

Instructional Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

In addition to specialized instruction, accommodations provide the student with dyslexia effective and equitable access to grade-level or course instruction in the general education classroom. Students with dyslexia may benefit from classroom accommodations, which simply allow the student to display their academic strengths without lowering grade-level standards.

Accommodations are not a one size fits all; rather, the impact of dyslexia on each individual student determines the accommodation. Accommodations should be individualized to fit the unique needs of the student as revealed in the formal dyslexia testing.

Accommodations are discussed and approved by the educational team, parent, and testing specialist at the student's annual 504 or ARD meeting, then listed on the 504 Service Plan or Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Accommodations should be regularly monitored by student, parent, teacher and dyslexia specialist, and can be removed or added to the Services Plan as needed at any time during the school year.

Listed below are examples of reasonable classroom accommodations:

- Copies of notes (e.g., teacher- or peer-provided)
- Note-taking assistance x Additional time on class assignments and tests
- Reduced/shortened assignments (e.g., chunking assignments into manageable units, fewer items given on a classroom test or homework assignment without eliminating concepts, or student planner to assist with assignments)
- Alternative test location that provides a quiet environment and reduces distractions
- Priority seating assignment
- Oral reading of directions or written material
- Word banks
- Formula charts

When making decisions about accommodations, instruction is always the foremost priority. Not all accommodations used in the classroom are allowed during a state assessment. However, an educator's ability to meet the individual needs of a student with dyslexia should not be limited by whether an accommodation is allowable on a state assessment.

Accommodations are changes to materials, actions, or techniques, including the use of technology, that enable students with disabilities to participate meaningfully in grade-level or course instruction. The use of accommodations occurs primarily during classroom instruction as educators use various instructional strategies to meet the needs of each student. A student may need an accommodation only temporarily while learning a new skill, or a student might require the accommodation throughout the school year or over several years.

In order to make accommodation decisions for students, educators should have knowledge of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and how a student performs in relation to them. Educators should also collect and analyze data pertaining to the use and effectiveness of accommodations (e.g., assignment/test

scores with and without the accommodation, observational reports) so that informed educational decisions can be made for each student. By analyzing data, an educator can determine if the accommodation becomes inappropriate or unnecessary over time due to the student's changing needs. Likewise, data can confirm for the educator that the student still struggles in certain areas and should continue to use the accommodation.

For more information, see Critical Information about Accommodations for Students with Disabilities available at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/accommodations/staar-telpas/>. For more information about technology integration, see <http://www.region10.org/dyslexia/techplan/>.

Access to Instructional Materials for Students with Disabilities

Accessible instructional materials (AIM) are textbooks and related core instructional materials that have been converted into specialized formats (e.g., Braille, audio, digital text, or large print) for students who are blind or have low vision, have a physical disability, or have a reading disability such as dyslexia. Digital books or text-to-speech functions on computers and mobile devices provide access to general education curriculum for students with dyslexia. Bookshare and Learning Ally provide electronic access to digitally recorded materials for students with print disabilities. TEA provides links to these resources as well as other accessible instructional materials for students with disabilities at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=2147487109>.

State Assessments and Accommodations

TEA accessibility policies may apply to any student taking STAAR or TELPAS depending on his or her needs and whether or not the student meets the eligibility criteria, if applicable. The link provided below contains the most current information regarding accommodations for state assessments.

<https://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/accommodations/>