Testing Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Produced by the Technical Assistance Partnership (TAP) for Transition at Cornell University

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Disclaimer

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Today’s Facilitators
Learning Objectives

Participants will:
- Understand the purpose of testing accommodations
- Define testing accommodations
- Understand their role in supporting a student with their testing accommodations
- Recognize that instructional accommodations used in the classroom should be aligned with the testing accommodations provided during assessment

Students will be provided access to and participate in general education curriculum and in courses that will prepare them to take and pass the required examinations.
Materials

• Testing Accommodations Manual
• Testing Accommodations Checklist
• Action Plan: “To-Do” List for Testing Accommodations
• Test Your Knowledge Quiz—Hot Topics
• Student Refusal—Parent Resource
New York State Education Department Office of Special Education

Blueprint for Improved Results for Students with Disabilities

**Self-Advocacy**
Students engage in self-advocacy and are involved in determining their own educational goals and plan.

**Family Partnership**
Parents, and other family members, are engaged as meaningful partners in the special education process and the education of their child.

**Specially-Designed Instruction**
Teachers design, provide, and assess the effectiveness of specially-designed instruction to provide students with disabilities with access to participate and progress in the general education curriculum.

**Research-Based Instruction**
Teachers provide research-based instructional teaching and learning strategies and supports for students with disabilities.

**Multi-tiered Support**
Schools provide multi-tiered systems of behavioral and academic support.

**Inclusive Activities**
Schools provide high-quality inclusive programs and activities.

**Transition Support**
Schools provide appropriate instruction for students with disabilities in career development and opportunities to participate in work-based learning.
On a sticky note:

1. Identify one testing accommodation that you frequently recommend on an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

2. On the flip side of the sticky note, identify “why” you recommend the testing accommodation. Note student needs or characteristics that justify the accommodation requested.

3. Record any questions you may have regarding Testing Accommodations.
Section One

Federal and State Requirements for Testing Accommodations

Photo by Allison Shelley for EDUImages.
Part 200 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education

§200.4(d)(2)(vi)

The IEP shall provide a statement of any individual testing accommodations to be used consistently by the student in the recommended educational program and in the administration of districtwide assessments of student achievement and, in accordance with department policy, State assessments of student achievement that are necessary to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the student.
Section Two

Learn About Testing Accommodations

Equal opportunity
• To participate
• To demonstrate knowledge/ability
Promote access to examinations
Based on student’s individual needs
Definition of Testing Accommodations

Testing accommodations remove obstacles to the test-taking process that are presented by the disability without reducing expectations for learning.
Equality vs. Equity
Definition of Testing Modifications

• Changes made to the testing process or to the content of the assessment itself that may change, lower, or reduce learning expectations.

• Modifications may also alter the underlying construct of the assessment.
Examples of Testing Modifications

Examples of testing modifications that reduce expectations for learning and affect the construct of the test include:

• Simplification, clarification, or explanation of test questions/items

• Use of spell-checking devices on a test of the student's spelling skills

• Use of a calculator on a test of the student's computational skills
Accommodation vs. Modification

Accommodation

Modification
Categories of Testing Accommodations

- Flexibility in scheduling/timing
- Flexibility in the setting used for the administration of assessments
- Changes in the method of presentation
- Changes in the method of response
Flexible Scheduling/Timing

• Extended time
• Testing duration/frequent breaks
• Multiple-day administration
Factors to Consider When Recommending Extended Time

• Timing accommodations may be needed in conjunction with other testing accommodations (e.g., tests read; scribe; special equipment to record responses).

• Student characteristics requiring extended time
  - Slow cognitive processing or work rate
  - Limited physical stamina
Flexible Setting

- Individually in separate location
- Small group in separate location
- Special lighting
- Adaptive or special equipment
- Special acoustics
- Minimal distractions
Method of Presentation: Revised Test Format

- Braille or large print
- Increase spacing
- Increase size, shape, or location of space for answers
- Reduce number of test items per page
- Increase size of answer bubbles
- Arrange items in vertical format with answer bubble next to choice
Method of Presentation: Revised Testing Directions

- Directions read to student
- Directions reread for each page of questions
- Language in directions simplified
- Verbs in directions underlined or highlighted
- Cues (e.g., arrows and stop signs) on answer form
- Additional examples provided

Testing Accommodations Manual: Section II (p. 5)
Method of Presentation: Use of Aids or Assistive Technology Devices

