</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Recommendations for Use</b>
Assistive technology	The student is able to use assistive technology, which includes such supports as typing on customized keyboards, assistance with using a mouse, mouth or head stick or other pointing devices, sticky keys, touch screen, and trackball	Students who have difficulty manipulating a mouse or standard keyboard may need an alternative device.
Braille	A raised-dot code that individuals read with the fingertips. Graphic material (e.g., maps, charts, graphs, diagrams, illustrations) is presented in a raised format (paper,	Students who are blind or have low vision may read text via braille. Tactile overlays and graphics also may be used to assist the student in accessing content through touch. The use of this accommodation may result in the

<b>Accommodation</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Recommendations for Use</b>
	thermoform). contracted braille (Unified English Braille, Nemeth code is available for math.)	student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment.
Braille writer or note-taker	A blind student uses a braille writer or note-taker with the grammar checker, internet, and file-storing functions turned off.	Students should number their responses to be sure that their answers can be transcribed accurately into a score-able test booklet or answer document.
Calculator/Calculation device	A student uses a specific calculation device (e.g., large key, talking, or other adapted calculator) other than the embedded grade-level calculator.	Students with visual impairments who are unable to use the embedded calculator for calculator-allowed items will be able to use the calculator that they typically use, such as a braille calculator or a talking calculator. Test administrators should ensure that the calculator is available only for designated calculator items.
Extended time	Students have until the end of the school day to complete a single test unit.	Students should be tested in a separate setting to minimize distractions to other students and should be scheduled for testing in the morning to allow adequate time for completion of a test by the end of the school day.
Human signer/Sign language/Sign interpretation of test	A human signer will sign the test directions to the student. The student may also dictate responses by signing.	The student must be tested in an individual or small group setting.
Large print test booklet	A large print form of the test that is provided to the student with a visual impairment.	Students with visual impairments who may not be able to use zoom or magnifying devices to access the test and may need a large print version of the form.
Scribe	The student dictates her/his responses to an experienced educator who records verbatim what the student dictates.	Students who have documented significant motor or language processing difficulties, or who have had a recent injury (such as a broken hand or arm) that makes it difficult to produce responses may need to dictate their responses to a human, who then records the student's responses verbatim either in the test platform or on paper. For

<b>Accommodation</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Recommendations for Use</b>
		these students, dictating to a scribe is the only way to demonstrate their composition skills.

**Tool 4: Federal Laws, Court Cases, and Federal Guidance on Student Participation**

Federal Laws	
Law	Description
ESSA	<p>The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was issued on December 10, 2015 (<a href="https://www.congress.gov/114/crpt/hrpt354/CRPT-114hrpt354.pdf">https://www.congress.gov/114/crpt/hrpt354/CRPT-114hrpt354.pdf</a>). It reauthorizes the 50-year-old Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the national education law and commitment to equal opportunity for all students. The bill mandates annual reporting of disaggregated data of groups of students, generating information about whether all students are achieving and whether schools are meeting the needs of low-income students, students of color, students with disabilities, and English learners. Specific ESSA requirements include provisions for</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(I) the participation in such assessments of all students;            (II) the appropriate accommodations, such as interoperability with, and ability to use, assistive technology, for children with disabilities (as defined in section 602(3) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1401(3))), including students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, and students with a disability who are provided accommodations under an Act other than the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.), necessary to measure the academic achievement of such children relative to the challenging State academic standards or alternate academic achievement standards described in paragraph (1)(E); and            (III) the inclusion of English learners, who shall be assessed in a valid and reliable manner and provided appropriate accommodations on assessments administered to such students under this paragraph, including, to the extent practicable, assessments in the language and form most likely to yield accurate data on what such students know and can do in academic content areas, until such students have achieved English language proficiency...</p>
IDEA	<p>IDEA specifically governs services provided to students with disabilities. Accountability at the individual level is provided through IEPs developed on the basis of each child’s unique needs. IDEA requires the participation of students with disabilities in state- and district-wide assessments. Specific IDEA requirements include</p>

Law	Description
	<p>Children with disabilities are included in general state and district-wide assessment programs, with appropriate accommodations, where necessary [Sec. 612 (a) (16) (A)]. The term ‘individualized education program’ or ‘IEP’ means a written statement for each child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with this section and that includes...a statement of any individual modifications in the administration of state or district-wide assessments of student achievement that are needed in order for the child to participate in such assessment; and if the IEP Team determines that the child will not participate in a particular state or district-wide assessment of student achievement (or part of such an assessment), a statement of why that assessment is not appropriate for the child; and how the child will be assessed [Sec. 614 (d) (1) (A) (V) and VI].</p> <p>For the small group of students with significant cognitive disabilities who are also English learners, these assessments will be an important tool to measure their progress in learning English.</p> <p>IDEA, 34 CFR §§300.160(b)(2)(i) and (ii)</p> <p>(2) The State's (or, in the case of a district-wide assessment, the LEA's) guidelines must:</p> <p>(i) Identify only those accommodations for each assessment that do not invalidate the score; and</p> <p>(ii) Instruct IEP teams to select, for each assessment, only those accommodations that do not invalidate the score.</p>

