

NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF **PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

Accessibility Manual:

HOW TO SELECT, ADMINISTER, AND EVALUATE USE OF ACCESSIBILITY SUPPORTS
FOR INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS

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

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<http://ccsso.ingeniuxondemand.com/DssPreview/Documents/2016/CCSSO%20Accessibility%20Manual.docx>

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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 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, designated features that are available for those students for whom the need has been identified by an informed educator or team of educators, and accommodations that are generally available for students for whom there is documentation on an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 accommodation plan.**

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.

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. 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.

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 (ELP) 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 ELP to fully access content that is in English, and who have disabilities served by 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: Approach to Accessibility

This section highlights three approaches to accessibility: universal features, designated features, and accommodations. Tools 1-3 in the resource section of this manual include: universal features, designated features, and accommodations currently being used.

Universal Features

Universal features are accessibility supports that are either embedded and 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 features are available to all students as they access instructional or assessment content. Tool 1 lists frequently used embedded and non-embedded universal features.

Making Decisions About Universal Features

Although universal features are generally available to all students, educators may determine that one or more might be distracting for a particular student. Educators may need to pay special attention to the universal features that are frequently used to ensure features are appropriate in meeting individual student instructional and assessment needs.

Designated Features

Designated features are features that 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 designated features (e.g., color contrast) are provided digitally through instructional or assessment technology, while non-embedded designated features (e.g., magnification device) are provided locally. Designated features should be assigned to a student by trained educators or teams using a consistent process. Tool 2 lists frequently used embedded and non-embedded designated features.

Making Decisions About Designated Features

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 designated features. 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. IEP or 504 teams should make decisions on what designated features need to be provided to the 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 designated features (e.g., scribe) are provided locally. Accommodations are generally available for students for whom there is a documented need on an IEP or 504 plan, or Individual Language Plan (ILP). Tool 3 includes embedded and non-embedded accommodations, that can be used as well as their descriptions and recommendations for use.

Making Decisions About Accommodations

EL teams, IEP teams, and 504 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, ILP, or 504 plan. Decision makers are responsible for entering information on accessibility features and accommodations from the IEP, 504 plan, or ILP.

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 achievement 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.
3. Appropriate accessibility supports are provided to help students access instructional and assessment content.

College- and career-ready standards and common 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 most 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; 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, 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 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, 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, including ELs and ELs with disabilities, can work toward grade-level academic content standards while they are improving their English proficiency. 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.

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.** These accessibility supports – universal features, designated features, 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 features (e.g., writing tools), designated features (e.g., translations), or accommodations (e.g., closed captioning), 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. 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 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.

Meaningful collaboration should be encouraged among classroom teachers, school administrators, assessment officials, parents, and students 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 for Learning (UDL) Implications

Universal Design for Learning principles address policies and practices that are intended to improve access to learning and assessments for all students. UDL 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 and can do. When UDL techniques are employed by educators, they can gain a more accurate understanding of what students know and can do. UDL techniques should be applied consistently during instruction and assessment. 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.

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

UDL 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 UDL may change. Traditionally, educators have thought of UDL 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 or designated features to empower greater numbers of students with optimal accessibility options.

Modifications in Instruction and Assessment

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

Modifications refer to **practices or materials that change, lower, or reduce** required learning expectations. Modifications may change the underlying construct of an assessment. Examples of 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 modifications to students during classroom instruction and classroom assessments may have the unintended consequence of reducing their opportunity to learn critical content. Nevertheless, modifications can be used in instruction as long as students do not expect that these 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 grade level content requirements. **Providing a student with a modification during a state accountability assessment may constitute a test irregularity and invalidate test scores.**

Instructional Accessibility Supports

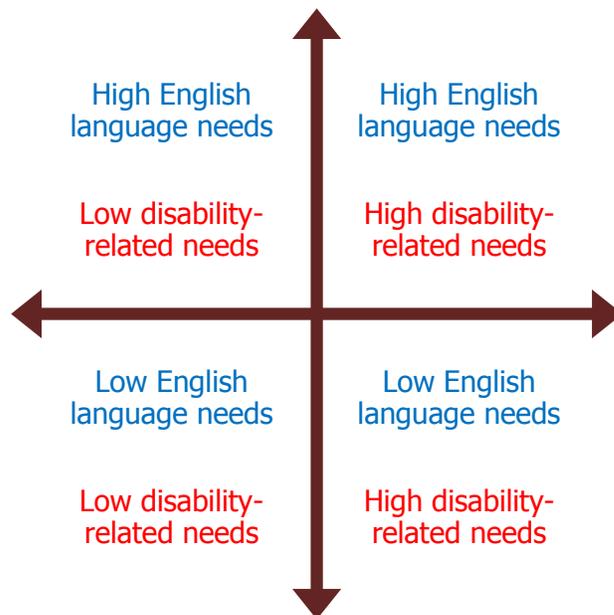
To optimize students' educational experiences, educators should hold regular meetings to coordinate their instructional approaches. Educators should consider:

- 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 designated features 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 quadrants will require different instructional support. Moreover, variability within each quadrant 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 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.