- Papers secured to work area with tape/magnets
- Visual magnification devices (specify type)
- Auditory amplification devices (specify type, e.g., frequency modulation [FM] system, headset)
- Audio-recorded version
- Computer-Based Test (including talking word processor)
- Masks or markers to maintain place
Method of Response

Need for equipment or assistance to record responses:

• Adaptive writing equipment
• Word processor or speech-to-text software
• Calculator
• Spell-check device
• Point to responses
• Record answers
• Use of scribe
Computer-Based Testing (CBT)
CBT Tools and Accommodations

Features

NYSED’s Office of State Assessment provides additional information on:

- CBT Tools and Accommodations
- NYS Alternate Assessment (NYSAA)
- Dynamic Learning Maps
- Test Manuals
CBT and NYSSAA: Testing Accommodations

- 6 Steps to Customize Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Supports, p.18
- Table 3: Accessible Supports, p.20
- Supports Allowed and Not Allowed, pp. 28-29
- Appendix C: DLM Access Worksheet/IEP Teams, pp. 60-61
CBT Tools and Accommodations

Features

CBT Tools

• Tools generally available to all test takers to access the online test materials

• May be selected by any student during testing
  ▪ Answer eliminator
  ▪ Zoom
  ▪ Line reader

• It is not necessary for a CBT tool that is available to all test takers to be identified as a testing accommodation on a student’s IEP.
CBT Tools (continued)

Quick CBT Links

Nextera—Admin Guidance
CBT Tools and Accommodations Features (continued)

CBT Accommodations Features

• Answer masking
• Reverse contrast
• Text-to-speech

Must be listed as testing accommodations in the student’s IEP.
Accommodations (1 of 8)
Assigning Accommodations to Individual Students

Tap or click any option below to enable or disable it for this student.

**Answer Masking Tool**
This tool hides answers that the students select, allowing the students to focus on just the answers they want. Clicking on answer choices reveals them to the students.

**Text-to-Speech (online only)**
This feature reads the question and, for certain types of questions, the available answers using a device's speaker (headphones are recommended).

**Reverse Contrast**
When this setting is turned on, all text is white on black background. *It can't be used with Background Color.*

**Background Color**
This setting changes the color of the background and text based on the selection made. *It can't be used with Reverse Contrast.*

**Initial Page Zoom**
This adjusts the default zoom level of the testing area. It can be adjusted during the test at any time.

**Read Aloud (by human)**
This indicates that the student will take the test online, but that all or part of the question and answers will be read aloud by the teacher. *This may not be used with any print variations or offline testing accommodations.*
Accommodations (2 of 8)

Answer Masking Tool

The author **most likely** includes the event described in lines 23 through 34 to show that

metal sewing machines are still in use but no longer practical
Accommodations
(3 of 8)

Reverse Contrast

Animals need to play just like humans. Through play, both humans and animals can learn about the dangers in our world.

Why Do Animals Play?
by Kathleen Weidner Zoehfeld

1. Puppies love to run and tumble. They chase each other around the yard. They wrestle and nip each other gently. A kitten will pounce on a toy mouse or leap high for a piece of yarn.

2. Why do animals play? For the same reason YOU play—because it’s FUN! But there is more to animal play than just fun. For animals in the wild, play is important to their very survival. Young animals have to learn about their world. They have to exercise their muscles and practice all the skills they will need to survive.
Accommodations (4 of 8)

Initial Page Zoom

This adjusts the default zoom level of the testing area. It can be adjusted during the test at any time.

- 100%
- 150%
- 200%
- 300%
Text-to-Speech (TTS)

• Online only
• Controlled by the student: the student must click “Play” on each test question
• TTS player can be moved around on screen
• Text is highlighted on screen as test is read
• Four reading speeds
There are 5,280 feet in a mile. What is the total number of feet in 6 miles?