Law	Description
<p>Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act</p>	<p>Section 504 provides individuals with disabilities with certain rights and protects individuals with disabilities against discrimination in federally funded programs and activities. Section 504 states</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States, as defined in section 705(20) of this title, shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance or under any program or activity conducted by any executive agency...</p> <p>In school settings, 504 legislation guarantees and protects students with disabilities who may not otherwise have an IEP, but are still considered an individual with disabilities. The definition of a student with disabilities is much broader under 504 than it is under IDEA. An important part of the 504 plans developed by schools for students with disabilities is often the lists of accommodations that the student can use on assessments.</p> <p>Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) ensure a level playing field for students with disabilities in a wide range of settings, including testing, and, similarly to IDEA, provide for reasonable testing accommodations to be given to students with disabilities as outlined/as needed. Title III of the ADA requires equal access and participation. The IEP/504 team is charged with making accommodations decisions for all IDEA/504 eligible students every year, as part of the annual IEP/504 process.</p>

**Legal Cases**

Case	Description
<p>Lau v. Nichols (1974)</p>	<p>The Office of Civil Rights established a policy for the provision of equal educational opportunities for ELs. This policy was described in a memorandum in 1970:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Where the inability to speak and understand the English language excludes national origin minority group children from effective participation in the educational program offered by a school district, the district must take affirmative steps to rectify</p>

Case	Description
	<p>the language deficiency in order to open its instructional program to these students.</p> <p>This memorandum does not tell districts what steps they must take to ensure the equal opportunities for ELs. However, it does state that the law is violated if</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• students are excluded from effective participation in school because of their inability to speak and understand the language of instruction;</li> <li>• national origin minority students are inappropriately assigned to special education classes because of their lack of English skills;</li> <li>• programs for students whose English is less than proficient are not designed to teach them English as soon as possible, or if these programs operate as a dead-end track; or</li> <li>• parents whose English is limited do not receive school notices or other information in a language they can understand.</li> </ul> <p>This law was tested in the Supreme Court Case, <i>Lau v. Nichols</i>. In 1974, the Supreme Court upheld this law, supporting the premise that if students cannot understand the language of instruction, they do not have access to an equal opportunity education. The Supreme Court said the following:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">There is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education.</p> <p>All students in the United States, regardless of native language, have the right to a quality education. An equal education is only possible when students are able to understand the language of instruction.</p>
<p>Castañeda v. Pickard (1981)</p>	<p>On June 23, 1981, the Fifth Circuit Court issued a decision that is the seminal post-Lau decision concerning education of language minority students. The case established a three-part test to evaluate the adequacy of a district’s program for EL students:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Is the program based on an educational theory recognized as sound by some experts in the field or is it considered by experts as a legitimate experimental strategy?</li> </ol>

Case	Description
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Are the programs and practices, including resources and personnel, reasonably calculated to implement this theory effectively?</li> <li>3. Does the school district evaluate its programs and make adjustments where needed to ensure language barriers are actually being overcome?</li> </ol>
Brookhart v. Illinois State Board of Education (1983)	This case demonstrated the necessary steps that a district is required to take in order to ensure that students with disabilities are prepared for graduation standards. School districts need to pay careful attention to ensure that students are aware of diploma requirements, and IEPs need to be written with these specific graduation requirements in mind.

### Federal Guidance

Guidance	Description
Questions and Answers Regarding Inclusion of English Learners with Disabilities in English Language Proficiency Assessments and Title III Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives	<p>This joint guidance document developed by the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) and the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) was released on July 18, 2014, to help states and local educational agencies understand how Part B of the <i>IDEA</i> and Titles I and III of the <i>ESEA</i> address the inclusion of ELs with disabilities in annual state ELP assessments.</p> <p>Retrieved July 25, 2016, from <a href="http://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/q-and-a-on-elp-swd.pdf">www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/q-and-a-on-elp-swd.pdf</a>.</p> <p>The 2014 guidance was amended by the July 2015 Addendum. The two documents address states' general obligations around including ELs with disabilities in ELP assessments, responsibilities of IEP teams, accommodations and alternate assessments, exit from EL status, annual measurable achievement objectives, initial identification, and other considerations.</p> <p>Retrieved July 25, 2016, from <a href="https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/addendum-q-and-a-on-elp-swd.pdf">https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/addendum-q-and-a-on-elp-swd.pdf</a>.</p>
Dear Colleague Letter on the Nondiscriminatory Administration of School Discipline	Issued on January 7, 2015, by the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Education, this document covers state and local educational agencies' obligations to EL students and addresses common civil rights issues. A separate section of the document discusses the issue of evaluating ELs for special education services and providing special education and English language services. This document is

