

Accommodations Guidelines

*2026 Spring and Summer Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)
and Keystone Exams*

***For Winter 2025-2026 Keystone Exams, please use the 2025-2026 Winter
Accommodations Guidelines.***



Pennsylvania
Department of Education

**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
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Remember that using ctrl+F in Windows or Chrome OS, or Command+F in macOS will make this document searchable.

Introduction

The focus of the Accommodations Guidelines is the selection, administration, and evaluation of appropriate accommodations for assessment.

New for 2026

With the move to online testing, the Accommodations Guidelines have changed. For some students, certain accommodations may no longer be needed to make the test accessible in the online mode. For other students, using the online testing mode may require new accommodations. It is important that educators responsible for assigning assessment accommodations to students thoroughly read the Accommodations Guidelines and familiarize themselves with the available accommodations. Students and Individualized Education Plan (IEP) teams can view the test platform in the [Online Tools Training](#), which may aid in making accommodations decisions for students.

While it is important to read for possible changes to all accommodations, highlighted below are the major changes to the 2026 Accommodations Guidelines:

Accommodation	Overview of Change	Relevant Links
Mixed Mode	With the move to online testing, mixed mode will no longer be available. A student testing online but requiring paper/pencil testing only for the open-ended items will use the transcription accommodation.	Transcription
Universal Test Features	In the past, these guidelines listed some universal test features as accommodations. These universal test features will no longer be coded as accommodations and are available to all students. This includes extended time and a student having an item or word read at their request.	Universal Test Features
Magnification	A new online accommodation has been added which will magnify the entire test for a student requiring a larger test display. As in the past, magnification will continue to be offered as a universal test feature through the online tools.	Universal Test Features Magnification (Accommodation)
Medical Monitoring with Smartphone or Smartwatch	Medical Monitoring with a Smartphone or Smartwatch is no longer considered a unique accommodation. A Unique Accommodation Assurance is no longer required. LEAs should continue to mark the usage of these devices as an accommodation in the student management portal and follow the guidance in this document.	Medical Monitoring with Smartphone or Smartwatch
Paper/Pencil Mode (Print-on-Demand)	2026 testing is moving online. Some exceptions will be made for a limited number of students requiring the paper/pencil mode accommodation. For those exceptions, schools will download and print the test, transcribe student responses into the online test, and securely destroy the paper/pencil assessment.	Paper/Pencil Mode (Print-on-Demand) Transcription
Read Aloud by a Human Reader	Schools are encouraged to use the online audio feature for a student requiring a read aloud accommodation. A student needing a human reader will now be required to test in a one-on-one setting.	Audio Read Aloud
Smart Glasses	Smart Glasses are prohibited during testing, unless they are also prescription and are the student's only option for accessing the test. LEAs must follow the guidance in this document for usage.	Smart Glasses

Links to Additional Resources

In addition to these Accommodations Guidelines, there are several additional resources available to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and schools for using accommodations on state assessments. The following resources can be found on the [PSSA](#) or [Keystone](#) webpages, under the heading “Testing” and “Accommodations.”

- Accommodations for English Learners
- Read Aloud, Scribing, and Transcription Guidelines for Operational Assessments
- Guidelines for Selection and Use of Accommodations on State Assessments Webinar
- Supplemental Guidelines for American Sign Language in the Video Sign Language Accommodation

The following resources can be found on the [PSSA](#) or [Keystone](#) webpages, under the heading “Testing” and “Administration Materials.”

- Handbook for Assessment Coordinators
- Directions for Administration (including a Spanish version)
- Directions for Administration Guidance for Paper/Pencil Testing (to be released before Spring 2026 testing).
- Pennsylvania Calculator Policy

The [Online Tools Training and Tutorials](#) can be found in the Pennsylvania test portal.

Additionally, resources for the Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA DLM), including eligibility criteria, are available on the [PASA](#) webpage. Accommodations specifically for the PASA DLM can be found in the [PASA DLM Accessibility Manual](#).

Using Accommodations on State Summative Assessments

Federal and state laws require the participation of students with disabilities in standards-based instruction and assessment initiatives. More information about laws regulating the inclusion of all students in state summative assessment can be found in [Appendix F](#).

To ensure participation of students with disabilities, LEAs should:

- Expect students with disabilities to achieve grade-level academic content standards
- Understand accommodations for instruction and assessment
- Select accommodations for instruction and assessment based upon individual student need
- Implement accommodations during instruction and assessment
- Evaluate and improve use of accommodations

Accommodations should be implemented and evaluated in classroom instruction and assessment before an accommodation is used for state summative assessment. More information and guidance on using accommodations on state assessments, as well as supplemental tools for decision-making and documentation, are available in [Appendix G](#).

When a student requires an accommodation for state summative assessment, the following steps should be taken:

1. Gather the necessary documentation of the selection, implementation, and evaluation of the accommodation in classroom instruction and assessment.
2. Read the guidelines for the accommodation in this manual ([Tables A, B, and C](#)).
3. Choose the necessary accommodations for the student in the student management portal. Accommodations that are embedded in the online assessment must be selected before the test ticket is generated. A code for these accommodations will appear on the test ticket. The portal is available to add accommodations approximately a month before testing. The exact date will be posted on the Announcements page in the test portal.
4. Submit a [Unique Accommodation Assurance](#), if required.
5. Implement the accommodation, following the guidance in this manual and related resources as needed ([Read Aloud, Scribing, and Transcription Guidelines](#), [Accommodations Guidelines for ELs](#), etc.)

Anyone responsible for entering student accommodations in the student management portal or submitting Unique Accommodation Assurances must read this Accommodations Guidelines manual and complete the [Guidelines for Selection and Use of Accommodations on State Assessments Webinar](#).

Special Circumstances for Accommodation Usage

A student may require an accommodation because of a recent medical condition or injury. This student may or may not have an IEP or 504. Those scenarios are outlined below.

Arm or Hand Injury

Many students with a recent injury that interferes with their ability to mark/write their own test answers have already developed a way to respond to instructional materials and assessments using the non-injured arm/hand. Continuing this adaptation allows the best opportunity for the student to independently think and respond to test questions. If a student can type, the student can complete the online test. If the student cannot type but can write, then a transcription accommodation may be needed. If the student cannot type or write, a scribing or voice-to-text accommodation may be needed. A student working slowly due to injury may need frequent breaks or small group testing. All requirements of these accommodations must be followed. Medical documentation should be kept locally.

Related Accommodations: [Scribing for Mathematics and Science, Algebra I, and Biology Open-ended, Grade 3 PSSA Short Answer, Keystone Literature Constructed Response, Scribing for ELA PSSA, Transcription](#)

Concussion

If a student has been diagnosed with a concussive injury prior to testing and there is current (**within two weeks of testing**) medical documentation stating the student may not participate in standardized testing, the student should be coded as "Recent Medical Emergency" in the student management portal. Documentation covers all subject area tests following the injury.

If there is **not** recent medical documentation (within two weeks of the testing window) stating that the student may not participate in standardized testing, and the school still determines that the student cannot or should not participate in the test due to the medical condition, the student must be coded as non-assessed "Other" in the student management portal.

If a student has been diagnosed with a concussive injury prior to testing, and there is medical documentation **within two weeks** of the testing window that states the student may participate in standardized testing with accommodations, the student may be granted those accommodations with medical documentation. All requirements of those accommodations must be followed.

Medical documentation should be kept locally.

Related Accommodations: [Frequent Breaks](#), [Paper/Pencil Mode \(Print-on-Demand\)](#)

Recent Medical Emergency

Generally, if a student can receive instruction, then they are also able to participate in state assessments; however, the health and well-being of students should take priority in determining whether they can participate.

Students may receive a medical exemption if they cannot participate in a state assessment during the testing window, including make-up dates, due to a significant medical event. Examples include, but are not limited to, a student who is 1) receiving short-term medical treatment due to a medical emergency; or 2) seriously ill or has a medical condition that prevents them from receiving instruction during the testing window.

1. A medical emergency is defined as a circumstance in which a student cannot take or finish taking the assessment during the entire testing window, including make-up dates, because of a recent significant medical event just prior to or during the annual testing window. Examples of medical emergencies include:
 1. Serious injury
 2. Concussion
 3. Confinement to home or hospital with an acute condition, not a long-term home instruction or hospital instruction situation.
 4. Inability to interact with others without serious risk of infection or contamination.
 5. Pregnancy with significant health complications or delivery just prior to or during the testing window.
 6. Mental health crisis that prevents a student from receiving instruction.

A note from a physician dated at least two weeks within the start of the testing window must be on file at the school. These records must be retained for three years.

2. A serious illness or medical condition is defined as one in which the student is receiving active treatment for a life-threatening illness or medical condition and/or the associated recuperation. A note from a physician must be on file at the school and must be retained for three years.

To account for a student with a medical exemption, as defined above, the student should be coded as "Medical Emergency" in the student management portal.

Note: An assessment of a student's medical condition must be made annually at the testing window for each content area.

Universal Test Features

Several test features are available to all students. Students requiring these features as accommodations do not need to have them marked in the student management portal. Test features available to all students include:

- Extended Time
- Magnification Tool
- Read Aloud of Test Directions
- Read Aloud of a Word, Phrase, or Item at Student Request
- Some Visual/Graphic Aids, Math Manipulatives, and Online Tools

Extended Time

Definition: Keystone and PSSA tests are untimed; therefore, any student may be given additional time beyond the scheduled test session. Students may request extended time beyond the regular test time as long as they are working productively.

Usage: Testing must be scheduled so that students have sufficient time to complete a test section prior to the end of the school day. Extended time should not extend beyond the school day. Test sections should be scheduled in sequence. PDE will have the ability to monitor the amount of time a student needed to complete the test, if necessary.

A student identified to need extended time ahead of testing may be assigned a small group setting to prevent disruption in testing.

Considerations: See the [Handbook for Assessment Coordinators](#) and the [Directions for Administration](#) for directions for administering extra time.

Related Accommodations: [Small Group Setting](#), [Extraordinary Time](#)

Magnification (Tool)

Definition: The magnification tool in the online platform allows a student to zoom in and out on any question at 1.5x, 2x, 3x, and 4x magnification.

Usage: Magnification using online tools only magnifies the question the student is on. Magnification reverts to 1x when the student moves to the next question. A student needing consistent magnification throughout the test should be assigned the magnification accommodation.

Considerations: Students should use the [Online Training Tools](#) before testing to practice the use of magnification.

Related Accommodations: [Magnification \(Accommodation\)](#)

Read Aloud Test Directions

Definition: All students should have the test directions from the Directions for Administration read aloud as part of standard test administration. Any student may ask for the directions or a portion of the directions to be repeated.

Usage: The test administrator may provide clarification of the test directions and/or direct the student to the correct section of the test. Test readers must ensure that all students understand what is expected of them when reading test directions aloud. Students must have an opportunity to ask questions and understand how to mark their answers before they begin taking the test. Test readers should be prepared to answer questions about item format, scoring rules, and timing. However, test readers should not answer questions about specific test items. The test administrator may re-read the directions or read directions from the student's test aloud at the student's request. Test readers may not paraphrase, provide assistance to, or cue students through uneven voice inflection when reading test directions.

Considerations: Students should be familiar with test expectations and practice with the [Online Training Tools](#) before the day of the assessment.

Related Accommodations: [Audio](#), [Read Aloud by Human Reader](#)

Read Aloud Some Mathematics, Science, and Writing Items (Allowable Items) at Student Request

Definition: It is permissible for a human reader to read aloud a word, phrase, sentence, or test item, as requested by the student for the Mathematics, Algebra I, Science, and Biology tests, and multiple-choice Conventions of Standard English items and the Text-Dependent Analysis (TDA) prompt for the English Language Arts (ELA) PSSA test. No reading passages or reading items besides the TDA may be read aloud by request on the ELA PSSA. No items may be read aloud by request on the Literature Keystone.

Usage: When reading test items aloud, test readers must be careful not to inadvertently give clues that indicate the correct answer or help eliminate some answer choices. It is important for readers to read test items/questions and text word-for-word, exactly as written. Readers may not clarify, elaborate, paraphrase, provide assistance to, or cue students through uneven voice inflection. Some items may not be read because it would invalidate the content being tested (e.g., the test reader for a grade 3-5 Mathematics PSSA should read ">" as "symbol" not "greater than" because this interferes with the content being tested.) Therefore, all test readers must follow the [Read Aloud, Scribing, and Transcription Guidelines](#).

Considerations: A student who does not need ALL items read aloud, but who is anticipated to need SOME allowable items read aloud often, may be placed in a small group setting.

The intention of this test feature is to ensure that the measurement of non-reading content is not influenced by a student's inability to decode words. For example, the student knows how to do the math, but cannot decode the word "perpendicular". The test administrator's does not announce to the test takers that questions will be read aloud for the students. It must be the test taker's initiative to ask to have "perpendicular" read aloud—it is not the test administrator's decision to interfere in the testing process and read "perpendicular" aloud because it will help a particular student or group of students.

Related Accommodations: [Audio](#), [Read Aloud by Human Reader](#), [Small Group Setting](#)

Some Visual/Graphic Aids, Math Manipulatives, and Online Tools

Definition: All students should receive scratch paper, which may be blank and/or graph paper, for all assessments. Students may also use highlighters and blank index cards. All students have access to the following online tools: cross off, highlighter, reading guide, mask, note-taker, and magnifier. Scoring Guidelines and Formula Sheets are embedded in the test, and paper copies are available for all students, as well. Students are provided with an online ruler tool (Grade 3 Mathematics PSSA) and online protractor tool (Grade 4 Mathematics PSSA). For paper/pencil testing, students should be provided with a physical ruler (Grade 3 Mathematics PSSA) and 3-inch protractor (Grade 4 Mathematics PSSA). Algebra I Keystone students may use straight-edge tool (not a ruler). All students may use an external keyboard, external mouse, and stylus. (Please note that the stylus does not work on open-ended questions).

Usage: Any of the above materials not embedded in the online test must be provided by the LEA. Students may not provide their own test materials. An exception is made for a student-owned external keyboard, external mouse, or stylus, if the student uses the device regularly in the classroom.

Considerations: No teacher- or LEA-created visual or graphic aids may be provided to any student, regardless of accommodation. Without prompting during the test session, students may use scratch paper to create their own organizers and visual aids.

Related Accommodations: [Math Manipulatives](#), [Sensory/Self-Regulation Tools](#), [Visual/Graphic Aids](#)

Accommodations Tables

Three accommodations tables are provided in this section. The tables must be used to fully understand the features and implementation of each accommodation type. Some accommodations are only allowable for certain students on certain parts of the test, e.g., a word-to-word bilingual dictionary is allowed only for English learners on the Mathematics, Algebra I, Biology and Science tests. A word-to-word dictionary is NOT allowed for the ELA or Literature tests.

Table A – Accommodations Overview: First, read [Table A](#) to determine if the accommodation is available for non-IEP, IEP/504, and/or English learning students, if it is embedded in the online test platform, and if it is a unique accommodation. Table A is intended to be a quick guide to available accommodations. For easy access, Table A links to entries in Table B and Table C.

Note: Accommodations in the column labeled “Allowable as a Stand-Alone Accommodation for English Learners” can be used as part of the student’s English Language Development (ELD) services without an IEP or 504.

Table B – Designated Accommodations: [Table B](#) gives details about the usage of designated accommodations, including the definition, usage, considerations, accommodation type, documentation required, and how to assign the accommodation in the student management portal.