A) 31,280
B) 31,680
C) 33,680
D) 35,280
Read Aloud (by Human)

- Student will be “served” test Form A on computer
- Reader should have a Test Read print test copy, which will also be Form A
# Test Read vs. Read Aloud vs. Text-to-Speech

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Test Read</strong> (paper only)</th>
<th><strong>Read Aloud</strong> (by human)</th>
<th><strong>Text-to-Speech</strong> (online only)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A human reads the test to the student from a paper test.</td>
<td>A human reads the test to the student from a paper test.</td>
<td>The computer reads the test to the student from the computer screen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student tests on paper and enters responses on paper.</td>
<td>The student tests on computer and enters responses on computer.</td>
<td>The student tests on computer and enters responses on computer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is a classroom-only accommodation and the student is marked as “Tested on Paper” in the Nextera Admin when in a CBT class.</td>
<td>This is a combination of an online- and human-delivered accommodation.</td>
<td>This is an online-only accommodation (the student has headphones while testing on computer).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Informed Appropriate Recommendations:

Consider the Tests Required

• Know the content—standard/skills measured
• How test is administered—duration
• When—schedule
• Presentation format—paper, computer, performance-based
• Response format—multiple choice, short answer, essay
• Test score informs additional supports
Sections One and Two Questions
Reflection #1: What’s Going on Your “To-Do” List?

• “I” time—reflect on the topics we covered.
• Note any specific “to-do” items on your action plan.
Section Three

Recommending Appropriate Testing Accommodations

• Student Characteristics
• School-age
• Preschool
• Access, Knowledge, Accurate Measure
Roles and Responsibilities
of Individuals Involved in Decision-Making and Implementation

• Committee on Special Education (CSE) or 504 Committee
  - Student
  - Parents
  - General Education Teacher
  - Special Education Teacher
  - Other required CSE members

• School Principals
Things to Know When Making Decisions

• Know the student
• Know the instructional accommodations provided to the student
• Know the types of testing accommodations
• Know the purpose and requirements of the tests
Considerations in Making Decisions

Recommend testing accommodations that will:

• Provide access to assessment program
• Enable students to demonstrate skills and knowledge
• Provide an accurate measure of the standards being assessed
More is better, right?

Well... not necessarily!
Testing Accommodations
Questions to Consider to Guide Decision-Making

• Is the student able to participate in the standard administration?

• In order to participate, does the student need accommodations in:
  - Scheduling/timing
  - Location/setting
  - Presentation (e.g., format)
  - Response
Questions to Consider to Guide Decision-Making (continued)

• How does the student’s disability impede their demonstration of knowledge/understanding required by the test?

• What accommodations are provided in the classroom?

• What accommodations focus on removing obstacles to equal participation that are a result of the disability?

• What accommodations facilitate participation that enables independence?
Instructional Accommodations Alignment to Testing Accommodations
Instructional and Testing Accommodation Alignment

What does it mean to align testing accommodations with instructional accommodations?
Align Testing Accommodations with Instructional Accommodations

Instructional accommodations may include, but are not limited to:

• Extended time to complete assignments
• Adaptive furniture or small-group instruction
• Alternative formats, decreased length of assignments and/or fewer assignments, breaking assignment into smaller parts and presenting information in a variety of ways
• Use of word processing software on a computer device or providing answers orally rather than written
Testing Accommodations Example

**Testing Accommodations** (to be completed for preschool children only if there is an assessment program for nondisabled preschool children):

Individual testing accommodations, specific to the student's disability and needs, to be used consistently by the student in the recommended educational program and in the administration of district-wide assessments of student achievement and, in accordance with department policy, state assessments of student achievement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Testing Accommodation</th>
<th>Conditions*</th>
<th>Implementation Recommendations**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Extended time</td>
<td>1. For tests requiring extended written responses (more than 4 sentences)</td>
<td>1. Double time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Separate setting</td>
<td>2. All tests</td>
<td>2. Small group (less than 5 students) — quiet with minimal visual distractions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Tests read</td>
<td>3. All tests</td>
<td>3. Text-to-speech software</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Conditions – Test Characteristics: Describe the type, length, purpose of the test upon which the use of testing accommodations is conditioned, if applicable.

**Implementation Recommendations: Identify the amount of extended time, type of setting, etc., specific to the testing accommodations, if applicable.
Documenting Testing Accommodations

• Document on IEP
• Document in clear manner
• Can indicate conditions or types of tests
• Cannot say “as appropriate,” “when necessary,” or “when asked for”
• Cannot indicate in a test-specific manner
Students Who Incur Disabilities Shortly Before Testing

Principal’s Responsibility

• Onset of a short-term or long-term disability
• Does not apply to a student in process of evaluation for special education

• Limited accommodations:
  - Extended time
  - Separate location
  - Answers recorded in any manner
  - Test read—vision impairment
Section Three Questions
Section Four

Implementing Testing Accommodations

Photo by Allison Shelley for EDUImages.
Planning and Preparation

- Scheduling of tests and qualified individuals (proctors)
- Preparing testing materials—changes in test formats
- Consideration of State assessments—request for specific changes to state assessments
- Computer-based testing platforms
Implementing Testing Accommodations