Guidance	Description
	<p>accompanied by resources for students and parents available in multiple languages. Retrieved July 25, 2016, from <a href="http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-el-201501.pdf">http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-el-201501.pdf</a>.</p>
<p>Dear Colleague Letter on FAPE/IEP Alignment</p>	<p>Issued on November 16, 2015, by the U.S. Department of Education (the Office of Special and Rehabilitative Services), this document addresses the entitlement of each eligible child with a disability to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) aligned with the child’s individualized education program (IEP). Retrieved July 25, 2016, from <a href="https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/guidance-on-fape-11-17-2015.pdf">https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/guidance-on-fape-11-17-2015.pdf</a>.</p>
<p>Americans with Disabilities Act Requirements: Testing Accommodations</p>	<p>Issued in September 2015 by the Department of Justice, this is the Department’s response to questions and complaints about excessive and burdensome documentation demands, failures to provide needed accommodations, and failures to respond to requests for testing accommodations in a timely manner. The guidance applies to testing entities (private, state, local) that have exams related to applications, licensing, certification, or credentialing for secondary, postsecondary, professional, or trade purposes. Retrieved July 25, 2016, from <a href="http://www.ada.gov/regs2014/testing_accommodations.html">http://www.ada.gov/regs2014/testing_accommodations.html</a>.</p>
<p>English Learner Tool Kit</p>	<p>This document was jointly developed by the Department of Education and Department of Justice and issued in September 2015 to help state and local education agencies help ELs by fulfilling the obligations in the Dear Colleague Letter of January 7, 2015. The tool kit includes 10 chapters, one for each of the “common civil rights issues” discussed in the January 7, 2015, Dear Colleague Letter. Retrieved July 25, 2016, from <a href="http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/index.html">http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/index.html</a>.</p>
<p>Peer Review of State Assessment Systems</p>	<p>This guidance was issued in September 2015 by the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) and is required by ESEA Section 1111(e) to ensure the technical soundness of each State’s assessment system. This version was revised after the previous version was suspended in December 2012. The document is reorganized, and includes updates based on revised professional standards.</p>

Guidance	Description
	Retrieved July 25, 2016, from <a href="https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/assessguid15.pdf">https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/assessguid15.pdf</a> .

## **Tool 5: Sample Student Profiles**

The following four profiles were drawn from actual student profiles, and identifying information has been removed or changed. These profiles are not meant to be representative, but rather to highlight the importance of addressing the individual needs of each English learner (EL) with a disability.

### **Student 1: High English Language Needs, Low Disability-related Needs**

Ricardo is a 14-year-old boy. He is in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade now and has been in the school district since kindergarten. However, he left for extended periods of time to return to his home country of Peru. Spanish is his first language and the primary language spoken at home.

Ricardo struggled in school academically and socially. Because of his EL status, it was difficult to determine if his struggle was due to limited English proficiency. Finally, in Grade 5, Ricardo's assessments were ordered in Spanish, and someone was brought in, so the student could be tested in his first language.

Those test results showed that he had a learning disability and, with special education support, he improved both socially and academically. He still struggled with having confidence in his abilities and he read well below his grade level.

The assessment coordinator, John, administered the general assessment with Ricardo. John wanted Ricardo to be able to have individual testing so that he could have all the time he needed. John read the math portion of the test to Ricardo, but he was on his own for the reading section. It was a horrible experience for Ricardo.

The reading section was completed over a week. John gave him multiple breaks, but he could not give Ricardo what he really needed. Ricardo wanted to do well so badly that he spent almost an hour on just one question. He kept trying to reread the passage but could not get through it. There were too many words that he could not read. He was so frustrated. He was in tears, but he refused to just leave it. He said, "I am going to do terrible. I just want to do better."

This year he was able to complete a partial alternate assessment instead of having to complete the reading portion of the test. He was thrilled when the scores came back, and he had exceeded proficiency. He wouldn't be able to take the alternate assessment next year, but at least he was successful this year. He was proficient in math and exceeding proficient in reading.

His English test scores were – Speaking: Intermediate; Listening: Basic; Reading: Emergent; and Writing: Emergent. He has made huge gains over the last year, both in his abilities and self-confidence. Ricardo's teacher is looking forward to the reading and writing portions of the general assessment next year. Hopefully, with another year under his belt and all the accommodations the teacher can offer, the student will feel successful again.

John did not know what could be done so that the test would better reflect the student’s true abilities. He thought that the state tests were not made to accurately assess ELs or students with disabilities. ELs also take the English proficiency test every year. He thought that it would be nice if those scores could be used to measure annual progress of ELs with disabilities instead of the general assessment. John thought that with all of the state assessments, it did not seem like there were real options as far as participation. But he had to administer the assessments.

### **Questions for Ricardo’s Case**

1. Do you agree with Ricardo’s placement on the language and disability grid?
2. What disability-related challenges are apparent for this student?
3. What language- and culture-related challenges is this student facing?
4. What instruction and assessment accommodations would be beneficial for this student?

### **Student 2: High English Language Needs, High Disability-related Needs**

Fatima came to the United States with her family as a refugee. She lives in a “complex” with an extended family. Her mother has a mild intellectual disability. Educators have been unable to communicate with her parents due to their limited knowledge of English. Some intercultural misunderstandings may have occurred. Fatima has been a student in her current district since kindergarten. Throughout her schooling, she has had some challenging behaviors in the classroom. Most notable has been taking things from the teacher and other students (food, pencils, etc.), which has created issues and concerns in her education.

Fatima has attained a reasonable amount of spoken English since she began school in kindergarten, but has very delayed skills in all areas according to grade-level standards. Fatima has a hearing impairment and severe vision impairment, for which she qualifies for special education.

Fatima’s school psychologist is concerned about the validity of Fatima’s assessment results because of the unresolved interaction between her disability and score results. Prior to enrolling in the district, Fatima’s family had not provided any medical interventions. The school obtained permission to take Fatima to an eye doctor. Glasses and vision exercises were prescribed. However, in her native culture it is not permitted to wear glasses. She reported that the first pair of glasses paid for by the health care system had been lost at home. Fatima then reported that the second pair of glasses, which was paid for by the school, had been broken. The third pair that the teacher paid for personally, had to stay at school, but was thrown away at lunch. Currently, Fatima is not wearing glasses which are an educational need for her. The school plans on getting her another pair when she returns from spring break. Their main focus is on creating a plan so that she will wear them. Fatima is also doing the vision exercises that need to be done daily, four times a day. She mainly does these exercises at school since she rarely remembers to do them at home.