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 ELP 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 assessment, 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 features (if any) are used for each particular student and what designated features and accommodations are available to this student will enable educators to make more informed decisions.

Documenting Accessibility Supports Under IDEA

For students 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 collaborative team members must state "how the child's disability affects the child's involvement and progress in the general education curriculum—the same curriculum as non-disabled children" [Sec. 614 (d) (1) (A) (i) (I)].

In addition to the PLAAFP, there are potentially three areas in which accessibility supports can be addressed in a student's IEP:

1. "Consideration of Special Factors" [Sec. 614 (d) (3) (B)]. This is where communication, blind or visually impaired, deaf or hearing impaired, limited English proficiency, behavioral, and assistive technology supports are considered.
2. "Supplementary Aids and Services" [Sec. 602 (33) and Sec. 614 (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" [Sec. 612 (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.

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. Sec. 794]

Examples of students who may receive designated features 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.

For more information on Section 504 Guidelines for Educators and Administrators please go to: <https://www.nd.gov/dpi/uploads/1334/Sect504SubpartD.pdf>

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 in 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.

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. 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.

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 an assessment. Educators are encouraged to implement accessibility supports in instruction to make sure these concerns are addressed before assessments

are administered. Accessibility supports should not be used for the first time on any assessment. 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 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.

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.

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 North Dakota 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. 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, teachers should ensure that test administrators and proctors 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 7-10 provide read aloud, scribe, translation, and human signer guidelines for non-embedded accessibility supports.

Ethical Testing Practices

Ethical testing practices must be maintained during the administration of a test. Unethical testing practices include inappropriate interactions between test administrators and students taking the test. They also include, but are not limited to, 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 Security

Test security involves maintaining the confidentiality of test questions and answers, 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.

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. Observations conducted during test administration, interviews with test administrators, and talking with students after testing sessions will likely provide beneficial information that can be used to guide an informative evaluation process on what accessibility supports are beneficial for students during assessment and instruction.

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.

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Tool 1: Universal Features

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

Embedded and Non-Embedded Universal Features Available to All Students

Universal Feature	Description
Amplification	The student raises or lowers the volume control, as needed, using headphones.
Breaks	The number of items per session can be flexibly defined based on the student's need. There is no limit on the number of breaks that a student might be given. This universal feature may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment.
Calculator: hand held or digital	A handheld or digital calculator can be accessed for calculator-allowed 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).
Digital notepad Global notes Scratch paper	These tools are used for making notes, computations, or responses.
Eliminate answer choices/answer choice eliminator Strikethrough	The student uses this feature to eliminate those answer choices that do not appear correct to the student.
English dictionary	An electronic or paper English dictionary may be available for the students to look up word meanings.
English glossary	Grade- and context-appropriate definitions students can utilize that may be embedded in textbooks, footnotes, margins, photos, charts, and illustrations or the glossaries at the end of textbooks to clarify word meanings. These glossaries may be also offered in an electronic or paper versions.
Expandable passages	The student or teacher is able to expand a document or passage so that it takes up a larger portion of the screen or paper as the student reads.
Highlighter	The student uses this digital or physical tool for marking with a color a desired text, items, or response options with a color.
Line reader	The student is able to use this feature either with a physical tool or electronic tool as a guide when reading text.

Universal Feature	Description
Line reader mask tool Line guide	
Keyboard navigation	The use of keystrokes or key commands in place of a mouse to navigate the computer. Students may use assistive technology device or software programs in the classroom during instruction or assessment that utilizes keyboard navigation.
Mark for review Flag for review	Allows students to flag items for future review. Students may circle, star, check, or use sticky flags to mark areas.
Math tools	Students can use either digital or physical tools, such as rulers, number lines, or math manipulatives.
Spellcheck	Writing tool for checking the spelling of words in student-generated responses.
Writing tools	The student uses writing tools to format and edit written responses, including cut and paste, copy, underline, italicize, bold, and undo/redo.
Zoom	A tool for enlarging the size of text and graphics on a given screen or a student may receive a large-print version of textbooks or other text. This feature allows students to view material in magnified form on an as-needed basis.
Noise buffer Headphones Audio aids	The student uses noise buffers to minimize distraction or filter external noise during testing.
Thesaurus	An electronic or paper thesaurus containing synonyms of terms can be provided to the student.