• Copies of IEP are provided to teachers, service providers, and others responsible for implementing the IEP.
• Each individual is informed of the implementation responsibilities.
Training and Professional Development

Staff development should:
• Communicate State policy, guidelines, and procedures.
• Provide decision-makers with the tools necessary to make appropriate individualized decisions about students.
• Provide the tools necessary to correctly implement testing accommodations.
Implementation of Testing Accommodations

• Should not be provided for the first time during a State examination.
• Must be provided across all placement settings—not restricted to traditional school year.
• For diagnostic testing and district wide screenings—may invalidate scores, affect identification for services.
• Student may refuse.
Section Four Questions
Reflection #2: What’s Going on Your “To-Do” List?

• “I” time—reflect on the topics we covered.
• Note any specific “to-do” items on your action plan.
Appendices

Photo by Allison Shelley for EDUImages.
Test Your Knowledge!
Review the “Quiz—Hot Topics” questions!
Test Your Knowledge!

With a partner:

• Use the “Test Your Knowledge Quiz—Hot Topics” and a writing utensil.

• Review the “Hot Topic” questions posted around the room.

• Answer each question with “Yes” or “No” based on your knowledge of testing accommodations.
Appendix A: Hot Topics
Appendix B

- Review the “Do’s”—identify 3 specific points that are evident in your current practice.
- Review the “Don’ts”—identify 1–2 practices you need to address or change in your district.
- Share your observations.
Appendix C
Student Characteristics

• Review the test accommodation and student characteristics you identified on your sticky note during the "Do Now" Activity.

• Compare to the chart.

• Note any other accommodations or possible effect on test-taking.
Appendices D and E: Special Populations
Appendices A–E Questions
Appendix F: “Tests Read”

- Recommendation for students with disabilities that limit their ability to decode print.
- Low-incidence accommodation.
- Documentation supporting the accommodation.
- Decision-making tool.
Appendix F

Determining the Appropriateness of “Tests Read”

There is documentation of:

• The student’s current reading skills.
• IEP goals related to reading development.
• Explicit and systematic reading instruction and outcomes.
• Research-based reading intervention(s) included in supplementary aids and/or services provided to the student to support reading instruction.

Consideration is given to whether the student’s difficulty in reading is a result of cultural and/or linguistic differences.
Appendix F

Documentation on IEP (p. iii)

SAMPLE DOCUMENTATION

Testing conditions appropriate for a student with a disability that severely limits or precludes the ability to decode print who **would** receive the “tests read” accommodation on the Grades 3-8 ELA Assessments or Reading Section of the NYSESLAT:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Testing Accommodations</th>
<th>Testing Conditions</th>
<th>Implementation Specifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tests Read</td>
<td>For all State and local tests, <strong>including</strong> tests of reading comprehension</td>
<td>Text-to-speech software may be used to provide this accommodation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Testing conditions appropriate for a student with a disability that moderately impacts the ability to decode print who **would not** receive the “tests read” accommodation on the Grades 3-8 ELA Assessments or Reading Section of the NYSESLAT:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Testing Accommodations</th>
<th>Testing Conditions</th>
<th>Implementation Specifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tests Read</td>
<td>For all State and local tests</td>
<td>Human reader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>except</strong> tests of reading comprehension</td>
<td>Text-to-speech software may be used to provide this accommodation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F

Test Accommodation Decision-Making Tool

• Review each of the questions.

• Describe the data or evidence needed.

• Identify the source of the evidence needed.

• What additional considerations may apply?
Appendix F

“Tests Read”

Human Reader

Computer-Based Testing

Audio Playback
Appendix F

“Tests Read” (Continued)

Procedures

• Read in a neutral tone without intonation or emphasis.

• Read word for word without clarification or explanation.

• Review text booklet—up to one hour prior.
Appendix F

Let’s Practice Reading Aloud: Math Question

1.) Jasmin wrote the number sentence below.

_____ < 856

Which number belongs on the line to make the number sentence true?

(A) 862
(B) 914
(C) 891
(D) 789
2.) 13 Eurypterid fossils are abundant in the Bertie dolostone, a sedimentary rock layer found in western New York State. The presence of both the eurypterids and the dolostone indicates that, during the formation of this rock layer, this region of New York State was

(1) covered by evaporating shallow seas
(2) uplifted and eroded
(3) buried beneath lava flows
(4) intensely metamorphosed
Appendices F Questions
Reflection #3: What’s Going on Your “To-Do” List?