Fatima also has a significant hearing loss. Most of the assistive technology suggested to help with this impairment is placed in the ears. The school got a hearing aid for Fatima that can be

worn under her headscarf. Her family would prefer that Fatima does not put her headscarf behind her ears. The quality of the sound, however, is not always optimal for the student. The aid provides a more muffled sound than it would if her ears could be out from under the headscarf. Because of these unresolved vision and hearing impairments, the psychologist does not want to conduct assessments with questionable validity.

The school hired interpreters and did home visits to figure out the best way to help Fatima. Every teacher on staff is working to help her. She is still classified as EL according to her most recent English proficiency test.

### **Questions for Fatima's Case**

1. Do you agree with Fatima's placement on the language and disability grid?
2. What disability-related challenges are apparent for this student?
3. What language- and culture-related challenges is this student facing?
4. What instruction and assessment accommodations would be beneficial for this student?

### **Student 3: Low English Language Needs, High Disability-related Needs**

Ben is 14 according to his birth certificate. He is in 7th grade. He was adopted from Haiti into a loving family when they think he was 5. He had lived in an orphanage and was malnourished when he came to the United States. He had limited language in his native Haitian Creole and had Peters Anomaly, with only one functioning eye. When he began kindergarten, he did not have any fine motor skills due to low muscle tone and did not appear to have any pre-literacy skills. He was quite passive and loved listening to stories, showing evidence that he came from a language with an oral tradition and had been told some stories in the past. He began to develop a charming personality and seemed to be adapting to his new language, culture, family, school, and environment.

He worked hard at school, had a lot of support as an English learner, and was assessed for support in physical and occupational therapy. His oral language continued to grow, as evidenced by his English assessment scores; however, he was not learning to read and write and began to struggle academically. He received specialized reading and math through special education in Grades 2 and 3, while remaining in the classroom for the rest of the time. He continued with ESL pull-out and he participated in an after-school reading and writing club. He became a part of the school and community, loved to have people read non-fiction to him, and he was able to discuss what was read when given the opportunity.

The loss of his first language over time seemed to have quite an impact, as he had nothing linguistically to relate to. Most language he used was very concrete, he clung to factual information, and he did not understand inferences or metaphors. He began to lose confidence and became very self-conscious in academic settings. After much testing, he was diagnosed with an intellectual disability, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder. In Grades 4 and 5, he was in an intensive self-contained special education program to focus on reading, writing, and math. It was during these years that he began to strengthen his reading and writing skills, but his math skills were far below proficient. Due to a change in location of the

program and his schedule, he did not receive ESL programming at this time other than the after-school program and Rosetta Stone. The question of shared support through ESL services and special education services resurfaced.

Ben's mother was frustrated with all the assessments that her son and other EL students with disabilities had to go through each year. She understood the need to assess, but she felt that there was too much time spent on "teaching to the test," as well as the days of the actual testing. She wondered about the purpose of the English language test for her son and she is not sure that accommodations are really that helpful. She would rather see educators using that time on appropriate instruction at her son's developmental level with less formal assessments along the way to show what he was learning, NOT what he couldn't possibly comprehend on the state-mandated tests. She does feel that the English test is a valid assessment of his language development. She felt that the accommodations that her son had were just something to put on paper, and that it would be more appropriate to use his oral strength and assess him on what he was presently learning. She was worried about Ben's future and saw that he had a potential six more years before graduating from high school with all of the required assessing. She believed in public education and hoped and expected that he would stay in school. She felt that due to his intellectual challenges, Ben needed to become functional. She was concerned that his self-esteem was affected every time he was put in front of a required test. Ben was receiving community support for his disability. However, the support that Ben needed might be not available if the school didn't have the data from the assessments.

#### **Questions for Ben's Case**

1. Do you agree with Ben's placement on the language and disability grid?
2. What disability-related challenges are apparent for this student?
3. What language- and culture-related challenges is this student facing?
4. What instruction and assessment accommodations would be beneficial for this student?

#### **Student 4: Low English Language Needs, Low Disability-related Needs**

Anna is a Spanish-speaking girl who was administered both the English proficiency assessment test and the general assessment this year. She was very outgoing, thus giving the impression to others that she was performing at a higher level than she actually was. Anna was also very conscientious about not making mistakes. She came late in the year when testing was already underway. Since Anna entered during the testing window, the school was expected to test her. On the general assessment, it was slightly easier for Anna because the school testing coordinator, Lesley, gave the test, and she was familiar with Lesley. Lesley also let her know that it was okay to be "wrong" or to say she did not know. After half an hour of testing, it became obvious that Anna was just randomly answering questions and did not appear to understand them. Lesley immediately contacted the testing coordinator for the district to inform her that the school had the wrong level of test for Anna. The district testing coordinator assessed the situation, and the teachers were informed that they had to administer the previously selected test for Anna. So, while Anna appeared "okay" taking the test, she often ended up in tears because she knew she did not know the answers.