Tool 2: Designated Features

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

Embedded and Non-Embedded Designated Features Identified in Advance

Designated Feature	Description
Masking	The student is able to block off content that is not of immediate need or that may be distracting. Masking allows students to hide and reveal individual answer options, as well as all navigational buttons and menus.
Color contrast	The student is able to adjust the text color and screen background color based on the student's need or preference.
Text-to-speech Read aloud	Text is read aloud to the student via embedded text-to-speech technology or a human.
Magnification	The size of specific screens may be adjusted by the student or with an assistive technology device or magnification software. Large-print tests or magnifying devices may also be used.
Bilingual dictionary	A bilingual/dual language word-to-word paper or electronic dictionary is provided to the student as a language support.
Color overlay	Color transparencies are placed over paper based materials.
Translated test directions	Translation of general test directions (not item prompts or questions) is a language support available to students. Test directions can be provided either by being read aloud or signed by a test administrator who is fluent in the language. Translations may be provided by a human or the test platform.
Separate setting	Test location is altered so that the student is tested in a setting different from that made available for most students.
Scribe	Allows for students to use their voices or assistive technology devices as a input device to a human to dictate responses or give commands (e.g., pulling down menus, saving work, etc.)
Simplified Test Directions	Teacher or test administrator rephrases/or simplifies the directions for students during instruction and assessment.
Stacked Translations	Stacked translations provide the full translation above the original English item.
Translated glossary	Translated glossaries are made available to find the meaning of content-specific words. This may be in the back of a text book or found on electronic versions of text, assessments, etc.

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/consortium policies and assessment types. In several instances, similar supports are grouped for the sake of clarity.

Embedded and Non-Embedded Accommodations Available with an IEP or 504 Plan

Accommodation	Description
American Sign Language (ASL)	Test content is translated into ASL video or provided by a human signer and the signed test content are viewed on the same screen.
Closed captioning	Printed text that appears on the computer screen as audio materials are presented.
Streamline	Provides a stream lined interface in which the items are displayed below the stimuli or text.
Abacus	This tool may be used in place of scratch paper for students who typically use a abacus.
Assistive technology Alternate response options	Alternate response options include but are not limited to adapted keyboards, large keyboards, StickyKeys, MouseKeys, FilterKeys, adapted mouse, touch screen, head wand, and switches.
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, thermoform, or refreshable braille). Both contracted and un-contracted braille (English Braille, American Edition) are available; Unified English Braille will be adopted for future assessments. Nemeth code is available for math.
Calculator Calculation device	A handheld or digital calculator can be accessed for calculator-allowed 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).
100s Number Table	A paper-based table listing number from 1-100.
Print on demand	The student uses paper copies of passages/stimuli/and/or items are printed for students.

Accommodation	Description
Speech-to-text Scribe	Allows the students to use their voices to input device to the computer or a human to dictate responses or give commands.
Multiplication table	A paper-based dingle digit (1-9) multiplication table is available to the student.

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

Federal Laws	
ESSA	<p>The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was issued on December 10, 2015 (https://www.congress.gov/114/crpt/hrpt354/CRPT-114hrpt354.pdf). 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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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...
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</p>

	<p>in state- and district-wide assessments. Specific IDEA requirements include</p> <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>
<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>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</p>

	<p>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>
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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 7th 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 (*ND does not allow partial alternate assessments*) 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 at approximately age 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.

Tool 7: Read Aloud Guidelines

Background

In cases where a student cannot use the computer-based version of assessments, the student should be provided the read aloud feature. When provided the read aloud 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.
- 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 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 may provide spelling of any word in a writing item prompt if requested by the student.
- 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 8: 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/or accommodations manuals.
- 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 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 9: Translation Guidelines

Sight translation is the provision of spontaneous oral translation of test items and/or directions from English to an EL’s native language. That is, sight translation involves on-the-spot rendering of printed test materials orally in the learner’s native language. Sight translation is the term used by professional translators and interpreters. However, in public education, the term oral translation is more frequently used.