Table C – Unique Accommodations: The accommodations in [Table C](#) are unique accommodations which require assurances to be submitted to PDE. Unique accommodations may be requested for a student who would not otherwise be able to access the test material, and for accommodations that could pose a security or validity risk to the test if used incorrectly. Because a unique accommodation might alter the test item content or validity of the student response, IEP teams need to be aware that the test results must be interpreted with caution. Like Table B, Table C gives details about the usage of designated accommodations, including the definition, usage, considerations, accommodation type, documentation required, and how to assign the accommodation in the student management portal.

Table A: Accommodations Overview

Accommodation	Allowable with Local Documentation	Allowable with IEP/504 Documentation Only	Allowable as a Stand-Alone Accommodation for English Learners	Embedded in Online System	Unique (requires Assurance to PDE)
Amplification Device	X			Volume Control Only	
Assistance with Selected Response	X				
Assistive Technology Device (ATD) (formerly Computer Assistive Technology)		X			X
Audio for Mathematics, Science, and Writing Items	X		X	X	
Audio for Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone		X		X	X
Augmentative or Alternative Communication (AAC)		X			X See ATD
Braille (Paper/Pencil Mode), Braille		X			
Braille (Refreshable)		X		X	
Calculators (Adaptive)	X				
Color Chooser	X			X	
Cueing System for On Task Behavior	X		X		
Delayed Auditory Feedback (DAF) / Pitch-shifting Frequency-altered Auditory Feedback (FAF)	X				X See ATD
Dictionaries and Translation Sheets (Word-to-Word for English Learners ONLY)			X		
Extraordinary Time		X			X
Frequent Breaks	X		X		

Accommodation	Allowable with Local Documentation	Allowable with IEP/504 Documentation Only	Allowable as a Stand-Alone Accommodation for English Learners	Embedded in Online System	Unique (requires Assurance to PDE)
Hospital/Home	X				
Interpret/Translate		X For sign language	X For language translation	X VSL and Spanish Only	
Large Print (Paper/Pencil Mode)		X			
Magnification	X			X	
Math Manipulatives	X				
Medical Monitoring with Smartphone or Smartwatch	X				
Monitor Test Response		X			
Noise Cancelling Headphones	X				
One-on-One Setting	X		X		
Paper/Pencil Mode (Print-on-Demand)		X See Table C for exceptions			X
Read Aloud All Mathematics, Science, and Writing Items by a Human Reader		X	X		
Read Aloud Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone by a Human Reader		X			X
Read Aloud to Self (Student)	X		X		
Scribing – Mathematics and Science Open-ended, Grade 3 PSSA Short Answer, Keystone Literature Constructed Response		X See Table B for exceptions	X For Mathematics and Science only		
Scribing – ELA PSSA Text-Dependent Analysis (Grades 4-8)		X See Table C for exceptions			X
Sensory/Self-Regulation Tool	X				

Accommodation	Allowable with Local Documentation	Allowable with IEP/504 Documentation Only	Allowable as a Stand-Alone Accommodation for English Learners	Embedded in Online System	Unique (requires Assurance to PDE)
Small Group (2-12)	X		X		
Smart Glasses	X				X
Spanish Version			X	X	
Test Administrators, Proctors, PCAs, TSS	X		X		
Transcription	X		X		
Video Sign Language		X		X	
Visual/Graphic Aids	X		X		
Voice-to-text (Speech-to-text, Talk-to-text)		X See Table C for exceptions			X See ATD

Table B: Designated Accommodations

Amplification Device	
<p>Definition: A device used to amplify the test administrator’s voice and/or the audio feature of the online test, such as a personal sound amplifier or classroom sound field FM system.</p> <p>Usage: The test administrator may wear the device when giving test directions.</p> <p>Considerations: The LEA must ensure that the use of the system does not interfere with other test takers. A one-on-one setting should be used if the device causes distraction.</p> <p>Students are able to control the volume of the embedded audio of the test in the test platform.</p> <p>If the device used for amplification connects to the internet, a Unique Accommodation Assurance form should be submitted for an Assistive Technology Device.</p>	<p>Type: Presentation</p> <p>Documentation Required: Local Documentation</p> <p>Embedded Online: No</p> <p>Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: Only if the device connects to the internet. Submit as an Assistive Technology Device.</p> <p>Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Assistive Technology Device</p> <p>Related Accommodations: Assistive Technology Device</p> <p>Additional Resources: Unique Accommodation Assurance</p>

Assistance with Selected Response

Definition: The test administrator marks the multiple-choice selected response at the student's direction. This may include assisting with a technology-enhanced item (drag and drop, drop-down box, hot text selection, etc.) at the student's direction.

Usage: This accommodation must occur in a one-on-one setting. The test administrator marks the response at the student's direction. The test administrator can in no way prompt, cue, or influence the student's response.

Considerations: This accommodation is intended for a student who is unable to physically select multiple-choice answers (including technology-enhanced items) due to disability or injury.

Students should practice responding to multiple-choice and technology-enhanced items in the Online Training Tools. If a student has difficulty independently responding to technology-enhanced items due to a visual or motor disability, an accommodated online form is available. Contact PDE at RA-EDUNIQUEACCOM@pa.gov.

Type: Response

Documentation Required: Local Documentation

Embedded Online: No

Unique Accommodation

Assurance Required: No

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Assistance with Selected Response

Related Accommodations: [Scribing for Mathematics and Science, Algebra I, and Biology Open-ended, Grade 3 PSSA Short Answer, Keystone Literature Constructed Response](#), [Scribing for ELA PSSA](#), [Transcription](#)

Additional Resources: [Online Tools Training](#)

Audio for Mathematics, Science, and Writing Items (“Allowable Items”)

Definition: Embedded audio of the full Mathematics and Science PSSA and Algebra I and Biology Keystone, as well as the writing items (Conventions of Standard English and TDA prompts) on the ELA PSSA. Audio is available in English only. The audio function includes text that is part of graphs, text boxes, diagrams, charts, and graphics. The audio function allows the student to pause, control volume and speed, and have text repeated.

Usage: The audio function will read aloud the entire test (or, for ELA PSSA, the allowable items). There is no ability for the student to turn off audio completely. A student requiring the audio accommodation should practice with it in the Online Tools Training prior to testing.

The function must be selected during test set-up in the student management portal. The default of the test is no audio. The student’s test ticket will indicate that audio is set up for the student with the code AU. If the student starts the test without the accommodation, the ticket will have to be regenerated and the student will have to begin the test again, so it is important to be sure the function is selected before testing starts.

Audio requires the use of headphones. A student testing without headphones must test in a one-on-one setting. If headphones are used, the student may test with the general student population, or in a small group.

Considerations: This accommodation is considered an intensive intervention available for a student who uses it in classroom instruction and assessment. If the student does not require audio of all mathematics, science, or writing items for instruction, then the student does not require audio of all mathematics, science, or writing items for the PSSA or Keystone tests.

Because reading aloud all test items by a human reader creates an artificial pace, the online audio version of the test must be considered for a student who requires a read aloud of the full test. This allows the student optimal control in moving through the test at an independent pace. The student may listen to a question being read aloud more than once as needed.

Occasionally, a non-IEP or 504 student requires audio of all Mathematics, Science, and Writing test items. This may be a student who has not yet been identified as needing

Type: Presentation

Documentation Required: Local Documentation

Embedded Online: Yes

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: No

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Audio

Related Accommodations: [Read Aloud All Mathematics, Science, and Writing Items by a Human Reader](#), [Audio of Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone](#)

Additional Resources: [Online Tools Training](#), [Appendix G: Supplemental Tools and Resources](#)

<p>special services. Documentation must be kept in the student record of the need for this intensive accommodation for both instruction and assessment. The tools in Appendix G may be used for record keeping</p>	
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Braille (Paper), Braille	
<p>Definition: A paper braille form is available from the test vendor. The paper braille form includes accessible graphics.</p> <p>Usage: The braille paper/pencil test must be ordered through the additional materials ordering system in the test portal.</p> <p>Responses written in the paper test or produced using a braille must be transcribed into the student's online test form, following the transcription guidelines in this document. After transcription, paper braille tests must be securely destroyed.</p> <p>Considerations: Consult with the student's Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI) to determine the braille type that needs to be ordered and plans for transcribing if the student is using a braille.</p>	<p>Type: Presentation, Response</p> <p>Documentation Required: IEP or 504 Documentation</p> <p>Embedded Online: No – see Refreshable Braille</p> <p>Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: No</p> <p>Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Braille – Paper Form</p> <p>Related Accommodations: Braille (Refreshable), Paper/Pencil Print-on-Demand, Transcription</p>

Braille (Refreshable)

Definition: The online test platform is compatible with a refreshable braille device that works with Job Access with Speech (JAWS).

Usage: A student using refreshable braille will need a braille graphics packet. These should be ordered through the additional materials ordering system in the test portal.

The function must be selected during test set-up in the student management portal. The student's test ticket will indicate that refreshable braille is set up for the student with the code REFBRILLE. If the student starts the test without the accommodation, the ticket will have to be regenerated and the student will have to begin the test again, so it is important to be sure the function is selected before testing starts.

Considerations: The JAWS website is a valuable source to evaluate which refreshable braille devices are compatible.

A student requiring the refreshable braille test and a read aloud accommodation will need to utilize a human reader. Audio will not work with the refreshable braille form. The IEP team determines if a read aloud is appropriate for the student to use along with the braille version.

Type: Presentation, Response

Documentation Required: IEP or 504 Documentation

Embedded Online: Yes, with JAWS

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: No

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Refreshable Braille/Accommodated Form

Related Accommodations: [Braille \(Paper\)](#)

Additional Resources: [Online Tools Training](#), [Freedom Scientific JAWS website](#)

Calculators (Adaptive)

Definition: Usage of an adaptive calculator on the allowable sections of the Grades 4-8 Mathematics PSSA, Algebra I Keystone, Science PSSA, and Biology Keystone. An adaptive calculator may include a speaking calculator, large keypad, paper multiplication chart, and other calculator apps.

Usage: No student may use calculators, including multiplication charts, on the Grade 3 Mathematics PSSA, or the non-calculator sections of the Grade 4-8 Mathematics PSSA. Calculators are not mandatory but allowed for all students on the Science PSSA and Biology Keystone.

All calculators must meet the guidelines in the Pennsylvania Calculator Policy.

Any calculator application accessed through a device with internet capabilities is considered a unique accommodation and an assurance must be completed.

A student eligible for a paper multiplication chart must use the one found in Appendix D.

A student using a speaking calculator must test in a one-on-one setting.

Considerations: The test platform utilizes the DESMOS Calculator, which can be installed for use during instruction on the DESMOS for PA testing page. The calculator is also available in the Online Training Tools.

Type: Response

Documentation Required: Local Documentation

Embedded Online: No

Unique Accommodation

Assurance Required: Only for calculator applications accessed with a device with internet capabilities. Submit as an Assistive Technology Device.

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Assistive Technology Device

Related Accommodations: [Assistive Technology Device](#), [Math Manipulatives](#)

Additional Resources: [Pennsylvania Calculator Policy](#), [Appendix D: Paper Multiplication Chart](#), [DESMOS Calculator](#), [Unique Accommodations Assurance](#), [Online Training Tools](#)

Color Chooser

Definition: A student may use different text and background colors, including reverse contrast and contrasting text, to access the test.

Usage: Students should preview the color choices in the Online Training Tools.

The function must be selected during test set-up in the student management portal. The student's test ticket will indicate that Color Chooser is set up for the student with the code CC. If the student starts the test without the accommodation, the ticket will have to be regenerated and the student will have to begin the test again, so it is important to be sure the function is selected before testing starts.

For print-on-demand paper/pencil testing, a student may use a color overlay. School assessment coordinators may also produce print-on-demand tests on alternate colored paper as needed.

Considerations: The online test colors default to black text on a white background with blue navigation buttons. Some tools (e.g., highlighter, cross-off, graphing tools, etc.) use color. However, no part of any test requires a student to distinguish between colors to answer a question.

Type: Presentation

Documentation Required: Local Documentation

Embedded Online: Yes

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: No

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Color Chooser

Additional Resources: [Online Training Tools](#)

Cueing System for On Task Behavior

Definition: A student may benefit from a systematic approach to staying on task, such as tapping on the desk or giving a hand signal.

Usage: Cueing must NOT be used to cue a student to a correct answer. It also may not be used to cue a student as to how to complete a task or encourage them to write or do more on a task.

Considerations: This accommodation should be used in the same way it is used during classroom assessment and instruction.

Type: Presentation

Documentation Required: Local Documentation

Embedded Online: No

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: No

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Other - Presentation

Dictionaries and Translation Sheets (Word-to-Word for English Learners ONLY)

Definition: English Learners may use a word-to-word dictionary and/or subject-specific word-to-word translation sheet on the Mathematics PSSA, Algebra I Keystone, Science PSSA, and Biology Keystone. These materials must be without definitions or pictures. Electronic translation applications and devices are not allowed on any PSSA or Keystone tests.

Usage: Students should only use materials that they are familiar with using and have used in classroom instruction and assessment prior to state testing.

Considerations: Word-to-word dictionaries are not allowed on the ELA PSSA or Literature Keystone.

Type: Presentation, Response

Documentation Required: Local Documentation or Documentation in the ELD Plan

Embedded Online: No

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: No

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Word-to-word dictionary/translation sheets for EL students

Related Accommodations: [Interpret/Translate, Spanish](#)

Additional Resources: [Accommodations Guidelines for English Learners](#)

Frequent Breaks	
<p>Definition: A student needs to take planned frequent breaks within a regularly scheduled test session as an accommodation for a disability or medical reason.</p> <p>Usage: Consider a small group setting for a student who requires frequent breaks within a test section (e.g., every 15 minutes). The student must be monitored during all breaks.</p> <p>Considerations: Do not mark “Frequent Breaks” as an accommodation for breaks between sessions, or for a student who may need to use the restroom during a test session.</p>	<p>Type: Timing</p> <p>Documentation Required: Local Documentation</p> <p>Embedded Online: No</p> <p>Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: No</p> <p>Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Frequent Breaks</p> <p>Related Accommodations: Small Group Setting, Extraordinary Time</p>
Hospital or Home Setting	
<p>Definition: A student who is receiving educational services in a home setting or hospital setting during the testing period should be tested in that setting. All students receiving educational services should be tested.</p> <p>Usage: A certified test administrator employed through the LEA must administer the test. The LEA must secure a location for daily return of test materials by the test administrator. The test must be administered on a school-owned device connected to internet.</p> <p>Considerations: It is the LEA’s responsibility to ensure testing of hospitalized and homebound students occurs.</p>	<p>Type: Setting</p> <p>Documentation Required: Local Documentation and/or Medical Documentation</p> <p>Embedded Online: No</p> <p>Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: No</p> <p>Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Hospital or Home Setting</p> <p>Related Accommodations: Frequent Breaks, Extraordinary Time</p> <p>Additional Resources: Handbook for Assessment Coordinators</p>

Interpret/Translate

Definition: The LEA provides a qualified sign language or native language interpreter for a student requiring sign language or native language interpretation/translation. English Learners enrolled in U.S. schools for fewer than three years are eligible for language translation.

Usage: Test Directions may be interpreted/translated for all tests. Test items may only be interpreted/translated for Mathematics, Algebra I, Science, and Biology, and the TDA prompts ONLY for grades 4-8 ELA PSSA. No other part of the ELA test including Conventions of Standard English items, reading passages and associated short answer and multiple-choice questions may be interpreted or translated. No part of the Keystone Literature exam may be interpreted or translated. Interpreters/translators may not clarify, elaborate, paraphrase, assist, or cue a student through uneven voice inflection or description, or through signing and non-manual expressions. Interpreters/translators must follow the Read Aloud, Scribing, and Transcription Guidelines.

Language interpreters may translate student responses to open-ended questions on the Mathematics and Science PSSA, Algebra I Keystone, and Biology Keystone, and transcribe the translation into the online test. Student responses may NOT be translated for the ELA PSSA or Literature Keystone.