Anna's parents were from Central America, and they did not speak English at home. It quickly became clear that there were some intercultural misunderstandings. Anna's parents were quite happy to have their child in a U.S. American school, but did not understand the special education aspect of things (a service not offered where they had lived). So when Anna started having problems in school, her parents did not know what to do and pressured Anna to pass the test. Her parents did not understand the purpose of the test and they were concerned that she had missed several questions. Lesley managed to calm both Anna and her parents, explaining to them that the school would do whatever it could to help Anna learn the material that was difficult for her.

### **Questions for Anna's Case**

1. Do you agree with Anna's placement on the language and disability grid?
2. What disability-related challenges are apparent for this student?
3. What language- and culture-related challenges is this student facing?
4. What instruction and assessment accommodations would be beneficial for this student?

## Tool 6: Dos and Don'ts When Selecting Accessibility Supports

**Do...**make accessibility decisions based on individualized needs (e.g., the student's amount of time in the country, disability needs, etc.).

**Don't...**make accessibility decisions based on whatever is easiest to do (e.g., preferential seating).

**Do...**select accessibility supports that reduce the effect of the disability and language barrier to access content and demonstrate learning.

**Don't...**select accessibility supports unrelated to documented student learning needs or to give students an unfair advantage.

**Do...**be certain to document instructional and assessment accommodation(s) on the IEP, 504, or EL plan.

**Don't...**use an accommodation that has not been documented on the IEP, 504, or EL plan.

**Do...**turn off certain universal features for some students if these features prove to be distracting.

**Don't...**assume that all universal features should be available to all students without previous try-outs.

**Do...**select designated features based on input of one or more informed educators.

**Don't...**make blanket decisions about designated features.

**Do...**ensure that accommodations are selected based on multiple stakeholders' input.

**Don't...**make unilateral decisions about accommodations.

**Do...**make decisions about designated features and accommodations prior to the assessment day.

**Don't...**assume that various combinations of accessibility supports will work effectively without testing these combinations.

**Do...**be specific about the "Where, When, Who, and How" of providing accessibility supports.

**Don't...**assume that all instructional accessibility supports are appropriate for use on assessments.

**Do...**refer to state accessibility policies and understand implications of selections.

**Don't...**simply indicate an accessibility support will be provided "as appropriate" or "as necessary."

**Do...**evaluate accessibility supports used by the student.

**Don't...**check every accessibility support possible on a checklist simply to be "safe."

**Do...**get input about accessibility supports from teachers, parents, and students.

**Don't...**assume the same accessibility supports remain appropriate year after year.

**Do...**provide accessibility supports for assessments routinely used for classroom instruction or ensure that students practice each support sufficiently.

**Don't...**provide an assessment accessibility support for the first time on the day of a test.

**Do...**select accessibility support based on specific individual student needs.

**Don't...**assume certain accessibility supports, such as a dictionary, are appropriate for every student.



**EQUALITY**

**VS**

**EQUITY**



**Equal, static instruction.**  
(c.f. "Traditional Instruction")



**Equitable, support based on student need.**  
(c.f. "accommodations and modifications")



**Flexible learning experiences, such that variable learners have access.** (c.f. UDL)

## **Tool 7: Accessibility Supports from the Student’s Perspective**

*Use this questionnaire to collect information about needed accessibility supports from the student’s perspective. The questions can be completed independently or as part of an interview process. Whatever method is used, however, be certain that the student understands the concept of “accessibility supports” (universal features, designated features, and accommodations), and provide examples as necessary. Also, provide a list of possible accessibility supports to give the student a good understanding of the range of supports that may be available.*

1. What parts of learning are easiest for you?

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2. Tell me something in class that you do well.

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*The things you said you can do well above are your strengths. For example, you may have mentioned vocabulary, grammar, reading, writing, listening, drawing, or doing your homework as some things you can do well. If you said you really like the subject, have a good memory, and work hard in class, these are also examples of your strengths.*

3. What parts of learning are hardest?

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4. Tell me something you do in class that is hard.

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*The things you said were hardest are areas you need to work on during the school year. For example, you might have listed reading the class textbook, taking tests, listening, remembering new information, doing homework, or doing work in groups. These are all things in which an accommodation may be helpful for you.*

5. In the list that follows, write down all of the challenges you currently have related to learning. Then look at a list of accessibility supports. Next to each class, write down what supports you think might be helpful for you.

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## Challenge List

**Things that are hard**

**Accessibility supports**

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This questionnaire was adapted from *A Student's Guide to the IEP* by the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (<http://nichcy.org/pubs/stuguide/st1book.htm>). Retrieved July 28, 2005.

## **Tool 8: Parent Input on Accessibility Supports**

### Questions Parents Should Ask about Accessibility Supports (Universal Features and Accommodations) in Instruction and Assessment

#### **About Instruction**

- What instructional supports does my child need to access and reach the academic standards?
- How can my child and I advocate to receive accessibility supports not yet provided in instruction?
- Are there any accessibility supports that my child uses at home but does not have available in the classroom?
- Are the accessibility supports my child is receiving in instruction meant to be temporary? If yes, what is the plan to help determine when to phase them out?
- How are the various staff members who work with my child providing accessibility supports? (across content instruction, English language development, special education, or other staff)
- What is the setting or model of program support my child receives for instruction?