Scripted oral translation involves having the sight translator read aloud a previously translated script of a test in the student’s native language. To the student, it may seem like a sight translation, in that the script is read aloud. However, the translation of the script has been previously prepared by a translator. Thus, the person who reads it neither interprets nor translates.

Note: Translators should not be family members.

Vocabulary and Syntax

- Use vocabulary in test items that is widely accessible to all students (e.g., do not use Castilian Spanish if students are from Mexico and Central America). When faced with multiple translations for a single term/word, choose the translation that will be recognized by the greatest number of students.
- Be sensitive to and minimize vocabulary that many students are likely to be unfamiliar with because of socio-economic status (e.g., “appraiser”).
- Avoid the use of syntax or vocabulary that is above the test’s target grade level. The test item should be written at a vocabulary level no higher than the target grade level, and preferably at a slightly lower grade level, to ensure that all students understand the task presented.
- Keep sentence structures as simple as is possible. In general, students tend to find a series of simpler, shorter sentences to be more accessible than longer, more complex sentences.
- Consider the impact of cognates. Be particularly aware of false cognates.

- Do not use cultural references or idiomatic expressions (such as “being on the ball” or “junior varsity teams”) that are not equally familiar to all students.
- Avoid sentence structures that may be confusing or difficult to follow, such as the use of passive voice or sentences with multiple clauses.
- Do not use syntax that may be confusing or ambiguous, such as negation or double negatives.
- Minimize the use of low-frequency, long, or morphologically complex words and long sentences.

Review/Revision Procedure for the Test Version in the Native Language and Side-by-Side Bilingual Version Test Translation Accommodations

- 1) The bilingual teacher, the translator, and other team members who can read in the target language
 - independently read the translated item and respond to it as if each of them was a student taking the test;
 - independently compare the original and translated versions of the item and look for translation errors; and
 - independently edit the translated item (if needed) and write comments on it.
- 2) With facilitation from project staff, all team members discuss any proposed changes and decide by consensus whether and how the translation of the item should be modified.
- 3) Project staff keeps an updated copy of the translated item.

Review/Revision procedure for the Directions Translated Into Native Language test translation accommodation

- 1) The bilingual teacher, the translator, and other team members who can read in the target language
 - independently read the (untranslated) items for which the directions apply and respond to them as if each of them was a student taking the test;
 - independently compare the original and translated versions of the directions and look for translation errors; and
 - independently edit the translated directions (if needed) and write comments on it.
- 2) With facilitation from project staff, all team members discuss any proposed changes and decide by consensus whether and how the translation of the directions should be modified.
- 3) Project staff keeps an updated copy of the translated directions.

Review/Revision procedure for the Bilingual Glossary test translation accommodation

- 1) The bilingual teacher, the translator, and other team members who can read in the target language
 - independently examine the item in English and respond to it as if each of them was a student taking the test;
 - independently compare the target words in the original version and their translation in the glossaries and look for translation errors; and
 - independently change the translation of the target words (if needed).
- 2) With facilitation from project staff, all team members discuss any proposed changes and decide by consensus whether and how the translation of the target words should be modified.
- 3) Project staff keeps an updated copy of the translated target words.

What types of training might be made available for translators?

As outlined in the following *Dos and Don'ts* chart, per State policy, translators might participate in all aspects of staff training related to test administration and protocols, test security, code of ethics, and planning for testing day. Schools/districts may wish to print the Dos and Don'ts chart for translators and require translators to check each of the 'Do' tasks.