Interpreters may preview assessment materials up to three school days prior to test administration in a secure location with a signed Confidentiality Agreement. Any notes taken to prepare for interpretation must be kept in a secure location with testing materials and must be destroyed after testing.

Schools will receive extra log ins for interpreter/translator delivery and preparation and parent reviews. Call test vendor for additional logins for interpreter/translator delivery and preparation.

Non-secure test items, such as the Directions for Administration, Scoring Guidelines, and Formula Sheets, can be pre-translated and printed for EL students. See the Accommodations for English Learners guidelines for more information.

Considerations: The Video Sign Language (VSL) version is available for the Mathematics

Type: Presentation, Response

Documentation Required: For Sign Language – IEP or 504 Documentation. For Language Translation – Local Documentation as part of an ELD Plan

Embedded Online: Video Sign Language and Spanish only

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: No

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: For Presentation - Test item/question signed, or Test item/question interpreted for EL, or Text-dependent analysis prompts signed, or Text-dependent analysis prompts interpreted for EL. For Response – Qualified interpreter translated, transcribed, and/or scribed student's signed responses, or Qualified interpreter translated, transcribed, and/or scribed EL student responses.

Related Accommodations: [Spanish](#), [Video Sign Language](#), [Word-to-Word Dictionaries](#)

Additional Resources: [Accommodations for English Learners](#), [Read Aloud, Scribing, and Transcription Guidelines](#), [Confidentiality and Test Security Certification Form](#)

and Science PSSA and Algebra I and Biology Keystone for Spring and Winter administrations. VSL is not available for the Summer Keystone administration. If a student uses the online VSL accommodation, the Educational Sign Language Interpreter must be present during the assessment to guarantee access for clarification and/or interpretation.

Spanish versions of the test are available for the Mathematics and Science PSSA, Algebra I Keystone, and Biology Keystone.

Large Print (Paper)

Definition: A large print paper/pencil test form is available from the test vendor. It is printed in 18-point font and is an exact replica of the print-on-demand paper/pencil form.

Usage: Large print forms must be ordered through the additional materials ordering system in the test portal.

Student responses must be transcribed into the online test by the school assessment coordinator or designee. After transcriptions, the large print test must be securely destroyed.

Math measurement graphics are not enlarged. An enlarged ruler/protractor is not provided. The student should use a high contrast or tactile ruler/protractor as used in instruction.

Considerations: For online testing, the image will always fill as much of the screen as it can while still maintaining the 4:3 ratio; therefore, an oversized monitor will display the image accordingly and may eliminate the need for a large print form. Additionally, magnification tools and the magnification accommodation further enlarge the test online. The student should use the Online Training Tools to determine effectiveness well before the testing window.

For a student requiring a large print paper/pencil test form in Spanish, the district or school assessment coordinator must contact the test vendor at least eight weeks before the testing window to order a Spanish large print paper/pencil test form.

Type: Presentation

Documentation Required: IEP or 504 Documentation

Embedded Online: No

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: No

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Large Print – Paper Form

Related Accommodations: [Magnification \(Accommodation\)](#), [Paper/Pencil Print-on-Demand](#), [Transcription](#)

Additional Resources: [Online Training Tools](#), [Universal Test Features – Magnification \(Tool\)](#)

Magnification

Definition: The embedded magnification accommodation will magnify the online test x2 throughout the entire test.

A student requiring a magnification accommodation may also use an external device, such as a handheld magnifier.

Usage: When this accommodation is selected, the test will appear magnified 2x throughout the entire test. Previously, students only had the magnification tool available, which must be reset for each question.

The function must be selected during test set-up in the student management portal. The student's test ticket will indicate that Magnification is set up for the student with the code MAG. If the student starts the test without the accommodation, the ticket will have to be regenerated and the student will have to begin the test again, so it is important to be sure the function is selected before testing starts.

Considerations: For online testing, the image will always fill as much of the screen as it can while still maintaining the 4:3 ratio; therefore, an oversized monitor will display the image accordingly and may eliminate the need for a large print form or additional magnification device. The Online Tools Training may be used to determine if the student needs a larger screen or the magnification accommodation ahead of testing.

In addition to the accommodation, the magnification tool is a universal test feature available to all students through the online tools. Students can access magnification by choosing the magnifying glass icon and choosing a magnification level (x1.5, x2, x3, or x4). Magnification through the online tools does not retain throughout the test – a student using it would need to select it for each question. The magnification tool still works with the magnification accommodation, allowing the student to zoom in on material even further.

If a student with a visual or motor disability is still unable to respond to technology-enhanced items with these accommodations in the online test tutorial, then the large print paper/pencil test may be considered, or an accommodated online form is available. Contact PDE at RA-EDUNIQUEACCOM@pa.gov.

Type: Presentation

Documentation Required: Local Documentation

Embedded Online: Yes

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: No

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Magnification

Related Accommodations: [Assistance in Selecting Response](#), [Large Print](#), [Monitor Test Response](#)

Additional Resources: [Universal Test Features - Magnification \(Tool\)](#), [Online Tools Training](#)

Math Manipulatives

Definition: The following math manipulatives are allowable for a student with a documented need:

- High contrast/tactile ruler for Grade 3 Mathematics PSSA ONLY – should measure 6 inches at 1/8-inch increments, and 15 centimeters at 1/10-centimeter increments.
- High contrast/tactile protractor for Grade 4 Mathematics PSSA ONLY – should show 0-180 degrees both clockwise and counterclockwise.
- Cranmer abacus and *Math Window* for braille users only.

Usage: The student should be familiar with the manipulative and use it regularly in classroom instruction and assessment.

Considerations: Number grids, number lines, and hundreds charts are not allowable. See the Calculator (Adaptive) accommodation for information about multiplication charts. Teacher-created manipulatives are not permitted on any portion of the PSSA or Keystone Exam.

A ruler tool (Grade 3) and a protractor tool (Grade 4) are embedded in the online test platform.

Type: Response

Documentation Required: Local Documentation

Embedded Online: No

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: No

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Other - Response

Related Accommodations: [Calculator \(adaptive\)](#), [Visual/Graphic Aids](#)

Additional Resources: [Universal Test Features - Some Visual/Graphic Aids, Math Manipulatives](#), [Online Training Tools](#)

Medical Monitoring with a Smartphone or Smartwatch

Definition: Some medical devices, such as blood glucose monitors and medical alert devices, are synchronized and/or accessed through a smartphone or smartwatch that is always in the student's possession for medical reasons.

Usage: The student's phone or device may remain on the student's desk in plain view of the test administrator. All notifications not needed for medical monitoring must be turned off so as not to distract the student or other test takers. The test administrator must ensure the student doesn't access the device for any other reason than medical monitoring.

Considerations: If a Personal Care Aide (PCA) or nurse must be in the room for medical monitoring, see Test Administrators, Proctors, PCAs, TSS. If the student does not have the device in the testing room (e.g., it is kept in the nurse's office and monitored remotely), this accommodation should not be selected. This accommodation should not be selected for medical devices that don't require the student to have a smartphone or smart device in their possession.

A Unique Accommodation Assurance is no longer required for a student retaining a smartphone or device for medical monitoring.

No documentation needs to be sent to PDE for test administrators, school assessment coordinators, proctors, or other certified adults in the room who need to keep devices for their own medical monitoring. As with students, all notifications not needed for medical monitoring must be turned off so as not to distract any test takers. It is best practice to document this internally and have a plan in place should the adult need to leave the room to address medical needs.

Type: Setting

Documentation Required: Local Documentation and/or Medical Documentation

Embedded Online: No

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: No

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Medical/Glucose Monitoring with a Smartphone or Smartwatch

Related Accommodations: [Test Administrators, Proctors, PCAs, TSS](#)

Additional Resources: [Handbook for Assessment Coordinators](#)

Monitor Test Response

Definition: This accommodation is intended for a small number of students with a documented need, such as a visual or motor disability, who may require a test administrator to monitor placement of their responses on the test to ensure they respond to the question in the intended space.

Usage: A student with a documented need, such as visual or motor disability, may need confirmation when responding to technology-enhanced items (e.g. drag and drop, drop down box, hot text selection, etc.). When using this accommodation, the test administrator may check to ensure that the student has chosen the intended response or answered the question in the intended way. (e.g., “You placed the comma after the word ‘said.’” or “You selected the box labeled ‘one-half.’”) The test administrator may not prompt the student or point to test items on the computer screen.

A student testing in paper/pencil mode will likely not need this accommodation, as there will no longer be bubble sheets and the student will answer directly below the question. However, when using this accommodation, the test administrator may bring blanks and/or incorrect placement of student responses on the answer sheet to the student’s attention (e.g., “Please make sure you have answered all questions.”) The test administrator may not point to test items on the student’s paper/pencil test form.

If verbalizing the student’s responses aloud, the accommodation must be provided in a one-on-one setting.

Considerations: This is not a scribing accommodation. Test administrators should not assist students with their responses. If a student needs assistance with a response, see the Assistance with Selected Response accommodation.

Type: Response

Documentation Required: Local Documentation

Embedded Online: No

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: No

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Other - Response

Related Accommodations: [Assistance with Selected Response](#), [One-on-One Setting](#), [Scribing for Mathematics and Science, Algebra I, and Biology Open-ended, Grade 3 PSSA Short Answer, Keystone Literature Constructed Response](#), [Scribing for ELA PSSA](#)

Noise Cancelling Headphones/Earplugs

Definition: Student wears a noise buffer, headphones that play white noise, or other sound masking device to minimize distraction and maximize concentration.

Usage: The student should not wear the headphones or earplugs until the directions have been completed. The test administrator must be sure to have the student's attention when giving additional directions.

If the headphones must be connected to a device to play white noise, a Unique Accommodation Assurance must be submitted.

If the student is unable to wear headphones to play white noise, the student must be tested in a one-on-one setting.

Considerations: Headphones or earplugs used for noise-cancelling may not be connected to Bluetooth or any other connection that may allow for information to be conveyed to the student during the assessment.

Students may use headphones connected via Bluetooth or other connections for the Audio accommodation.

Type: Setting

Documentation Required: Local Documentation

Embedded Online: No

Unique Accommodation

Assurance Required: Only if the headphones must be connected to a device to play white noise. Submit as an Assistive Technology Device.

Assignment in Accommodations Portal:
Other - Setting

Related Accommodations: [Small Group Setting](#)

Additional Resources: [Unique Accommodation Assurances](#)

One-on-One Setting

Definition: The student completes the test in a room with just the test administrator and no other students.

Usage: One-on-one testing MUST be used with the following accommodations:

- Any accommodation where the student or test administrator is verbalizing a response out loud (Scribing, Assistance with Selected Response, Monitoring Test Response, some Assistive Technology Devices, Voice-to-Text, etc.)
- Read Aloud by a Human Reader, so that the student can control the pacing of the read aloud
- Audio, if the student is not wearing headphones
- Any other accommodation that may cause a distraction to other students in the room

One-on-one setting may also be used to reduce distractions for the tester or provide other accommodations.

Considerations: To prevent any suspicion of testing anomalies, PDE strongly encourages that a second proctor be in the testing room when one-on-one testing is utilized.

Type: Setting

Documentation Required: Local Documentation

Embedded Online: No

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: No

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: One-on-One setting

Related Accommodations: [Small Group Setting](#)

Read Aloud All Mathematics, Science, and Writing Items (“Allowable Items”) by a Human Reader

Definition: A student has the Mathematics PSSA, Science PSSA, Algebra I Keystone, and/or Biology Keystone read aloud in full by the test administrator. Additionally, the student has writing items (“allowable items”) from the ELA PSSA read aloud by the test administrator. (Writing or “allowable” items include the Conventions of Standard English selected response questions and the Text-Dependent Analysis prompt).

Usage: Readers may not clarify, elaborate, paraphrase, assist, or cue a student through uneven voice inflection. All test readers must follow the Read Aloud, Scribing, and Transcription Guidelines.

New for 2026: A student requiring a read aloud by a human reader should be tested in a one-on-one setting so that the student may control the pace and have questions repeated as needed. This accommodation should no longer be offered in small groups with despiraled test books.

Considerations: This accommodation is considered an intensive intervention available for a student who uses it in classroom instruction and assessment. If the student does not require a read aloud of all mathematics or science items for instruction, then the student does not require a read aloud of all mathematics or science items for the PSSA or Keystone tests.

Because reading aloud all test items creates an artificial pace, the online audio version of the test must be considered for a student who requires a read aloud of all or most of the test items on the Mathematics, Algebra I, Science, and Biology tests, multiple-choice Conventions of Standard English items and the Text-Dependent Analysis prompt on the ELA PSSA. This allows the student optimal independence in moving through the test at their own pace. The student may listen to a question being read aloud more than once as needed.

This accommodation is not allowable on the Literature Keystone, because the assessment does not include items measuring writing.

Type: Presentation

Documentation Required: IEP or 504 Documentation, or as part of the student’s ELD plan, including documentation that the student needs a human reader

Embedded Online: No

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: No

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: All Test Items Read Aloud by a Human Reader (for Mathematics, Science, Algebra I, and Biology), All Conventions Questions/Text-Dependent Analysis Prompts Read Aloud by a Human Reader (for ELA).

Related Accommodations: [Audio](#), [Audio of Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone](#), [Read Aloud of Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone by a Human Reader](#), [One-on-One Setting](#)

Additional Resources: [Online Training Tools](#), [Read Aloud, Scribing, and Transcription Guidelines](#)

Read Aloud to Self (Student)

Definition: The student reads the test aloud to self (may also use a whisper phone).

Usage: Whisper phones and reading to self can be distracting to those students who are not reading aloud. An optimal testing environment for all students must be provided, therefore it is not recommended to have a student read aloud to themselves in a quiet testing area with other students. Some rooms may be large enough to allow a student to use a whisper phone out of hearing-range to other testers in the room. The school assessment coordinator must make that determination according to the testing environment being used. If space does not allow for the student to use the whisper phone out of hearing-range of other testers in the room, the student should test in a one-on-one setting.

Considerations: If the student is reading aloud their own responses, a one-on-one setting must be used.

Type: Presentation

Documentation Required: Local Documentation

Embedded Online: No

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: No

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Other - Presentation

Related Accommodations: [One-on-One Setting](#)

Scribing for Mathematics and Science, Algebra I, and Biology Open-ended, Grade 3 PSSA Short Answer, Keystone Literature Constructed Response

Definition: Student dictates or signs open-ended/constructed response to qualified educational sign language interpreter, qualified native language interpreter, or designated test administrator. Scribing should not be confused with transcription, in which the student writes their response independently and the response is transcribed into the online test form by a test administrator.

Usage: Scribing requires a one-on-one setting so that students are neither distracted nor influenced by other students' responses.

Responses must be scribed verbatim in English directly into the student's online test. (A student taking the Spanish version who qualifies for a scribe may have the response scribed in Spanish for the Mathematics and Science PSSA and Algebra I and Biology Keystone.) After the scribe completes the response, the student must be given the opportunity to review the response. The test administrator/scribe may not in any way correct or prompt the student to make a correction. The student is solely responsible for determining if the text accurately reflects what they dictated. The scribe must follow the guidelines in the Read Aloud, Scribing, and Transcription Guidelines.

Type: Response

Documentation Required: IEP or 504 Documentation, or Medical Documentation due to recent injury

Embedded Online: No

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: No

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Scribing for Open-Ended

Related Accommodations: [Assistance with Selected Response](#), [Interpret/Translate](#), [One-on-One Setting](#), [Scribing for ELA PSSA](#), [Transcription](#), [Voice-to-Text](#)

Additional Resources: [Read Aloud](#), [Scribing](#), and [Transcription Guidelines](#)

The scribe must sign the Test Security Certification form.