#### **About Accessibility Supports**

- What are the tests my child needs to take, what do they measure (e.g., regular or alternate academic standards), and for what purpose is each given?
- Are the accessibility supports allowed on state tests also provided for district tests?
- How can I support my child at home to ensure that my child can access homework meaningfully?
- Can my child participate in part of an assessment with or without certain accessibility supports?
- Are there consequences for allowing certain changes to how my child participates in a test? How will my child's test scores count?
- Do consequences of accessibility supports vary by type of test?

## Questions for Instruction and Assessment

Is the need for each accessibility support documented in my child's planning tool (such as ISAAP, PNP, or a similar tool) and/or EL, IEP, or 504 plan?

Are there too many or too few accessibility supports being provided?

What are my child's preferences for specific accessibility supports?

If my child needs designated features or accommodations, how will they be provided?

If an accessibility support provided on a test is not used in instruction, or is not presented in the same format (e.g., an online calculator for a test), how will my child be given opportunities to practice using the accessibility support?

If an accessibility support used in instruction is not allowed on a test, is there another allowed option to assist the student? If yes, has it been documented and tried in instruction first? If no, how is my child being prepared to work without the accessibility support before the test? What evidence is there to know if my child was able to access or use the accessibility supports provided?

Adapted from the *Minnesota Manual for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities in Instruction and Assessment*. Questions are based in part on questions and content from NCLD's Parent Advocacy Brief, *NCLB: Determining Appropriate Assessment Accommodations for Students with Disabilities*, and *Testing Students with Disabilities: Practical Strategies for Complying with District and State Requirements*, 2nd ed. (2003) by Martha Thurlow, Judy Elliott, and James Ysseldyke.

**Tool 9: Instructional Accessibility Features and Accommodations (AFAs)**

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Beginning of Year AFAs:</b>	<b>Middle of Year AFAs</b>	<b>End of Year AFAs</b>
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.
<b>Teacher Evaluation:</b>	<b>Teacher Evaluation:</b>	<b>Teacher Evaluation:</b>
<b>Team Recommendations:</b>	<b>Team Recommendations:</b>	<b>Team Recommendations:</b>



**Tool 11: Accessibility Supports in the Classroom**

*Use this chart to track different aspects of how a student uses accessibility supports (universal features and accommodations) in your classroom. This will help inform decision making on accessibility supports.*

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

What accessibility supports does the student use in the classroom? List them in the chart. Then follow the questions in the chart.

Questions	List accessibility supports – universal supports and accommodations				
1. Is it noted in student’s planning tool (such as ISAAP or PNP) and/or EL, IEP, or 504 plan?					
2. For what task(s) is it used? (e.g., task type or standard).					
3. Does the student use it for that task every time? Note how often.					
4. Does the student use it alone or with assistance? (e.g., aide, peers?)					
5. If more than one support is available, how do these supports interact? For example, does one accessibility support seem more effective					

when used with another on a task?					
6. If the accessibility support is presented differently on the test (e.g., an online calculator), how can you give the student opportunities to practice using it?					
7. Does the student's individualized plan (e.g., EL, IEP, 504) need to be updated?					

## Tool 12: After-test Accessibility Questions

Use this form after a test to interview a student about the accessibility supports (universal features and accommodations) provided, used, whether they were useful, and whether they should be used again. Also note any adjustments or difficulties experienced by the student in either how the accessibility support was administered or in using the accessibility support during the assessment. Students in higher grades may do this independently, or filling out this form could be facilitated through a discussion between a teacher and a student.

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Accessibility support used: \_\_\_\_\_

Questions	Supports Available (List)			
Was the accessibility support used? (Circle Yes or No and record optional comments.)	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
Was the accessibility support useful? (Circle Yes or No and record optional comments.)	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
Were there any difficulties with the accessibility support? (Are adjustments needed?) (Circle Yes or No and record optional comments.)	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
Should the accessibility support be used again? (Circle Yes or No and record optional comments.)	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No

Student signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### Tool 13: Assessment Accessibility Plan

#### Student Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Assessment: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Assessment: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Case Information

ESL/Bilingual Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Education Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

School Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Building/School: \_\_\_\_\_

General Education Teacher(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Accessibility supports that the student needs for this assessment and date arranged:

Accessibility Supports	Date Arranged
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
Comments: _____	_____

Person responsible for arranging accessibility supports and due date:

Person Responsible Due Date	Date Arranged
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
Comments: _____	_____

Room assignment for assessment: \_\_\_\_\_

Planners for this process (signatures): \_\_\_\_\_

Adapted from Scheiber, B., & Talpers, J. (1985). *Campus access for learning disabled students: A comprehensive guide*. Pittsburgh: Association for Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities.

## Tool 14: Accessibility Journal for Teachers

One way to keep track of what accessibility supports work for students is to support them in keeping an “accessibility journal.” The journal lets the student be in charge and could be kept up to date through regular consultation with an ESL/bilingual teacher, special education teacher, general education teacher, assessment administrator, or other staff members. Just think how much easier it would be for educators to decide which accessibility supports to select if the student kept a journal documenting all of the following:

- accessibility supports used by the student in the classroom and on tests;
- test and assignment results when accessibility supports are used and not used;
- student’s perception of how well the accessibility support “works”;
- effective combinations of accessibility supports;
- difficulties of accessibility support use; and
- perceptions of teachers and others about how the accessibility support appears to be working.