• “I” time—reflect on the topics we covered.
• Note any specific “to-do” items on your action plan.
Appendix G: “Use of Scribe”

- Recommendation—How and When
- Accommodations needed?
- Who scribes?
- Procedures
Appendix G

Why Scribing?

When the writing task is the primary barrier to learning, scribing will allow students with physical and cognitive difficulties to:

• Focus more on content and less on writing mechanics
• Demonstrate knowledge
• Reduce frustration
Appendix G

The Scribe

A Scribe Is:

• A recorder of what the student dictates.

• Trained and qualified.

• Familiar with the scribing procedures and tests including knowledge of the vocabulary used in the test.

• Used throughout the school year as per the IEP.

A Scribe Is NOT:

• A note taker.

• Unfamiliar to the student.

• Used for the first time during State or districtwide assessments.
Appendix G

What Makes a Good Scribe?

The important abilities and skills that should be taken into account are:

• Experience and training
• Writing speed
• Legibility
• Accuracy
• Interpersonal skills
• Subject familiarity
Appendix G

Alternatives for Scribing

Alternate recommendations to use of a scribe:

• Assistive technology—word processor, tablet, etc.
• Record student responses
• Speech-to-text software

Promote student independence!
Appendix G

Important Points

• Accommodations in combination
• Staff appropriately prepared
• Dictate to scribe or recording device
• Scribe use of word processor
• Capitalization and punctuation
• No more spelling
• Enter responses into CBT platform
• Mathematics
Appendix G

Examination Preparations Using a Scribe

• Prepare glossary of subject terms and jargon to help scribe with spelling.
• Student and scribe should know the scribing conditions (allowed vs. not allowed).
• Copies of test should be available to both student and scribe.
• Prior to exam day, procedures and preparation for the provision of a scribe need to occur.
Appendix G

Procedures for the Use of Scribe

Procedures to be used to implement the testing accommodation “Use of Scribe” on both written and mathematics tests.
Appendix G

Practice Time!

Pick a partner—paper and pencil required.

Writing prompts:
1. Student: In 2–3 sentences, respond to the question provided...
2. Scribe: Follow the directions/guidance provided...

Reverse roles, repeat activity!
Appendix G Questions
Reflection #4: What’s Going on Your “To-Do” List?

• “I” time—reflect on the topics we covered.
• Note any specific “to-do” items on your action plan.
Appendix H

Multiple-Day Administration

• Consideration
• Documentation
• Procedures
Appendix I

Student Refusal

• Explain reasons for test accommodation.
• Administer test without accommodation.
• Document the incident.
• Indicate any accommodations used by student.
• Notify the parents.
• Consider additional counseling or a review of the IEP.
Appendix J

Allowable Testing Accommodations

Reference tool on what specific testing accommodations are permissible on NYS tests.
Quality Indicators for Testing Accommodations
Quality Indicators

Testing Accommodations are:

• Recommended by individuals who know the strengths and needs of the student, including parents (and the student, as appropriate) as active participants in decision-making who understand the purpose of testing accommodations.

• Aligned to the instructional accommodations currently used during classroom instruction.

• Determined student by student, based on the unique needs and individual learning characteristics of the student.
Quality Indicators (Continued)

Testing accommodations are:

• Consistently provided in the classroom, prior to State or district-wide assessments.

• Determined systematically using a standard set of questions or variables to consider in making decisions.

• Documented in the IEP.

• Reviewed annually and at reevaluation by the CSE.
Appendix H-J Questions
Reflection #5: What’s Going on Your “To-Do” List?

• “I” time—reflect on the topics we covered.
• Note any specific “to-do” items on your action plan.
Reflection and Action Planning

- What are your biggest takeaways from this session?
- What additional questions do you have?
- How are you going to use this information?
- What follow-up information would you like?
Testing Accommodations Guidance

Testing Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Changes in Allowable Testing Accommodations on the Grades 3–8 New York State English Language Arts Assessments

Accommodations for Testing
Information and Resources for CBT

School Administrator’s Manuals—Office of State Assessment

NYSAA Test Administration Resources

Grades 3–8 Test Manuals
Information and Resources

NYS Education Department—Special Education

NYS Office of Special Education Partnership

NYS Office of Assessment

NYS Office of Special Education Quality Assurance (SEQA)
Contact Us

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