Considerations: This accommodation is intended for a student with a physical disability or injury that severely limits or prevents the student’s motor process of handwriting or keyboarding; OR a disability that severely limits or prevents the student from expressing written language, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so. LEA must retain IEP, 504, plan, or student record documentation as evidence for this accommodation.

Scribing may interfere with the student’s response to any test item as well as prevent the student from moving at their own pace, thinking deeply, and responding independently.

Because the open-ended responses are keyboarded, the LEA/school should consider if the student can keyboard the response even if they cannot handwrite.

Scribing interferes with the measurement of independent writing skills. Due to test security and item response validity, Scribing for Grades 4-8 PSSA ELA Text-Dependent Analysis is a separate accommodation that requires the LEA to complete an assurance submission to PDE.

ELs enrolled in U.S. schools for fewer than three years are eligible to dictate non-English responses to a qualified native language interpreter for Mathematics, Algebra I, Science, and Biology tests. Interpreters may not translate student dictated responses to open-ended items on the ELA PSSA or Literature Keystone Exam from a non-English language into English, including short answer responses, TDA responses, and constructed responses.

If a student needs a scribe for multiple-choice, see Assistance with Selected Response.

Sensory/Self-Regulation Tool

Definition: A student who requires an object or tool for sensory and/or self-regulation (i.e. a fidget) may use a small item during state assessment.

Usage: The sensory/self-regulation tool should not make noise or be a distraction to the student or other students in the room. If the team feels the tool will create a distraction, a separate one-on-one setting must be used.

Considerations: A student may not use a sensory/self-regulation tool that could double as a manipulative or visual aid on the test (e.g., a 10x10 pop-it grid could be used as a math manipulative and therefore may not be used on the test).

Type: Setting

Documentation Required: Local Documentation

Embedded Online: No

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: No

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Other - Setting

Related Accommodations: [Math Manipulatives](#), [Visual/Graphic Aids](#)

Additional Resources: [Universal Test Features – Some Visual/Graphic Aids, Math Manipulatives, and Online Tools](#)

Small Group

Definition: A test setting of 2-12 students used to administer accommodations as needed.

Usage: Small group testing may be used with the following accommodations:

- Audio with headphones
- Translation and signing
- Distractibility
- Frequent breaks
- Providing planned extra time
- For a student who is anticipated to utilize the “Read Aloud of Some Allowable Items” test feature frequently
- Other documented need

Considerations: Small group settings with despiraling should no longer be used for Read Aloud. Read Aloud by a Human Reader must be conducted in a one-on-one setting. Audio with headphones can be administered with the general population or in a small group. For this reason, PDE no longer differentiates between a 1-5 and 1-12 small group.

A one-on-one setting must be used for any accommodation where a student’s responses are verbalized out loud.

Type: Setting

Documentation Required: Local Documentation

Embedded Online: No

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: No

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Small Group Setting

Related Accommodations: [One-on-One Setting](#), [Test Administrator](#), [Proctors](#), [PCAs](#), [TSS](#)

Spanish Version

Definition: Grade 3-8 Mathematics and Science PSSA, Algebra I Keystone, and Biology Keystone are presented online in Spanish, with embedded English translation.

Usage: English Learners enrolled in U.S. schools for three years or less are eligible to take a Spanish version of the Grade 3-8 Mathematics and Science PSSA, and the Biology and Algebra I Keystone Exam.

The student may respond in Spanish or English.

The Directions for Administration are also provided in Spanish and may be read by a test administrator fluent in Spanish.

The accommodation must be selected during test set-up in the student management portal. The student's test ticket will indicate that the student will take the Spanish form with the code SPAN. If the student starts the test without the accommodation, the ticket will have to be regenerated and the student will have to begin the test again, so it is important to be sure the function is selected before testing starts.

Considerations: There is no Spanish version of the ELA PSSA or Literature Keystone.

There is a print-on-demand paper/pencil Spanish version of the Mathematics, Science, Algebra I, and Biology assessments for a student eligible for both the Spanish test and paper/pencil mode. Check the guidelines for paper/pencil print-on-demand to determine eligibility. This accommodation should be chosen in the accommodations page of the student management portal. Choosing this accommodation will allow the paper/pencil test to be printed when the print-on-demand window opens. Spanish Print-on-Demand is a unique accommodation and requires an assurance to PDE. For a student requiring a large print paper/pencil test in Spanish, the district or school assessment coordinator must contact the test vendor at least eight weeks before the testing window to order a Spanish large print paper/pencil test form.

Type: Presentation, Response

Documentation Required: Local Documentation as part of an ELD Plan

Embedded Online: Yes

Unique Accommodation

Assurance Required: No (except for Spanish Paper Form)

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Spanish, Spanish Print-on-Demand

Related Accommodations: [Interpret/Translate](#), [Word-to-word Dictionary](#)

Additional Resources: [Accommodations Guidelines for English Learners](#)

Test Administrators, Proctors, Personal Care Aides, Therapeutic Support Staff, and Other One-on-One Staff

Definition: A student may need to be assigned to a certain test administrator or proctor, especially one familiar with their accommodation needs. A student may require the presence of a Personal Care Aide (PCA), Therapeutic Support Staff (TSS), nurse, or other one-on-one staff member.

Usage: These persons assigned to a student may not coach or provide feedback (e.g., answer any questions pertaining to the content of the test, review rough drafts, or indicate to the student that any items need a second look) during or after completion of the test. All persons assigned to the student or in the room during testing must sign a [Test Security Certification](#) form.

A paraprofessional is permitted to administer the PSSA or Keystone Exams with training. However, a PCA or TSS may not administer tests while also providing a service to a student. PCAs, TSSs, nurses, or any other one-on-one aide assigned to a student or classroom during testing must complete the Pennsylvania State Test Administration Training (PSTAT) and the training provided by the school assessment coordinator.

Considerations: To prevent any suspicion of testing anomalies, PDE strongly encourages school entities not to allow teachers to be Test administrators and/or proctors of their own students, or that a proctor be in the testing room with the teacher if the teacher acts as the test administrator of their own class or students, or when special settings, such as small group or one-on-one, are utilized. Therefore, if students with accommodations are assigned to their own teacher who is familiar with their accommodations, PDE strongly recommends an additional proctor be in the testing room.

Type: Setting

Documentation Required: Local Documentation

Embedded Online: No

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: No

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: One-on-One Setting or Small Group Setting as relevant

Related Accommodations: [Small Group Setting](#), [One-on-One Setting](#)

Additional Resources: [Confidentiality and Test Security Certification Form](#), [Handbook for Assessment Coordinators](#)

Transcription

Definition: Student responses are written outside of the online test and must be entered by the test administrator or designee. Transcription should not be confused with scribing, in which a student orally dictates the response to a scribe.

Usage: The following circumstances require transcription:

- The student tested online but has a documented need to handwrite open-ended responses that must be transcribed into the online test.
- The student tested using a paper/pencil form (including print-on-demand, large print, or braille) which must be transcribed into the online test.

Type: Response

Documentation Required: Local Documentation, IEP or 504 documentation, or Medical Documentation due to recent injury

Embedded Online: No

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: No

- The student wrote or keyboarded the response in a language other than English, and the qualified interpreter/translator transcribed the response into the test in English (for Mathematics and Science, Algebra I and Biology only – see Interpret/Translate).
- The student used voice-to-text or other assistive technology device to create a response that must be transcribed into the test.

All transcription must be completed by a qualified school assessment coordinator or test administrator. There must be more than one certified assessment coordinator or test administrator in the room when transcription is occurring. Ideally, transcription will occur in the testing session and the student will have an opportunity to review their work. If this is not possible, the paper/pencil test or written response may be transcribed at a later time, but as soon as possible and no longer than 24 hours after the test session has concluded. All transcription must occur before the close of the testing window (5pm on the final day of testing). The school assessment coordinator will need to unlock the student test ticket for transcription. All paper/pencil tests and written responses must be stored as secure materials until transcription is complete. Once transcription is complete, all paper/pencil tests and written responses must be securely destroyed. The transcribers must sign the Test Security Certification form (located in the Handbook for Assessment Coordinators).

If a student is able to test in the online testing mode, but has a documented need to handwrite open-ended responses, the student may complete the selected response portion of the assessment online and then write the open-ended responses on paper. The responses must be entered into the online test by the test administrator or designee.

When producing the response on a separate device, such as an Assistive Technology Device, responses should be transcribed directly from the device into the student's online test if possible. If the text must be printed for transcription, it should be sent directly to a secure printer, transcribed, and then securely destroyed. Responses may not be sent to an unsecure printer or emailed for printing. All original student work must be securely destroyed or permanently deleted from the device by the school assessment coordinator.

Considerations: The student using the accommodation should be aware of the character limits in the online platform, as their written responses will not fit if they are over the limit.

Assignment in Accommodations Portal:
Transcription

Related Accommodations: [Assistance with Selected Response](#), [Assistive Technology Device](#), [Interpret/Translate](#), [Paper/Pencil Print-on-Demand](#), [Scribing for Mathematics and Science, Algebra I, and Biology Open-ended, Grade 3 PSSA Short Answer, Keystone Literature Constructed Response](#), [Scribing for ELA PSSA](#), [Voice-to-Text](#)

Additional Resources: [Read Aloud, Scribing, and Transcription Guidelines](#), [Handbook for Assessment Coordinators](#)

Video Sign Language

Definition: Embedded Video Sign Language (VSL) interpretation of each question on the Mathematics and Science PSSA, Algebra I and Biology Keystone.

Usage: The student should practice with the VSL accommodation in the Online Training Tools before testing.

The function must be selected during test set-up in the student management portal. The student's test ticket will indicate that Video Sign Language is set up for the student with the code VSL. If the student starts the test without the accommodation, the ticket will have to be regenerated and the student will have to begin the test again, so it is important to be sure the function is selected before testing starts.

Utilization of the VSL accommodation does not replace a student's onsite educational interpreter during the assessment, as they are required to be there to provide access for questions and/or concerns.

Following notification of a student needing the VSL presentation accommodation, ensure there is a dedicated computer that is capable of downloading the large video files and that it meets all of the additional criteria set forth by the test vendor.

Considerations: A student using this accommodation must use VSL or have text signed to them during instruction and assessments; it should not be used solely during PSSA assessments.

VSL is not available for any part of the ELA PSSA or Literature Keystone tests. The VSL online version is available for the PSSA Mathematics and Science and Keystone Algebra I and Biology assessments for Spring and Winter administrations. There is no VSL available for the Summer Keystone administration.

Type: Presentation

Documentation Required: IEP or 504 Documentation

Embedded Online: Yes

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: No

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Video Sign Language

Related Accommodations: [Interpret/Translate](#)

Additional Resources: [Supplemental Guidelines for American Sign Language \(ASL\) in the Video Sign Language \(VSL\) test version](#)

Visual/Graphic Aids

Definition: Besides what is already offered through the online tools and universal test features, very few visual and graphic aids are allowable on the PSSA and Keystone tests. In addition to aids and online tools allowable to all students, a student with a documented need is permitted to use a keyboard overlay and may use specialty paper such as large-squared paper or special lined paper.

For paper/pencil mode, a student may use wiki stix or a reading line guide. Additionally, the school assessment coordinator or designee may use highlighters, underlining, colored stickers, or sticky notes ONLY on the procedural assessment directions, e.g., “GO ON”, “STOP”, “Complete question 00.” This is only for a student who regularly requires aid with procedural directions due to a disability that disallows the student from recognizing a direction to turn the page or to stop. Since this requires opening the paper/pencil test form, only the school assessment coordinator or designee may place the stickers.

Since the online test presents only one item at a time and does not require turning pages, the placement of sticky notes on directions by the school assessment coordinator or designee is not allowed.

Usage: The LEA will provide all allowable visual/graphic aids mentioned above. A student may not bring their own visual/graphic aids to the test session. Without prompting during the test session, a student may create their own organizers, such as number lines or writing organizers, on scratch paper when the testing session starts.

All scratch paper must be destroyed after testing.

The school assessment coordinator or test administrator may not use, or direct students to use, online tools, highlighters, underlining, or colored stickers on assessment directions associated with test items (e.g. “Read the following passage about wild ponies. Then answer questions 1–10” or “Use the figure below to answer question 00.”)

Considerations: Other than the materials mentioned above, teacher- or LEA-created graphic organizers, including writing organizers and number lines, are not allowable on any portion of any test.

Type: Presentation, Response

Documentation Required: Local Documentation

Embedded Online: No

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: No

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Other - Presentation

Related Accommodations: [Math Manipulatives](#), [Sensory/Self-Regulation Tool](#)

Additional Resources: [Online Tools Training](#), [Universal Test Features – Some Visual Aids/Graphics](#), [Math Manipulatives](#), and [Online Tools](#)

Table C: Unique Accommodations

Unique Accommodations are available for a student who would not otherwise be able to access the test material. These are accommodations that could pose a security or validity risk to the test if used incorrectly.

Because a unique accommodation may alter the test item content or validity of the student response, IEP and 504 teams need to be aware that the test results must be interpreted with caution when a unique accommodation is used.

The following accommodations are considered unique accommodations. A Unique Accommodation Assurance must be submitted for any student requiring a unique accommodation.

Please do NOT submit Unique Accommodation Assurances for Designated Accommodations listed in Table B. PDE must be contacted for any accommodation not listed in this manual at RA-EDUNIQUEACCOM@pa.gov.

Assistive Technology Device

Definition: As a presentation accommodation, Assistive Technology Devices (ATD) include computer software and hardware, such as screen readers and screen enlargement applications. ATD may be used by a student with a visual disability or a disability that severely limits or prevents the student from accessing the test.

As a response accommodation, Assistive Technology Devices (ATD) include computer software and hardware, such as voice recognition and voice-to-text programs, screen enlargement applications, adaptive keyboards, word processors, and devices to help perform navigation tasks. ATD helps a student with mobility/sensory impairments, or a disability that severely limits or prevents the student from expressing written language even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so.

Usage: The student should use the ATD in a manner consistent with usage during classroom instruction and assessment. As a response accommodation, the response must be transcribed directly from the ATD screen or sent to a secure printer and destroyed after transcription. No responses should be sent via email or to a non-secure printer.

Considerations: This accommodation is intended for a student who does not access instructional and testing materials through typical means. Note that online tools and accommodations, including audio, may provide sufficient support for testing. The student can practice with these tools in the Online Training Tools. The online system may not be interoperable with some assistive devices and/or software, including screen readers and voice recognition or voice-to-text software. Most navigation tools are interoperable with the online system. Verify operability prior to testing.

Type: Presentation, Response

Documentation Required: IEP or 504 Documentation

Embedded Online: No

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: Yes

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Assistive Technology Device

Related Accommodations: [Amplification](#), [Audio](#), [Augmentative or Alternative Communication](#), [Calculator \(Adaptive\)](#), [Delayed Auditory Feedback DAF/ Pitch-shifting](#), [Frequency-altered Auditory Feedback FAF](#), [Voice-to-Text](#), [Transcription](#)

Additional Resources: [Supplemental Guidelines for Device Lock-Down](#), [Unique Accommodation Assurances](#)

Audio of Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone

Definition: Embedded audio of the full ELA or Literature test, including passages, test items, and directions, is appropriate as a unique accommodation for the student who meets the criteria below. Audio is available in English only. The audio function includes text that is part of graphs, text boxes, diagrams, charts, and graphics. The audio function allows the student to pause, control volume and speed, and have text repeated.

Usage: The function must be selected during test set-up in the student management portal. The default of the online test is no audio. The student's online test ticket will indicate that Audio is set up for the student with the code AUFL. If the student starts the test without the accommodation, it cannot be turned on retroactively, so it is important to be sure the function is selected before testing starts.