*In the spaces provided below, design and organize the use of an accessibility journal for one of your students. Answer these questions:*

1. What would you include as headings for the journal?

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2. When would the student make entries in the journal, and what types of support would the student need to make these entries?

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3. With whom would the student share journal entries, and when would it be done?

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### Tool 15: Identifying Roles and Responsibilities

Directions: This activity can be completed in small groups. Complete the columns below and discuss roles and responsibilities in the provision of standards-based education to your students.

Your Role as You See It	The Role of Other Colleagues as You See Them
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

#### Discussion Issues

1. Is your role clear in the provision of standards-based education to your students?
2. What appear to be similarities and differences between perceived roles and responsibilities of various educators?
3. To what extent does collaboration among educators occur in your building or district? What are some of the barriers or obstacles?
4. Are our boundaries clear? What are you doing now that you feel may be “out of your jurisdiction”?
5. What are some opportunities or barriers that can either facilitate or hinder future opportunities for general, ESL/bilingual, and special education teacher collaboration?

Adapted from *Delaware Accommodation Activity Sheets*, Delaware Department of Education.

## **Tool 16: Read Aloud (Oral Administration) Guidelines**

### **Background**

In cases where a student cannot use the computer-based version of assessments, the student should be provided the read aloud (oral administration) feature. When provided the oral administration support, the student will have those parts of the test that have audio support in the computer-based version read by a qualified human reader.

### **Qualifications of Test Readers**

- The human reader should be an education professional who is familiar with the student, and who is typically responsible for providing this feature in the classroom.
- The human reader must be trained in accordance with test administration and security policies and procedures as articulated in the state’s guidelines located in the assessment specific Test Administration Manual (TAM).
- The human reader must have prior experience in providing read aloud support and must be familiar and comfortable with the process before providing this support to a student during test administration.

### **Preparation Procedures**

- Human readers must read and sign a test security/confidentiality agreement consistent with state policy or practice prior to test administration.
- Human readers are expected to familiarize themselves with the test environment and format of the test in advance of administering the read aloud support during operational testing.
- Human readers must clearly distinguish between the test content that should and should not be read aloud to students. Reading aloud test content that is not permitted will result in a test misadministration and will invalidate the test.
- Prior to administering the test, the human reader should inform the student of the parameters of the read aloud support.
- The human reader must be aware of whether the student requires additional accessibility supports that have been approved for use during the test.

### **Guidelines for Reading Aloud**

- The test environment must be configured in such a way as to ensure that the read aloud does not interfere with the instruction or assessment of other students (e.g., ensuring adequate spacing so that the reader’s voice does not carry to other students or testing in a separate setting).
- The human reader can only read aloud the same test content that is supported through audio in a computer-based version. No other test content may be read aloud.
- The human reader must read test content exactly as written and as clearly as possible.

- The human reader must communicate in a neutral tone and maintain a neutral facial expression and posture.
- The human reader should avoid gesturing, head movements, or any other verbal or non-verbal emphasis on words.
- The human reader must avoid conversing with the student about test items and respond to the student's questions by repeating the item, words, or instructions **verbatim** as needed.
- The human reader must not paraphrase, interpret, define, or translate any items, words, or instructions.
- The human reader should adjust his/her reading speed and volume if requested by the student.

### **Post-Administration**

- The human reader must not discuss any portion of the test or the student's performance with others.

## **Tool 17: Scribe Guidelines**

### **Background**

A scribe is an adult who writes down or inputs to the computer what a student dictates via speech or an assistive communication device. A guiding principle in providing a scribe during test administration is to ensure that the student has access to and is able to respond to test content.

### **Qualifications of Scribes**

- The scribe should be an education professional who is familiar with the student, and who is typically responsible for providing this accommodation in the classroom.
- The scribe must be trained in accordance with test administration and security policies and procedures as articulated in test administration manuals, accessibility and accommodations manuals, and related documentation.
- The scribe must have prior experience in providing scribing or transcribing services and must be familiar and comfortable with the process before providing this accommodation to a student during operational test administration.

### **Preparation Procedures**

- Scribes must read and sign a test security/confidentiality agreement prior to test administration.
- Scribes are expected to familiarize themselves with test format using a practice test as well as test environment in advance of the testing session if administering the scribe accommodation during operational testing.
- Scribes must be familiar with the Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan if the student for whom they are scribing has a disability, so that there are plans in place for providing all needed designated supports and accommodations.
- Scribes must be aware if the student requires additional accessibility features or accommodations that have been approved for use during the test.
- Scribes should meet with the student in advance and practice scribing with the student prior to the assessment.

### **Guidelines for Scribing**

- Scribing must be provided in a separate setting so as not to interfere with the instruction or assessment of other students.
- For computer-based administrations, scribes must enter student responses directly into the test interface, making use of the embedded and non-embedded accessibility supports available for a given item and student.
- Scribes should comply with student requests regarding use of all available features within the test environment.

- Scribes must avoid conversing with the student about test items and record the student's responses **verbatim** even if they contain errors.
- Scribes may respond to procedural questions asked by the student (e.g., test directions, navigation within the test environment).
- Scribes may not respond to student questions about test items if their responses compromise validity of the test. The student must not be prompted, reminded, or otherwise assisted in formulating his or her response during or after the dictation to the scribe.
- Scribes may ask the student to restate words or parts of a sentence as needed. Such requests must not be communicated in a manner suggesting that the student should make a change or correction.
- Scribes may not question or correct student choices, alert students to errors, prompt, or influence students in any way that might compromise the integrity of student responses.
- Scribes may not edit or alter student work in any way, and must record exactly what the student has dictated.
- The student must be allowed to review and edit what the scribe has written.