Dos and Don'ts for Translators

	Dos	Don'ts
Before the Test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Do provide supervised access to the test administration directions (TAD) up to four days prior to test administration. <input type="checkbox"/> Do know which test sections should be administered prior to each test administration. <input type="checkbox"/> Do sign test materials in and out with each use. No test materials may leave the district except the TAD. <input type="checkbox"/> Do review test security agreements and Code of Ethics. <input type="checkbox"/> Do sign a test security agreement to be kept on file at the district office. <input type="checkbox"/> Do participate in training with the school test coordinator or designee. <input type="checkbox"/> Do make sure you are aware of any school policies regarding bathroom emergencies, student sickness during the test, fire alarm procedures, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Do review the accommodations permitted for the EL student receiving translation support. Do plan for test day: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review the allowable accessibility supports. ○ Read and practice test directions in advance – practice and create script to read to students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't remove the test booklet from the school.
During the test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Do tell the student the ground rules of the test administration in the student's native language (including which parts of the test can and cannot be translated). <input type="checkbox"/> Do make sure you and the student each have a copy of the test. After testing, leave the test booklet at the school with the test coordinator. <input type="checkbox"/> Do interpret/translate all directions including example questions. <input type="checkbox"/> Do emphasize words printed in boldface, italics, or capitals. <input type="checkbox"/> Do avoid voice inflection which may be seen as cueing. <input type="checkbox"/> Do identify potentially unknown words in a test items. Look up the meaning of the unknown words in a monolingual English or bilingual dictionary and write the meaning or target language equivalent of the word on your copy of the test booklet. Destroy notes after use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't alert the student to his/her mistakes during testing. • Don't prompt the student in any way that would result in a better response or essay. • Don't influence the student's response in any way. • Don't define terms for the student. That constitutes assistance that gives the student extra help that is not received by other students. It is unethical for an interpreter to provide such assistance and it is also strictly forbidden.
After the test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Do participate in the evaluation process (and/or discussion of how well the accommodation worked). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't discuss test or responses with others.

Tool 10: Human Signer Guidelines

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

1. Signers must be trained on test administration policies by local test coordinators.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. Test administrators must be familiar with the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plan, and should know in advance which accommodations are required by the student, and for which test the student is designated to receive a human signer. Test administrators must be aware of whether a student requires additional tools, devices, or adaptive equipment that has been approved for use during the test, such as a magnifier, closed circuit television (CCTV), abacus, braille, slate, or stylus, and if use of these tools impacts the translation of the test, the signer should be made aware of this.
9. 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.

10. 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.
11. Signers must spell any words requested by the student during the test administration.
12. When test items refer to a particular line, or lines, of a passage, re-sign the lines before signing the question and answer choices. For example, the signer should sign, "Question X refers to the following lines...", then sign the lines to the student, followed by question X and the response options.
13. 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.
14. 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.
15. If the student chooses an answer before the signer has signed all the answer choices, the human signer must ask if the student wants the other response options to be signed.
16. 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.

Exceptional Accommodation Guidelines for North Dakota State Assessments



NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Guidance on Exceptional Accommodations for North Dakota State Assessments

Students may have an accommodation on their IEP/504 plan that is not listed as an approved state accommodation. In rare instances, the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) will approve this “Other” accommodation for use during state testing. These accommodations should be used during classroom instruction and assessments on a regular basis and the student should be proficient with its use.

Only a very limited number of students who meet specific guidance criteria may use the accommodation on North Dakota State Assessments and receive a valid score. Standard accommodations for all North Dakota State Assessments are listed in the *North Dakota Accessibility Manual*.

The special education director/coordinator, district test coordinator, or EL coordinator must submit a *Unique Accommodation Request* to the NDDPI for approval.

If the request is approved by the NDDPI, the student may receive a valid score on the assessment when using this accommodation.

If the accommodation request is not approved and the student used the accommodation on North Dakota State Assessments, the district may be instructed to mark the assessment as having a non-approved accommodation. This will result in the score being invalidated or suppressed and the student being considered a “non-participant” for the assessment.



NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Unique Accommodation Request Application

IEP teams, Section 504 committees, and EL committees may request permission to use accommodations other than those included in the *North Dakota Accessibility Manual*. Office of Special Education should receive such requests no later than four (4) weeks before the student's first day of testing.

The request should come from the special education director/coordinator, district test coordinator, or EL Coordinator. The following information must be included in the request:

1. Student ID #, District, School name
2. Specific requested accommodation(s)
3. Rationale for the request provided by the IEP team, Section 504 committee, or EL committee
4. Verification statement that the student receives the accommodation(s) on a regular basis during classroom instruction and classroom assessment, and is familiar with the accommodation(s)
5. Impact of the student's assessment results if the student is not permitted to use the requested accommodation(s)

Send written requests at least four (4) weeks prior to the administration of the assessment to:

Office of Special Education
North Dakota Department of Public Instruction
600 East Boulevard Avenue
Bismarck, ND 58503

If the request is approved by NDDPI, the student may receive a valid score on the assessment when using the requested accommodation.

If the accommodation request is not approved and the student uses the accommodation during the NDSA or NDAA, the district may be instructed to mark the assessment as having non-approved accommodation. This will result in the score being invalidated or suppressed and the student being considered a “non-participant” for the assessment.

Upon completion of the review of the request, the review committee will reply to the request within 10 days.