The student should practice with the audio function in the Online Tools Training before testing.

Audio requires the use of headphones and/or one-on-one setting to eliminate distraction to others. If headphones are used, the student may test with the general student population, or in a small group (less than 12). The student may press the start and stop buttons as needed.

Considerations: This accommodation is intended for a student who has a disability that precludes the student from accessing printed text. It is meant to allow a student to participate in the reading assessment who would not be able to participate by any other means. The need for this accommodation must be documented through locally administered diagnostic evaluations. The accommodation must be documented in the IEP or 504 plan and used consistently in classroom instruction and assessment. When determining the need for this accommodation, it is important to consider the purpose of the assessment the student will be taking and the reading skills the assessment is intending to measure, as well as how the accommodation may affect the results. A student requiring Audio or Read Aloud of the Full ELA or Literature Test would also typically require the use of a voice-to-text or scribing accommodation.

A student who uses the Audio of Full PSSA/Literature Keystone accommodation must:

- Have a documented disability that severely limits or prevents that student's ability to

Type: Presentation

Documentation Required: IEP or 504 Documentation, including documentation of locally administered diagnostic evaluations

Embedded Online: Yes

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: Yes

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Audio for Full ELA/Literature

Related Accommodations: [Audio for Mathematics, Science, and Writing Items](#), [Read Aloud Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone by a Human Reader](#), [Scribing for Mathematics and Science, Algebra I, and Biology Open-ended, Grade 3 PSSA Short Answer, Keystone Literature Constructed Response](#), [Scribing for ELA PSSA](#)

Additional Resources: [See Appendix C for examples of students who may and may not be eligible for this accommodation.](#) [Read Aloud, Scribing, and Transcription Guidelines](#), [Unique Accommodation Assurances](#), [Online Tools Training](#)

decode text and derive meaning from text even when repeated and varied evidence-based interventions and instruction are used to teach the student to decode.

- Only access print materials with a screen reader, audio, a human reader, or other Accessible Educational Materials (AEM) during classroom instruction and assessment.

This accommodation is intended for a student who is a non-reader, not simply reading below grade level. For this reason, Audio of the Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone will not be appropriate for every student who receives the Read Aloud or Audio of All Mathematics, Science, and Writing Items accommodation on the Mathematics and Science PSSA or Algebra I and Biology Keystone.

Testing with this accommodation will increase testing time and create an artificial pace for the student. A student who does not regularly receive this accommodation in the classroom as part of regular instruction and assessment may experience frustration or lack of motivation because of the time and pacing. Offering this accommodation to a student who does not meet the criteria above may result in inaccurate test scores.

Because reading aloud all test items creates an artificial pace, the online audio version of the test must be considered for a student who requires a read aloud of the full ELA test. This allows the student optimal control in moving through the test at an independent pace. The student may listen to a question being read aloud more than once as needed.

If a student does need a human reader for the ELA PSSA or Literature Keystone test, see Read Aloud for Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone for more information.

Augmentative or Alternative Communication (AAC)

Definition: AAC can include forms of communication (other than oral speech) that are used to express thoughts, needs, wants, and ideas. AAC is augmentative when used to supplement existing speech, and alternative when used in place of speech that is absent or not functional.

Usage: If the AAC is able to access the internet, the device must be securely configured. The online test platform is not interoperable with AAC devices. Responses created using AAC devices must be transcribed into the online test form.

Considerations: All grammar, spelling, word prediction with topic specific dictionary, internet, thesaurus, dictionary and all other functions and stored files that might cue the student in any way must be disabled.

Type: Response

Documentation Required: IEP or 504 Documentation

Embedded Online: No

Unique Accommodation

Assurance Required: Yes – choose Assistive Technology Device

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Assistive Technology Device

Related Accommodations: [Assistive Technology Device](#), [Transcription](#)

Additional Resources: [Supplemental Guidelines for Device Lock-Down](#), [Unique Accommodation Assurances](#)

Delayed Auditory Feedback (DAF)/Pitch-shifting Frequency-altered Auditory Feedback (FAF)

Definition: This accommodation is intended for a student with a speech-auditory disability that precludes them from accessing instructional and testing materials without the use of a feedback device.

Usage: Testing using a DAF/FAF must be in a one-on-one environment.

Considerations: The DAF/FAF application must be securely configured in lockdown mode.

Type: Presentation

Documentation Required: Local Documentation

Embedded Online: No

Unique Accommodation

Assurance Required: Yes – choose Assistive Technology Device

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Assistive Technology Device

Related Accommodations: [Assistive Technology Device](#), [One-on-One Setting](#)

Additional Resources: [Supplemental Guidelines for Device Lockdown](#), [Unique Accommodation Assurances](#)

Extraordinary Time

Definition: In rare cases, a student may not be able to finish the test in one day by any other means. In this case, a student may be granted “extraordinary time” and the test session may span into the following day.

Usage: If a student requires testing into the next school day, they must be reminded not to talk about the test to other students. The student must be monitored closely to prevent changing any answers to items already completed. For this reason, a student using extraordinary time must test in a one-on-one environment.

Extraordinary Time should be a planned accommodation that is used in regular classroom instruction and assessment. It should not be granted simply because a student did not complete the assessment within the testing day.

Considerations: The Extraordinary Time accommodation is intended for a student who needs considerable testing time due to disability or medical condition that may require them to work slowly or take frequent breaks, thereby making it impossible to complete the exam within one school day.

PSSA and Keystone Exams are untimed as a universal feature of the assessment. All students may be given additional time beyond the test session, as long as they are working productively. Testing should be scheduled so that students have time to complete a session by the end of the school day, even if extra time is needed. The general population of students should be able to complete the assessment within a school day. Using additional time beyond the test session but within the school day is NOT an accommodation.

If a student becomes ill during the assessment and must continue a test session on another school day, this is NOT considered an Extraordinary Time accommodation.

Type: Timing

Documentation Required: IEP or 504 Documentation, or Medical Documentation

Embedded Online: No

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: Yes - choose Other

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Other - Timing

Related Accommodations: [Frequent Breaks](#), [Hospitalization/Homebound Setting](#), [One-on-One Setting](#)

Additional Resources: [Universal Test Features – Extended Time](#), [Unique Accommodation Assurances](#)

Paper/Pencil Mode (Print-on-Demand)

Definition: Beginning with the Spring 2026 testing window, Pennsylvania is transitioning all testing online. Paper/pencil testing will only be available for a student who:

- requires testing in paper/pencil mode as an accommodation due to disability, as documented in the IEP or 504 plan.
- has medical documentation within two weeks of the testing window to test in paper/pencil mode, due to recent injury or illness.
- is prohibited from using online devices per terms of educational placement or documented legal adjudication.
- requires a paper braille or paper large print test (see guidelines for those accommodations in this document).

Usage: Paper/pencil testing is print-on-demand. This accommodation should be chosen in the accommodations page of the student management portal. Choosing this accommodation will allow the paper/pencil test to be printed when the print-on-demand window opens. Schools with a student requiring the paper/pencil accommodation will print the assessment with a secure printer. Once printed, test materials must be securely stored. The vendor will only ship paper tests for braille and large print.

A supplemental Directions for Administration document will be available on the PDE website. In addition to outlining directions for administration specific to paper/pencil testing, it will also give guidelines for transcribing questions into the online test.

Schools administering paper/pencil tests, including large print and braille, will have student work transcribed into the online assessment. A student using the paper/pencil test will automatically be assigned a corresponding form of the online test. All responses will be transcribed into the online form. For technology-enhanced items, an approximation of the question will be included in the paper/pencil test. The student will interact with these questions similarly to the TE item in the online test (for example, a student may circle a response instead of dragging and dropping it, or underline text instead of highlighting it.) Therefore, it is important that the school assessment coordinator or test administrator transcribing the student responses follows the instructions for transcription closely.

Schools will destroy paper/pencil materials on site. No paper/pencil assessments will be returned to the vendor after testing.

Type: Presentation

Documentation Required: IEP or 504 Documentation, recent Medical Documentation, or terms of educational placement or legal adjudication

Embedded Online: No

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: Yes

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Print-on-Demand Paper/Pencil Form, Spanish Print-on-Demand Paper/Pencil Form

Related Accommodations: [Braille \(paper\)](#), [Large Print \(paper\)](#), [Transcription](#)

Additional Resources: [Paper/Pencil Print-on-Demand Directions for Administration Guidelines](#), [Unique Accommodation Assurances](#)

Print-on-Demand Paper/Pencil Mode is also available in Spanish for eligible students. Choose the Spanish Print-on-Demand Paper/Pencil Form accommodation for this version. It will be available with an English version for reference.

Considerations: The student must use this accommodation for classroom instruction and local assessment in order to use it for state testing. This is likely an extremely limited number of students in each LEA.

Read Aloud of Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone by a Human Reader

Definition: Student has the ELA PSSA or Literature Keystone read aloud to them by a human reader in full, including passages, test items, and directions, as a unique accommodation for the student who meets the criteria below.

Usage: Testing with this accommodation must be administered in a one-on-one setting with a human reader. The student must have the option to ask the reader to slow down or repeat text. For this reason, small group with de-spiraling is not allowable for this accommodation. The human reader must follow the Read Aloud, Scribing, and Transcription Guidelines.

Considerations: This accommodation is intended for a student who has a disability that precludes the student from accessing printed text. It is meant to allow a student to participate in the reading assessment who would not be able to participate by any other means. The need for this accommodation must be documented through locally administered diagnostic evaluations. The accommodation must be documented in the IEP or 504 plan and used consistently in classroom instruction and assessment. When determining the need for this accommodation, it is important to consider the purpose of the assessment the student will be taking and the reading skills the assessment is intending to measure, as well as how the accommodation may affect the results. A student requiring Audio or Read Aloud of the Full ELA or Literature Test would also typically require the use of a voice-to-text or scribing accommodation.

A student who uses the Read Aloud of Full PSSA/Literature Keystone accommodation must:

- Have a documented disability that severely limits or prevents that student's ability to

Type: Presentation

Documentation Required: IEP or 504 Documentation, including documentation of locally administered diagnostic evaluations, and documentation that the student needs a human reader

Embedded Online: No

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: Yes

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: All ELA Test Items Read Aloud by a Human Reader

Related Accommodations: [Audio for Mathematics, Science, and Writing Items](#), [Read Aloud of All Mathematics, Science, and Writing Items by a Human Reader](#), [Scribing for Mathematics and Science, Algebra I, and Biology Open-ended, Grade 3 PSSA Short Answer, Keystone Literature Constructed Response](#), [Audio for Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone](#), [Scribing for ELA PSSA](#)

Additional Resources: [See Appendix C for examples of students who may and may not be eligible for this accommodation.](#) [Read Aloud](#),

<p>decode text and derive meaning from text even when repeated and varied evidence-based interventions and instruction are used to teach the student to decode.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only access print materials with a screen reader, audio, a human reader, or other Accessible Educational Materials (AEM) during classroom instruction and assessment. <p>This accommodation is intended for a student who is a non-reader, not simply reading below grade level. For this reason, Read Aloud of the Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone by a Human Reader will not be appropriate for every student who receives the Read Aloud or Audio of All Mathematics, Science, and Writing Items accommodation on the Mathematics and Science PSSA or Algebra I and Biology Keystone.</p> <p>Testing with this accommodation will increase testing time and create an artificial pace for the student. A student who does not regularly receive this accommodation in the classroom as part of regular instruction and assessment may experience frustration or lack of motivation because of the time and pacing. Offering this accommodation to a student who does not meet the criteria above may result in inaccurate test scores.</p> <p>Because reading aloud all test items creates an artificial pace, the online audio version of the test must be considered for a student who requires a read aloud of the full ELA test. This allows the student optimal control in moving through the test at an independent pace. The student may listen to a question being read aloud more than once as needed.</p>	<p>Scribing, and Transcription Guidelines, Unique Accommodation Assurances</p>
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Scribing for ELA PSSA Text-Dependent Analysis (Grades 4-8)	
<p>Definition: The student dictates or signs the open-ended/constructed response for the Text-Dependent Analysis prompt on the ELA PSSA to a designated test administrator.</p> <p>Scribing interferes with the measurement of independent writing skills. Due to test security and item response validity, scribing for grades 4-8 PSSA ELA Text-Dependent Analysis is a separate accommodation that requires the LEA to complete an assurance submission to PDE.</p> <p>Scribing should not be confused with transcription, in which the student writes their response independently and the response is transcribed into the online test form by a test administrator.</p>	<p>Type: Response</p> <p>Documentation Required: IEP or 504 Documentation, or Medical Documentation due to recent injury</p> <p>Embedded Online: No</p> <p>Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: Yes</p> <p>Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Scribing for Open-Ended</p>

Usage: Scribing requires a one-on-one setting so that students are neither distracted nor influenced by other students' responses.

Responses must be scribed verbatim in English directly into the student's online test. After the scribe completes the response, the student must be given the opportunity to review the response. The test administrator/scribe may not in any way correct or prompt the student to make a correction. The student is solely responsible for determining if the text accurately reflects what they dictated. The scribe must follow the guidelines in the Read Aloud, Scribing, and Transcription Guidelines.

The scribe must sign the Test Security Certification form.

Considerations: The scribing accommodation is intended for a student with a physical disability or injury that severely limits or prevents the student's motor process of handwriting or keyboarding; OR a disability that severely limits or prevents the student from expressing written language, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so. LEA must retain IEP, 504 plan, or student record documentation as evidence for this accommodation.

Scribing may interfere with student response to any test item as well as prevent the student from moving at their own pace, thinking deeply, and responding independently.

Because the open-ended responses are keyboarded, the LEA/school should consider if the student can keyboard the response even if they cannot handwrite.

Interpreters may not translate student dictated responses to open-ended items on the ELA PSSA or Literature Keystone Exam from a non-English language into English, including short answer responses, TDA responses, and constructed responses.

If a student needs a scribe for multiple-choice, see Assistance with Selected Response.

Related Accommodations: [Assistance with Selected Response](#), [Interpret/Translate](#), [Scribing for Mathematics and Science, Algebra I, and Biology Open-ended](#), [Grade 3 PSSA Short Answer](#), [Keystone Literature Constructed Response](#), [Transcription](#), [Voice-to-Text](#)

Additional Resources: [Read Aloud](#), [Scribing, and Transcription Guidelines](#), [Unique Accommodation Assurances](#)

Smart Glasses

Definition: Smart glasses may provide augmented reality, displays, cameras, and connectivity to other devices as built in features. Therefore, they are not permissible during testing unless they function as the student's only means of prescription glasses. In this case, a Unique Accommodation Assurance must be submitted, and the student must be tested in a one-on-one setting.

Usage: If a student wears prescription smart glasses, the school assessment coordinator should first work with parents/guardians to determine if the student has an alternative pair of glasses that can be worn during testing, or if the prescription is necessary for testing.

If the student has no alternative prescription glasses and must wear the smart glasses during testing, the student must be tested in a one-on-one setting with the test administrator actively monitoring the student to ensure the features of the smart glasses are not utilized. The smart glasses must be powered off during testing.

A Unique Accommodation Assurance must be completed if the student must wear prescription smart glasses during testing.

Considerations: Smart glasses that do not function as a student's prescription glasses are prohibited from the testing room.

The one-on-one test administrator should be familiar with the functionality of the glasses in order to determine if the student has turned on the glasses or used the features of the glasses, particularly video or camera features, during testing. Test irregularities should be reported to PDE immediately.

Type: Setting

Documentation Required: Local Documentation

Embedded Online: No

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: Yes - choose Other

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Setting - Other

Related Accommodations: [One-on-One Setting](#)

Additional Resources: [Unique Accommodation Assurances](#)

Voice-to-Text

Definition: A student who requires this accommodation must use a school-issued or school-approved device to respond to the test items via voice-to-text technology. The student responses from the voice-to-text dictation software must be transcribed into the online test. This feature is NOT embedded in the online test.