### **Post-Administration**

- The scribe must not discuss any portion of the test or the student's performance with others.

### **Guidelines for Transcription**

- Responses must be transcribed verbatim onscreen or in the paper test booklet by the test administrator as soon as possible after the test is administered.
- Any stored test content on the word processing device must be deleted after the transcription is completed. While awaiting transcription, the device with recorded answers must be stored in a secured, locked location.

## **Tool 18: Human Signer Guidelines**

### **Background**

In cases where a student requires a sign language support, and for whom the American Sign Language (ASL) video accommodation is not available or appropriate, a human signer is provided.

### **Qualifications of Human Signer**

- Human signer should be an education professional who is familiar with the student, and who is typically responsible for providing this accommodation in the classroom.
- The human signer must be trained in accordance with test administration and security policies and procedures as articulated in test administration manuals, accessibility and accommodations manuals, and related documentation.
- Human signer must have prior experience in providing signing or transliteration services and must be familiar and comfortable with the process before providing this accommodation to a student during operational test administration.

### **Preparation Procedures**

- Human signers must read and sign a test security/confidentiality agreement prior to test administration.
- Human signers are expected to familiarize themselves with test format using a practice test as well as test environment in advance of the testing session if administering the accommodation during operational testing.
- Human signers must be aware if the student requires additional accessibility features or accommodations that have been approved for use during the test.
- Human signers should meet with the student in advance and practice with the student prior to the assessment.

### **Guidelines for Human Signer**

Human signers must follow these procedures during testing to ensure the standardization of the signed presentation to the students.

- Signers must be trained on test administration policies by local test coordinators.
- Signers should use signs that are conceptually accurate, with or without simultaneous voicing, translating only the content that is printed in the test book or on the computer screen without changing, emphasizing, or adding information. Signers may not clarify (except for test directions), provide additional information, assist, or influence the student's selection of a response in any way. Signers must do their best to use the same signs if the student requests a portion repeated.

- Signers must sign (or sign and speak when using Sim-Com [Simultaneous Communication]) in a clear and consistent manner throughout test administration, using correct production, and without inflections that may provide clues to, or mislead, a student. Signers should be provided a copy of the test and the administrative directions prior to the start of testing (check individual state policy for the amount of time allowed), in order to become familiar with the words, terms, symbols, signs, and/or graphics that will be read aloud to the student.
- Signers should emphasize only the words printed in boldface, italics, or capital letters and inform the student that the words are printed that way. No other emphasis or inflection is permitted.
- Signers may repeat passages, test items, and response options, as requested, according to the needs of the student. Signers should not rush through the test and should ask the student if they are ready to move to the next item.
- Signers may not attempt to solve mathematics problems, or determine the correct answer to a test item while signing, as this may result in pauses or changes in inflection which may mislead the student.
- Signers must use facial expressions consistent with sign language delivery and must not use expressions which may be interpreted by the student as approval or disapproval of the student's answers.
- Upon review of the test, if a human signer is unsure how to sign and/or pronounce an unfamiliar word, the signer should collaborate with an ASL-fluent content expert (if available) which sign is most appropriate to use. If the signer is unable to obtain this information before the test, the signer should advise the student of the uncertainty and spell the word.
- When using an ASL sign that can represent more than one concept or English word, the signer must adequately contextualize the word, in order to reduce ambiguity. The signer may also spell the word after signing it, if there is any doubt about which word is intended.
- When signing selected response items, signers must be careful to give equal emphasis to each response option and to sign options before waiting for the student's response.
- When response choices will be scribed, the signer should inform the student at the beginning of the test that if the student designates a response choice by letter only ("D", for example), the signer will ask the student if he/she would like the response to be signed again before the answer is recorded in the answer booklet or the computer-based test.
- After the signer finishes signing a test item and all response options, the signer must allow the student to pause before responding. If the pause has been lengthy ask, "Do you want me to sign the question or any part of it again?" When signing questions again, signers must avoid emphasis on words not bolded, italicized, or capitalized.
- Signers should refer to the state glossary (if provided) for technical vocabulary (signs used on the ASL video accommodation) for consistency in providing the accommodation.

**Tool 19: Teacher Evaluation of Classroom Accessibility Features and Accommodations**

**Teacher Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Subject:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please list each accessibility support (feature or accommodation), rate its effectiveness, and comment about what you think might improve effectiveness, if needed.

No.	Accessibility Support	Not effective	Somewhat effective	Very effective
1.		1	2	3
	How could the effectiveness of this accessibility support be improved?			
2.		1	2	3
	How could the effectiveness of this accessibility support be improved?			
3.		1	2	3
	How could the effectiveness of this accessibility support be improved?			

## **Tool 20: Questions to Guide Evaluation at the School and District Level**

Discuss the following questions with other educators:

- Are there procedures in place to ensure test administrators adhere to directions for the administration of accessibility supports (universal supports and accommodations)?
- In what ways can you use assessment data and accessibility data to ensure appropriate accessibility supports are being used?
- In what ways are you currently evaluating the methods of students receiving accessibility supports? How can you improve these methods?