Usage: The student will need a second device to utilize the text-to-speech software. The device must be locked down so that the dictation/voice-to-text/speech-to-text/talk-to-text software is the only application accessible on the second device. The student may use whichever software application they typically use to receive this accommodation in classroom instruction and assessment, as long as the device is able to be locked down.

Considerations: A student with a recent arm or hand injury may use voice-to-text only if they are familiar with the technology and have been using it as an accommodation in classroom instruction and assessment due to the injury. A student should not use voice-to-text for the first time during the state assessment.

When transcribing a student's response to the online test form, the school assessment coordinator or designee must follow PDE's guidelines on entering the text verbatim (exactly as the text appears on the device the student used with the voice-to-text software). After transcription, the student's work should be deleted from the device. If the text is printed for transcription, it should be sent directly to a secure printer, transcribed, and then securely destroyed. Responses may not be sent to an unsecure printer or emailed for printing. The responses should be transcribed or printed prior to exiting the application as the responses may be lost from the device.

Type: Response

Documentation Required: IEP or 504 Documentation, or Medical Documentation of recent injury

Embedded Online: No

Unique Accommodation

Assurance Required: Yes – choose Assistive Technology Device

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Assistive Technology Device

Related Accommodations: [Assistive Technology Device](#), [Scribing for Mathematics and Science, Algebra I, and Biology Open-ended, Grade 3 PSSA Short Answer, Keystone Literature Constructed Response](#), [Scribing for ELA PSSA](#), [Transcription](#)

Additional Resources: [Supplemental Guidelines for Device Lockdown](#), [Unique Accommodation Assurances](#)

Appendix A: Unique Accommodation Assurance Submission Process

A student may require the use of a unique accommodation to access the Keystone Exams and/or PSSA tests. Per the [Accommodations Guidelines](#), unique accommodations are intended for a student with a disability that precludes them from accessing and responding to assessment materials through typical means, such as the embedded universal accessibility features of the online assessment. To quickly determine if an accommodation is a **unique** accommodation, see the last column of [Table A](#).

The Unique Accommodation Assurance Submission Process ensures PDE that unique accommodations will be carried out according to the parameters outlined in the Accommodations Guidelines to ensure test administration fidelity and security are maintained. Specific parameters will be reviewed in the submission process, but the submitter should also review these parameters in the Accommodations Guidelines before starting the submission process.

Unique Accommodation Assurances only apply to the student whose PA Secure ID is referenced in the submission. A new assurance must be completed for each student.

To use any **unique** accommodation, the school assessment coordinator or designee must submit the PSSA/Keystone Exam Unique Accommodation Assurance to PDE no less than six weeks in advance of the testing window. Follow the steps below to complete the submission:

1. View the webinar on [Guidelines for Selection and Use of Accommodations on State Assessments](#). Review the guidelines in the Accommodations Guidelines for each requested accommodation to ensure eligibility before completing the submission.
2. Preview the assurance questions below and gather the necessary information.
3. Submit the responses to PDE via this link: <https://uniqueaccom.pattan.net/>. Submissions should be made six weeks before testing begins. (Exceptions will be made for requests due to student injury). These responses serve as the official submission to PDE. The submitter will receive a confirmation of receipt and a copy of responses to keep for records within five business days of submission.
4. PDE will not provide a response unless there are questions about the contents of the electronic submission. If more information is needed about the use of the proposed unique accommodation, a PDE/Bureau of Special Education (BSE) representative will contact the individual listed as the contact on the submission.
5. Documentation of this submission must be maintained by the school assessment coordinator (SAC) and may be subject to additional review by PDE/BSE. It is the submitter's responsibility to make sure the SAC receives a copy of the submission.
6. **For this school year only:** Because the move to online testing occurs after the 2025-2026 Winter Keystone window, assurances for Winter 2025-2026 must be submitted separately from the Spring 2026 and Summer 2026 assurances. See the Winter 2025-2026 handbook for instructions and the link. Spring 2026 and Summer 2026 assurances only need to be submitted once. If a change needs to be made after the submission is made, please email RA-EDUNIQUEACCOM@pa.gov. New submissions must be made for each school year.

The Unique Accommodation Confidentiality Agreement previously signed by principals, school assessment coordinators, and test administrators is no longer required. All principals, school assessment coordinators, and test administrators should continue to sign the PSSA or Keystone Test Security Certification.

NOTE: Requests to use unique accommodations are no longer emailed to PDE. Please follow the steps outlined above for all unique accommodations. Questions regarding unique accommodations should be sent to: RA-EDUNIQUEACCOM@pa.gov.

2026 KEYSTONE/PSSA UNIQUE ACCOMMODATION ASSURANCE

Before beginning the Survey Monkey link to submit the Unique Accommodation Assurance, the submitter may wish to gather the information below:

- District/Charter School/Service Provider Name
- School Name
- Student PA Secure ID
- Student Grade
- Name/Title of Person Completing Request
- Phone Number of Person Completing Request
- Email Address of Person Completing Request
- Name of District Assessment Coordinator
- Name of School Assessment Coordinator
- Name of Special Education Coordinator
- Does the student receive special education services through an IEP?
- Does the student receive services through a Section 504 Plan?
- The Unique Accommodation requested:
 - Assistive Technology Device (including Augmentative or Alternative Communication Device, Calculator Apps on Device, Delayed Auditory Feedback/Pitch Setting Frequency/Altered Auditory Feedback, and Voice to Text Software or Device)
 - Audio or Read Aloud of Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone (Audio of TDA and Standards of Conventional English items, and Audio of the full Science and Mathematics PSSA, Algebra I and Biology Keystone do NOT require a Unique Accommodation Assurance.)
 - Paper/Pencil Print-on-Demand Form
 - Scribing for ELA Grades 4-8 Text-Dependent Analysis (Scribing for Mathematics, Algebra I, Science, Biology, ELA Grade 3, and the Literature Keystone do not require an assurance because they do not measure writing).
 - Other unique accommodation not outlined above

For each accommodation requested, the submitter will be asked to provide the following information/answers to the following questions:

- The specific tests for which the accommodation is needed (PSSA ELA, PSSA Mathematics, PSSA Science, Keystone Literature, Keystone Algebra I, Keystone Biology)
- The assessment mode (paper/pencil, online)
- How the accommodation is documented in Section IV of the student's IEP or 504 Plan, or in other documentation, including the diagnostic tool used to determine eligibility for the Audio or Read Aloud of the Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone.
- An assurance that the student receives this accommodation regularly in classroom instruction.
- An assurance that the specific guidelines, procedures, and considerations for each specific accommodation will be followed.
- An assurance that external devices that may be used to administer the accommodation will be locked down.

Appendix B: Confidentiality Agreement for Language Interpreters/Sight Translators and Educational Sign Language Interpreters



Pennsylvania Department of Education

Test security and student confidentiality are of the utmost importance to the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and it is the Department's obligation to protect information about tests and students in the assessment process. Such information includes performance tasks, multiple-choice items, scoring rubrics, and student responses used in the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment and Keystone Assessments. The nature and quality of an individual student's performance must not be released.

Qualified interpreters/sign translators (for languages other than English) and educational sign language interpreters may review test materials up to three days prior to test administration. Test materials must be reviewed in a secure location supervised by the principal or school assessment coordinator. Materials may not be removed from the secure location. Filing or retaining any notes beyond the testing window or making copies of any kind is strictly prohibited.

These assessments rely on the measurement of individual achievement. Any deviation from the assessment procedures outlined in the assessment and accommodation manuals [group work, teacher coaching (e.g., paraphrasing, explaining, giving suggestions about test items), pre-teaching or pre-release of the performance tasks or assessment items, use of old Pennsylvania assessments as preparation tools, etc.] is strictly prohibited and will be considered a violation of test security. Any action by a professional employee or commissioned officer that is willfully designed to divulge test questions, falsify student scores, or compromise the integrity of the state assessment system will be subject to disciplinary action under sections 1259-1267 of the School Code (24 P.S. Sections 12-1259-12-1267).

We are certain that you share our concern that all items and students' responses be handled in a professional and confidential manner. By signing this agreement, you acknowledge that you have read and understand this Confidentiality Agreement and agree to abide by these requirements.

Legal First Name (print)	MI	Legal Last Name (print)
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Title	Address	Telephone
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Signature	Date
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Signature (principal or assessment coordinator)	Date
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Appendix C: Sample Vignettes for Read Aloud or Audio of Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone

Use the vignettes below to help determine if a student is eligible for a Read Aloud of the Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone accommodation

Read Aloud of Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone- Example #1

J.B is a seventh-grade student with a genetic condition causing optic neuropathy. This condition resulted in a sudden and progressive loss of vision. He is currently learning braille, but not yet proficient enough to use it to access the general education curriculum. To access general education materials, he uses screen reading technology. He is not relying on his residual vision to access materials, as trying to read printed materials causes extreme eye strain and fatigue. The specially designed instruction (SDI) in his current IEP outlines the use of screen reading technology and use of a human read aloud of items that cannot be read through his screen reader. J.B.'s IEP team determined that he requires a read aloud of the full ELA PSSA using the imbedded audio technology, as he is not able to access text by any other means.

Read Aloud of Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone- Example #2

A.C. is an eleventh-grade student who was previously assessed on the PASA DLM, the state alternate assessment designed for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. A.C.'s IEP team met and reviewed the PASA eligibility criteria and determined that he no longer qualifies. Therefore, he will take the Keystone Exam this year with appropriate accommodations determined by his IEP team. A.C. has an intellectual disability that significantly affects his ability to decode text. He is sometimes able to comprehend when materials are read to him, but not able to read independently. He uses this accommodation on all classroom assignments and assessments. A.C.'s IEP reflects a full read aloud of all printed materials as an accommodation to access and comprehend text on the Literature Keystone, as he is not able to engage with reading passages without this accommodation.

Read Aloud of Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone- Example #3 (Non-Example)

R.W. is a student with ADHD and a specific learning disability in reading. She is in fifth grade and reads independently at a third-grade level. She uses the accommodation of a read aloud in the classroom setting at times to help with distractibility and attention. R.W. is able to decode and show some comprehension of text with additional time as needed. The IEP team reviewed the full read aloud unique accommodation for her, and determined it is not necessary. While she will benefit from a read aloud of directions and non-reading content, she is able to comprehend some written material and does not require a full read aloud of the ELA assessment.

Appendix D: PSSA/Keystone Multiplication Table

To be used in accordance with the [Calculator \(Adaptive\) Accommodation](#)

X	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
2	2	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24
3	3	6	9	12	15	18	21	24	27	30	33	36
4	4	8	12	16	20	24	28	32	36	40	44	48
5	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60
6	6	12	18	24	30	36	42	48	54	60	66	72
7	7	14	21	28	35	42	49	56	63	70	77	84
8	8	16	24	32	40	48	56	64	72	80	88	96
9	9	18	27	36	45	54	63	72	81	90	99	108
10	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	110	120
11	11	22	33	44	55	66	77	88	99	110	121	132
12	12	24	36	48	60	72	84	96	108	120	132	144

Appendix E: Supplemental Guidelines for Device Lock-Down

Because of the wide array of student devices (and operating systems) being used across the Commonwealth, these guidelines cannot provide specific instructions for locking down every type of device and every operating system. The steps below are options for locking-down iPads and Chromebooks; however, it is advisable to consult school or LEA technology personnel to determine if there are processes in place for restricting outside access within approved student devices. Note: School staff should document the steps used to lock-down the device so that it's available for explanation/demonstration should PDE require additional details.

For additional questions, contact your IT team.

Devices must be locked down, so students are unable to access any other programs while taking the assessment.

Placing an iPad in Guided Access

1. Go to **Settings > General > Accessibility > Guided Access**
2. Turn on **Guided Access**
3. Tap **Passcode Settings**, then tap **Set Guided Access Passcode**
4. Enter a passcode, then confirm it.
5. Open the app.
6. Triple-click the Home button.
7. Tap Start

Turning on Kiosk Mode on a Chromebook

1. Sign into the Admin console
2. Go to **Devices > Chrome > Apps and Extensions > Kiosks**
3. Click on the **+** or **add by URL**.
4. Select the kiosk app you want to use. Click **add** and then **save** to apply changes.
5. On the same **Device Settings** page, under **Kiosk Settings > Auto-Launch Kiosk App**, select the app.

Appendix F: Federal and State Laws Requiring Participation by Students with Disabilities

Several important laws require the participation of students with disabilities in standards-based instruction and assessment initiatives. These include federal laws such as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA).

Every Student Succeeds Act

Guidance is available in electronic form on the US Department of Education's website at [Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)](#).

Each State must implement a set of high-quality student academic assessments in mathematics, reading or language arts, and science, administered as follows:

Mathematics: in each of grades 3 through 8; and at least once in grades 9 through 12; Reading or language arts: in each of grades 3 through 8; and at least once in grades 9 through 12; Science: not less than one time during grades 3 through 5; grades 6 through 9; and grades 10 through 12.

Criteria

With the singular exception of those assessments for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, the same academic assessments must be used to measure the achievement of all public elementary school and secondary school students in the State.

§ 200.6(a)(2)(i) specifies that all students with disabilities, except those students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, must be assessed using the general academic assessment aligned with the challenging State academic standards for the grade in which the student is enrolled. Further, under § 200.6(a)(2)(ii), students with the most significant cognitive disabilities may be assessed using either the general assessment or an alternate assessment aligned with the challenging State academic content standards for the grade in which the student is enrolled and with alternate academic achievement standards, if the State has adopted such alternate academic achievement standards.

Inclusion of Students

§ 200.6(b)(3) requires that a student with a disability receive appropriate accommodations, as determined by the relevant team articulated in § 200.6(b)(1)(i), (ii), or (iii), so that the student with a disability can participate in the assessment and receive the same benefits from the assessment that non-disabled students receive.

The determination of which accommodations would be appropriate for a student must be made individually by a student's IEP team, placement team, or other team the LEA designates to make these decisions.

To enable the participation of all in such assessments, States must provide all appropriate accommodations, such as interoperability with, and ability to use, assistive technology, for children with disabilities (as defined in [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#)), 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.), such as [ADA Amendments Act of 2008](#), necessary to measure the academic achievement of such children relative to the challenging State academic standards or alternate academic.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004

IDEA specifically governs services provided to students with disabilities. Accountability at the individual level is provided through IEPs developed on the basis of each child's unique needs. IDEA requires the participation of students with disabilities in state- and district-wide assessments. Specific IDEA requirements include the following:

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].

Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act

Section 504 provides individuals with disabilities with certain rights and protects individuals with disabilities against discrimination from federally funded programs and activities. Section 504 states the following:

No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States, as defined in section 705(20) of this title, shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance or under any program or activity conducted by any Executive agency.

In school settings, 504 legislation guarantees and protects students with disabilities who may not otherwise have an IEP but are still considered individuals 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 are often the lists of accommodations that the student can utilize on assessments.

Including All Students with Disabilities in State Accountability Assessments

Both federal and state laws require that all students with disabilities be administered assessments intended to hold schools accountable for the academic performance of students. IEP team members must actively engage in a planning process that addresses:

- assurance of the provision of accommodations to facilitate student access to grade-level instruction and state assessments; and
- use of alternate assessments to assess the achievement of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

Links to access Pennsylvania School Code:

22 PA Code

[Pennsylvania Public School Code](#)

Chapter 4

[Chapter 4 -- Academic Standards and Assessment - Pennsylvania Code](#)

22 Pa. Code § 4.51. State assessment system. (j) Children with disabilities shall be included in the State assessment system, with appropriate accommodations, where necessary. As appropriate, the Commonwealth will develop guidelines for the participation of children with disabilities in alternate assessments for those children who cannot participate in the State assessment as determined by each child's individualized Education Program team under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and this part.

Chapter 14

[Chapter 14 -- Special Education Services](#)

The Special Education regulations in Pennsylvania are found under the 22 PA Code, Chapter 14 which provides regulatory guidance to ensure compliance with the federal law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004, and its regulations.

§ 14.102. Purposes. (a) It is the intent of the Board that children with disabilities be provided with quality special education services and programs. The purposes of this chapter are to serve the following:

- (1) To adopt Federal regulations by incorporation by reference to satisfy the statutory requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C.A. §§ 1400--1482) and to ensure that:
 - (i) Children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education which is designed to enable the student to participate fully and independently in the community, including preparation for employment or higher education.
 - (ii) Children with disabilities have access to the general curriculum and participate in State and local assessments as established and described in Chapter 4 (relating to academic standards and assessment).

Chapter 15

[Chapter 15 -- Protected Handicapped Students](#)

This chapter addresses an LEA's responsibility to comply with the requirements of Section 504

§ 15.1. Purpose. (b)Section 504 and its accompanying regulations protect otherwise qualified handicapped students who have physical, mental or health impairments from discrimination because of those impairments. The law and its regulations require public educational agencies to ensure that these students have equal opportunity to participate in the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the ability of the protected handicapped student in question. LEAs are required to provide these students with the aids, services and accommodations that are designed to meet the educational needs of protected handicapped students as adequately as the needs of non-handicapped students are met. These aids, services and accommodations may include, but are not limited to, special transportation, modified equipment, adjustments in the student's roster or the administration of needed medication.

Pennsylvania Accountability Plan

[Future Ready PA Index](#)

Pennsylvania ESSA State Plan

[Pennsylvania ESSA State Plan](#)

Appendix G: Supplemental Tools and Resources

This section provides useful tools and resources for teams to use in selecting appropriate accommodations for students.

PART 1: Expecting Students with Disabilities to Achieve Grade-Level Academic Content Standards

With the focus of legislation aimed at accountability and the inclusion of all students comes the drive to ensure equal access to grade-level content standards. Academic content standards are educational targets outlining what students are expected to learn at each grade level. Teachers ensure that students work toward grade-level content standards by using a range of instructional strategies based on the varied strengths and needs of students. For students with disabilities, accommodations are provided during instruction and assessments to help promote equal access to grade-level content. To accomplish this goal of equal access,

- every Individualized Education Program (IEP) team member must be familiar with content standards and accountability systems at the state and district levels
- every IEP team member must know where to locate standards and updates.
- collaboration between general and special educators must occur for successful student access.

All students with disabilities can work toward grade-level academic content standards and most of these students will be able to achieve these standards when the following three conditions are met:

1. 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.
2. IEPs for students with disabilities are developed to ensure the provision of specialized instruction.
3. Appropriate accommodations are provided to help students access grade-level content.

Pennsylvania has adopted the Pennsylvania Core Standards (PCS) for English language arts and mathematics. To access them, go to [Pennsylvania Core Standards](#). New academic standards for Science, Technology & Engineering, Environmental Literacy & Sustainability (STEELS) were adopted by the PA State Board of Education in January 2022. To access them, go to [STEELS K-12 Standards](#).

See [Appendix F](#) for specific Federal and State laws regarding testing participation.

PART 2: Understanding Accommodations for Instruction and Assessment

What Are Accommodations?

Accommodations are practices and procedures that ensure that educators, as well as students and parents, have a valid measure of what students with disabilities know and can do.

Accommodations use is applied to classroom instruction. In addition, students with IEPs, 504 plans, and ELD plans may be provided with assessment accommodations. Accommodations do not reduce expectations for learning.

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

Typically, accommodations use does not begin and end in school. Students who use accommodations will generally also need them at home, in the community, and as they get older, in post-secondary education and at work. As ELs become more proficient in English, their need for accommodations will decrease.

Description of Accommodations Categories

Accommodations for instruction and assessment are commonly categorized in these ways: presentation, response, setting, and timing/scheduling:

- *Presentation Accommodations*—Allow students to access print information in alternate ways. These alternate modes of access are auditory, multi-sensory, tactile, and visual.
- *Response Accommodations*—Allow students to complete activities, assignments, and assessments in different ways or to solve or organize problems using some type of assistive device or organizer.
- *Setting Accommodations*—Change the location in which a test or assignment is given or the conditions of the assessment setting.
- *Timing/Scheduling Accommodations*—Increase the allowable length of time to complete an assessment or assignment and perhaps change the way the time is organized.

Who Is Involved in Accommodations Decisions?

The IEP Team must make assessment and accommodation decisions for students based on individual need. The IEP Team includes the student, parents, the special education teacher, and the LEA representative, as well as others who are knowledgeable about the educational needs of the student. Decisions regarding assessment and accommodations are not made by individuals outside of the IEP Team.

The same decision-making procedures apply for the Student Support Team for 504 Plans and ELD Services.

Accommodations selected may not invalidate the state assessment and must be documented in IEPs, 504 plans, and ELD Services.

Refer to: [Tool C: Parent Input in Accommodations](#)

IEP Team Considerations for Instructional Accommodations

To assure students with disabilities are engaged in standards-based instruction, every IEP team member needs to be familiar with the state's standards. The process of making decisions about accommodations is one in which the IEP team members attempt to level the playing field so that students with disabilities can participate in the general education curriculum. In leveling the playing field, the team should consider the following:

1. Student characteristics: Reduction of the effects of a disability or language barrier.
2. Instructional tasks expected of students to demonstrate grade-level content in state standards: Assignments and class tests.
3. Consistency with standards-based IEP for classroom instruction and assessments: Fidelity to accommodations and achievement standards noted in IEP.

IEP team members should consider if the student really needs any accommodation. A student may not be receiving an accommodation he or she really needs or may be receiving too many. Research indicates that more is not necessarily better, and that providing students with accommodations 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.

PA State Board of Education approved State Academic Standards: [PA Standards](#)

Accommodations and Universal Design

The Keystone and PSSA tests employ the use of universal design principles which address policies and practices that are intended to improve access to learning and assessments for all students. They are important to the development and review of assessments to remove barriers that bar students with disabilities from showing what they know. When universal design techniques are employed, educators can gain a more accurate understanding of what students know and can do. Universal design techniques should be applied from the beginning of test development through the implementation of assessments.

Traditionally, we have thought of universal design as coming first, and accommodations being applied during testing. With current technology, we can build some accommodations into the design of the test itself.

Some of these features may continue to be accommodations (available to students with disabilities and English language learners) and others may be considered online tools that are available to all students. Some students with disabilities and English language learners will have a need for accommodations beyond those that can be built into the testing platform.

Accommodations and Modifications

Accommodations do not reduce learning expectations. They meet specific instruction and assessment needs of students with disabilities and allow educators to know that measures of a student's work are valid.

Modifications refer to practices that change, lower, or reduce learning expectations. Modifications may change the underlying construct of an assessment. Examples of modifications include the following:

- 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 accommodation 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).
- 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 opportunities to learn critical content. If students have not had access to critical, assessed content, they may be at risk of not meeting graduation requirements. Providing a student with a modification during the PSSA or Keystone tests may constitute a test irregularity and may result in an investigation of the school or district's testing practices. It could also affect a student's score.

PART 3: Selecting Accommodations for Instruction and Assessment Based upon Individual Student Need

To ensure students with disabilities and without disabilities are engaged in standards-based instruction and assessments, every IEP team member and student instructional team member must be knowledgeable about the state and district academic content standards and assessments. Effective decision making about the provision of appropriate accommodations begins with making good instructional decisions. In turn, making appropriate instructional decisions is facilitated by gathering and reviewing good information about the student's disability and present level of academic achievement and functional performance in relation to local and state academic standards.

Accommodations should always be chosen based on individual student need. IEP team meetings or instructional team meetings that simply engage people in checking boxes on a state or local compliance document are neither conducive to sound decision making practices, nor do they advance equal opportunities for students to participate in the general education curriculum.

Document Accommodations on a Student's IEP

For students with disabilities served under IDEA, determining appropriate instructional and assessment accommodations should not pose any problems for IEP teams that follow good IEP 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 accommodations should be a straightforward event. The PLAAFP is a federal requirement under which IEP 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)].

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

1. "Consideration of Special Factors" [Sec. 614 (d) (3) (B)]. This is where communication 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.

PA IEP template: [Individualized Education Program \(IEP\) \(Annotated\)](#)

Document Accommodations on a Student's 504 Plan

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires public schools to provide accommodations 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 the following:

No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States shall, solely because 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]

Chapter 15 Service Agreement: [Chapter 15. Protected Handicapped Students](#)

Document Accommodations in a non-IEP Student's Record

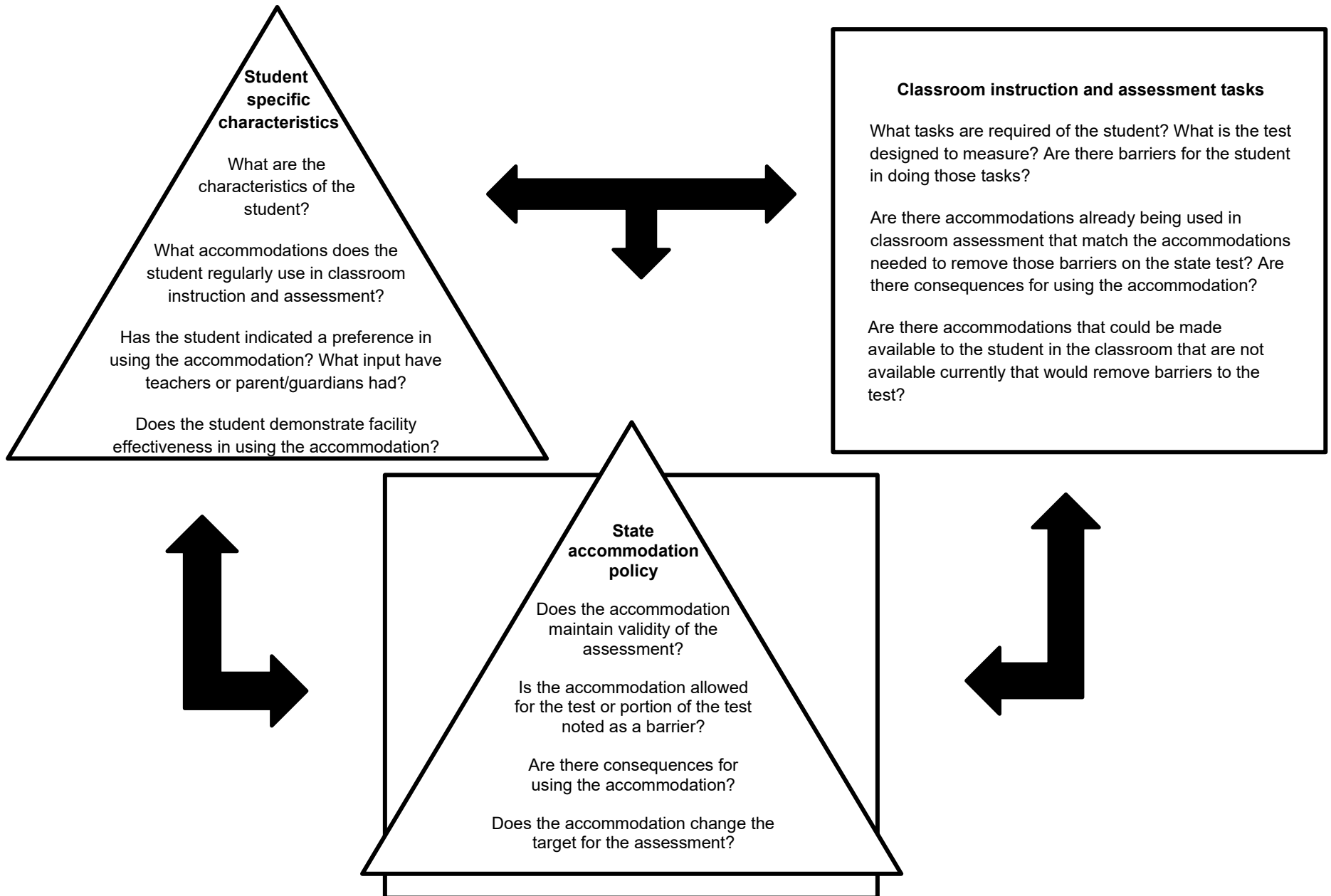
Some students without an IEP may still require an allowable accommodation for the state test. Documentation of the allowable accommodation used by the student for the state test must be kept in the student record file. This allows instructional team monitoring of the effectiveness of the accommodation and provides necessary documentation for state monitoring purposes. The supplemental tools in this section can be used for this purpose. Independent learning and assessment is the goal for all students. It should not be assumed that struggling readers need accommodations. Some accommodations require documentation in an IEP or 504 plan. [See Accommodations Tables.](#)

The Decision-Making Process

The decision-making process for state assessment accommodations should include consideration of at least these three factors (see figure 1):

1. Student characteristics (e.g., disabilities, language proficiency, accommodations used in classroom instruction/assessments to access and perform in academic standards and state tests).
2. Individual test characteristics (i.e., knowledge about what tasks are required on state assessments and ways to remove physical and other barriers to students' ability to perform those tasks).
3. State accommodations policies for the assessment or for part of an assessment and consequence of decisions.

Figure 1. Considerations When Making Decisions for Assessment Accommodations



Tool A: Guidelines for Selecting Accommodations

Do...	Don't...
Do ... make accommodations decisions based on individualized needs.	Don't ... make accommodations decisions based on whatever is easiest to do (e.g., not providing preferential seating).
Do ... select accommodations that reduce the effect of the disability to access instruction and demonstrate learning.	Don't ... select accommodations that are unrelated to documented student learning needs or are intended to give students an unfair advantage.
Do ... be certain to document instructional and assessment accommodations on the IEP, 504 Plan, ELD Plan, or student record.	Don't ... use an accommodation that has not been documented on the IEP, 504 Plan, ELD Plan, or student record.
Do ... be familiar with the types of accommodations that can be used as both instructional and assessment accommodations.	Don't ... assume that all instructional accommodations are appropriate for use on all assessments.
Do ... be specific about the where, when, who, and how of providing accommodations.	Don't ... simply indicate an accommodation will be provided "as appropriate" or "as needed."
Do ... refer to state accommodations policies and understand implications of selections.	Don't ... check every accommodation possible on a checklist simply to be safe.
Do ... evaluate accommodations used by the student.	Don't ... assume the same accommodations remain appropriate year after year.
Do ... get input about accommodations from teachers, parents, and students, and use it to make decisions at IEP, 504, EL, or instructional team planning meetings.	Don't ... make decisions about instructional and assessment accommodations alone.
Do ... provide accommodations for assessments routinely used for classroom instruction.	Don't ... provide an assessment accommodation for the first time on the day of a test.
Do ... select accommodations based on specific individual needs in each content area.	Don't ... assume certain accommodations, such as extra time, are appropriate for every student in every content area.

Tool B: Accommodations from the Student's Perspective

Use this questionnaire to collect information about needed accommodations from the student's perspective. The questions can be completed independently or as part of an interview process. Whatever method is used, however, be certain that the student understands the concept of an accommodation, providing examples as necessary. Also, provide a list of possible accommodations to give the student a good understanding of the range of accommodations that may be available.

1. Think about all the classes you are taking now. What is your best class?

2. Explain what you do well in this class.

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

3. Now ask yourself, "What class is hardest?"

4. What is the hardest part of this class for you?

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

5. In the list that follows, write down all of the classes you are taking now. Then look at a list of accommodations. Next to each class, write down what accommodations you think might be helpful for you.

Class List

Classes	Accommodations

This questionnaire was adapted from *A Student's Guide to the IEP* by the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities, Retrieved July 28, 2005.

Tool C: Parent Input in Accommodations

Questions Parents Should Ask About Accommodations in Instruction and Assessments

About Instruction

- Is my child expected to reach regular or alternate achievement standards? Does this affect what types of accommodations are available to my child in instruction or on assessments?
- What accommodations does my child need to access and reach academic standards?
- Are there accommodations that could be allowed in instruction that are not currently being provided?
- Are there accommodations being used at home that could be used in instruction to help my child access and learn content or help in performing certain academic tasks?
- How can my child and I advocate to receive accommodations not yet provided in instruction?
- Are the accommodations my child is receiving in instruction meant to be a temporary support? If yes, what is the plan to help determine when to phase out or discontinue the use of a certain accommodation?

About Assessment

- How are the staff members who work with my child providing accommodations (regular, special education, or other staff)?
- How are the staff members who work with my child providing accommodations (across regular, special education, or other staff)?
- What are the tests my child needs to take, what do they measure (e.g., regular or alternate academic standards), and for what purpose is each given?
- Are the accommodations allowed on state tests also provided for district tests?
- Can my child participate in part of an assessment with or without accommodations?
- If my child is not taking the general assessment, is it because the test is “too hard” or because the accommodation needed is not allowed on the assessment?
- Are there consequences for allowing certain changes to how my child participates in a test? How will my child’s test scores count?
- Do consequences of accommodations vary by type of test?

Tool C: Parent Input in Accommodations (cont.)

About Instruction and Assessment

Is the need for each accommodation documented in my child's IEP or 504 plan? Are there too many or too few accommodations being provided?

What are my child's preferences for specific accommodations? If my child needs accommodations, how will they be provided?

If an accommodation used in instruction is not allowed on a test, is there another option to support the student that is allowed? If yes, has it been documented and tried in instruction first? If no, how is my child being prepared to work without the accommodation before the test?

List other questions here.

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

PART 4: Implementing Accommodations During Instruction and Assessment

Accommodations During Instruction

The student must be provided the selected accommodations during instructional periods that necessitate their use. **An accommodation may not be used solely during assessments.**

As the state moves to providing assessments on technology-based platforms, IEP teams and student instructional teams must take care to ensure that students have opportunities to become familiar with the technological aspects of the assessment process. In addition to taking the practice tutorial using the Online Training Tools and Tutorials, it is also important for educators to provide opportunities for all students to use technology for learning. This is especially important for meeting the PA Core Standards expectation for all students to compose Text-Dependent Analysis responses for the ELA PSSA tests. Also, constructed responses and technology-enhanced items continue to be a part of the Keystone and PSSA tests.

Online Tools Training

The following *online tools* are available to all online test-takers as part of the test format as relevant to each subject and grade level:

Pointer, cross-off tool, highlighter, sticky note, magnifier, line guide, calculator, graphing tool, ruler, formula sheets, writing checking lists, conversion tables

Students will have access to practice tutorials. Students must be provided with enough time to use the practice tutorial and online tools to allow for optimal performance during the actual test. Online tools can also be used to practice with embedded accommodations and determine if embedded accommodations meet the needs of the student.

Accommodations During Assessment

Planning for Test Day

Once decisions have been made about providing accommodations to meet individual student needs, the logistics of providing the actual accommodations during state and district assessments must be mapped out. It is not uncommon for members of the IEP team, most often special education teachers, to be given the responsibility for arranging, coordinating, and providing assessment accommodations for all students who may need them. Thus, it is essential for all IEP team members to know and understand the requirements and consequences of district and state assessments, including the use of accommodations. It is important to engage the appropriate personnel to plan the logistics and provisions of assessment accommodations on test day.

Prior to the day of a test, be certain test administrators and proctors know what accommodations each student will be using and how to administer them properly. For example, test administrators and proctors need to know whether a student needs to test in a separate location so that plans can be made accordingly. Staff administering accommodations, such as reading to a student or writing student responses, must adhere to specific guidelines so that student scores are valid.

The current design of the online testing platform allows for some accommodations to be provided on the testing platform itself. Through a process of creating a student profile, an IEP team may work with the assessment coordinator to program the test to provide certain accommodations, such as color contrast and audio functions. Providing these accommodations through the testing platform can guarantee that the provision of accommodations is standardized from student to student and district to district. However, it is important to monitor the provision of accommodations on test day to ensure that accommodations are delivered and the technology is working as it should. The assessment coordinator must ensure that all test material is completely removed from testing devices each day.

Refer to:

[Tool D: Accommodations Use in the Classroom](#)

[Tool F: Assessment Accommodations Plan](#)

[Tool G: After Test Accommodations Questions](#)

Administering Assessments and Accommodations

State and local laws and policies specify practices to assure test security and the standardized and ethical administration of assessments. Test administrators, proctors, and all staff involved in test administration must adhere to these policies and must be certified through the Pennsylvania State Test Administration Training (PSTAT). Test administrators who are required to provide a read aloud or scribing accommodation for a student must follow the [Read Aloud, Scribing, and Transcription Guidelines](#).

The Code of Professional Responsibilities in Educational Measurement (NCME, 1995) states that test administrators and others involved in assessments must

- take appropriate security precautions before, during, and after the administration of the assessment.
- understand the procedures needed to administer the assessment prior to administration.
- administer standardized assessments according to prescribed procedures and conditions and notify appropriate persons if any nonstandard or delimiting conditions occur.
- avoid any conditions in the conduct of the assessment that might invalidate the results.
- provide for and document all reasonable and allowable accommodations for the administration of the assessment to persons with disabilities or special needs.
- avoid actions or conditions that would permit or encourage individuals or groups to receive scores that misrepresent their actual levels of attainment.

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

Ethical Testing Practices

Ethical testing practices must be maintained during the administration of a test. Unethical testing practices relate to inappropriate interactions between test administrators and students taking the test. Unethical practices include, but are not limited to, allowing a student to answer fewer questions, changing the content by paraphrasing, or offering additional information, coaching students during testing, editing student responses, or giving clues in any way.

PDE recommends the presence of a test proctor in addition to the test administrator in the testing room when the teacher of record administers the test.

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 accommodations is necessary to ensure test results reflect actual student learning. Test administrators who are required to provide a read aloud and/or scribing accommodation for a student must follow the [Read Aloud, Scribing, and Transcription Guidelines](#). The [Accommodations Tables](#) and [Tool E: Guidelines for Using Accommodations](#) provide guidance for the standard administration of allowable accommodations for the Keystone and PSSA tests.

Test Security

Test security involves maintaining the confidentiality of test questions and answers; it is critical in ensuring the integrity and validity of a test. Scribes, Interpreters, and Translators must sign the Test Security Certification form (located in the [Handbook for Assessment Coordinators](#)).

In a paper-and-pencil test, test security can become an issue when accessible 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 must keep testing materials in a secure place during testing sessions to prevent unauthorized access, keep all test content confidential and refrain from sharing information or revealing test content with anyone, securely destroy all student original work (including scratch paper); and return all materials as instructed. Test administrators who are required to provide a read aloud and/or scribing accommodation for a student must follow the [Read Aloud, Scribing, and Transcription Guidelines](#).

Some of the same considerations for test security apply when students are taking the online test. For example, school and district personnel must ensure that only authorized persons have access to the test and that test materials are kept confidential. In addition, it is important to guarantee that students are seated in such a manner that they cannot see each other's workstations, that students are not able to access any additional programs or the internet while they are taking the assessment, and that students are not able to access any saved data or computer shortcuts while taking the test. Online testing is meant to enhance student independence. Test administrators may not interact with the test material. Test administrators who are required to provide a read aloud or scribing accommodation for a student must follow the [Read Aloud, Scribing, and Transcription Guidelines](#).

Refer to [Tool A: Guidelines for Selecting Accommodations](#) and [Tool E: Guidelines for Using Accommodations](#) for additional considerations.

Tool D: Accommodations Use in the Classroom

Use this chart to track different aspects of how a student uses an accommodation in your classroom. This will help inform decision making on assessment accommodations.

Student:

Date:

What accommodations does the student use in the classroom? List them under “accommodation” in the chart. Then follow the questions in the chart.

Accommodation	1. Is it noted in student’s IEP?	2. For what tasks is it used (e.g., task type* or content/standard)?	3. Does the student use it for that task every time? Note how often.	4. Is the need for it fixed or changing?	5. Does the student use it alone or with assistance (e.g., para-professional, peers)?	6. Notes (e.g., does one accommodation seem more effective used with another on a task?).

**How taking in or responding to information presented, solving or organizing information, specific content/standards being learned or assessed, etc.*

Adapted from Minnesota Manual for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities in Instruction and Assessment.

Tool E: Guidelines for Using Accommodations

Do...	Don't...
Do ... place students in a one-on-one setting for read aloud by a human reader.	Don't ... read aloud test items to the whole class.
Do ... place students in a small group of 2-12 for extended time, distractibility, changed test schedule, or to replicate instructional setting.	Don't ... read aloud any reading passages or related questions of the PSSA ELA or Literature Keystone (See Full ELA/Literature Read Aloud for exceptions - all required Unique Accommodation Assurance paperwork must be completed and the specific guidelines and procedures must be followed.)
Do ... enable students to be independent learners and test takers.	Don't ... use voice inflection, pointing, hinting, stickers or highlighters, posters, signs, student work, problem solving steps, scientific charts, grammar rules, reading strategies, or any other action or device to lead a student to a correct answer or away from a wrong answer.
Do ... ensure students have had sufficient practice with the online system tutorial.	Don't ... assume a read aloud of all test items is effective for all struggling readers.
Do ... allow students to continue testing as long as they are working productively.	Don't ... provide feedback, answer student questions about, or explain test items.
Do ... allow only student created graphic organizers. Students may only create organizers on scratch paper once the testing session has started.	Don't ... provide organizers for students or prompt students to create them.
Do ... allow student to review and edit what the scribe has written.	Don't ... require a student using the scribe accommodation to spell aloud every word in a dictated response.
Do ... provide testing for a student who may be hospitalized or homebound as long as the student is receiving educational services.	Don't ... allow calculation devices for the non-calculator part of the test or for any part of the Grade 3 test for any student.
Do ... complete an assurance form for a unique accommodation and submit it to PDE.	Don't ... allow students to discuss test items during breaks.
Do ... contact PDE for guidance regarding special circumstances such as death in the family, serious illness, or medical condition.	Don't ... allow students to go to lunch, gym, library, etc., during a session. Students testing through lunch should get a break to eat but should not interact with other students until the section is complete.

Tool F: Assessment Accommodations Plan

Student Information

Name:

Date of Assessment:

Name of Assessment:

Case Information

Special Education Teacher:

School Year:

Building/School:

General Education Teacher:

Assessment accommodations that student needs for this assessment and date arranged:

Accommodation	Date

Comments:

Person responsible for arranging accommodations and due date:

Person Responsible	Due Date

Comments:

Room assignment for assessment:

Planners for this process (signatures):

Scheiber, B., & Talpers, J. (1985). *Campus Access for Learning Disabled Students: A Comprehensive Guide*. Pittsburgh: Association for Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities

PART 5: Evaluating and Improving Use of Accommodations

Accommodations must be selected based on the individual student's needs and must be used consistently for both instruction and assessment. Collecting and analyzing data on the use and effectiveness of accommodations is necessary to ensure the meaningful participation of students with disabilities in state- and district-wide assessments. Data on the use and impact of accommodations during assessments may reveal questionable patterns of accommodations use, as well as support the continued use of some accommodations or the rethinking of others.

What Information Should Be Collected?

Gathering information on accommodations may be easier in a technology-based assessment platform when the accommodations are programmed into the system. However, just because information *can* be collected does not automatically indicate that it is meaningful. Some test features are available to all online test takers, such as the online tools. Other available options for the online test must be pre-programmed and are considered accommodations, such as the audio function and the color contrast function.

For the print-on-demand paper-and-pencil assessment, information on the use of accommodations is entered in the student management portal.

Questions to Guide Evaluation of Accommodation Use at the School/District Level

1. Are there policies to ensure ethical testing practices, standardized administration of assessments, and proper test security practices before, during, and after the day of the test?
2. Are there procedures in place to ensure test administration procedures are not compromised with the provision of accommodations?
3. Are students receiving accommodations as documented in their IEPs, 504 plans, and/or ELD plans?
4. Are there procedures in place to ensure that test administrators adhere to directions for the implementation of accommodations?
5. How many students with IEPs or 504 plans are receiving accommodations?
6. What types of accommodations are provided, and are some used more than others?
7. How do students who receive accommodations perform on state and local assessments? If students are not meeting the expected level of performance, is it due to not receiving the necessary instruction, not receiving the accommodation, or using accommodations that were not effective?

Questions to Guide Evaluation at the Student Level

These questions can be used to evaluate the accommodations used at the student level, as well as the school or district levels:

1. What accommodations are used by the student during instruction and assessments?
2. What are the results of classroom assignments and assessments when accommodations are used, versus when accommodations are not used? If a student did not meet the expected level of performance, is it due to not having access to the necessary instruction, not receiving the accommodations, choosing not to use the accommodation, or using accommodations that were ineffective? Or was there another reason?
3. What is the student's perception of how well the accommodation worked?
4. What combinations of accommodations seem to be effective?
5. What are the difficulties encountered in the use of accommodations?
6. What are the perceptions of teachers and others about how the accommodation appears to be working?

It is critical to stress that evaluation of accommodations use is not the responsibility of just one individual. The entire IEP team should contribute to the information gathering and decision-making processes.

Postsecondary Implications

College and career readiness is an important educational outcome for all students. As students with disabilities plan for their transition to postsecondary settings, it is important for IEP teams to have documented the student's use of accommodations so that the student can continue to use them as needed in college and career settings. Colleges and universities may allow fewer accommodations than were available in K–12 settings, so it is important for students to document their need to use accommodations. This may also be true for students who transition into vocational and other workplace settings.

Refer to [Tool B: Accommodations from the Student's Perspective](#) and [Tool F: Assessment Accommodations Plan](#) for strategies for evaluating use of accommodations.

Tool G: After-Test Accommodations Questions

Use this form after a classroom or state assessment to interview a student about the provided accommodations: whether it was used, whether it was useful, and whether it should be used again. Also note any adjustments or difficulties experienced by the student in either how the accommodation was administered or in using the accommodation during the assessment.

Student:

Date:

Test Taken	Accommodation Provided	Was the accommodation used?	Was the accommodation useful?	Were there any difficulties with the accommodation? Are adjustments needed?	Should the accommodation be used again?
1.		Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
2.		Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
3.		Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
4.		Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
5.		Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
6.		Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
7.		Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
8.		Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No

Student signature:

Assistant signature (if applicable):

Adapted from Minnesota Manual for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities in Instruction and Assessment.

Contact Information

For Testing Accommodations Questions

Pennsylvania Department of Education

RA-EDUNIQUEACCOM@pa.gov

Data Recognition Corp. (DRC)

Customer Service

1-800-451-7849

PaTTAN – Harrisburg

6340 Flank Drive

Harrisburg, PA 17112

(717) 541-4960

(800) 360-7282 in PA only

PaTTAN – East

333 Technology Drive

Malvern, PA

(610) 265-7321

(800) 441-3215 in PA only

PaTTAN – Pittsburgh 3190

William Pitt Way

Pittsburgh, PA 15238

(412) 826-2336

(800) 446-5607 in PA only

Pennsylvania Department of Education

Bureau of Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction

607 South Street

Harrisburg, PA 17120

717-346-9399

Pennsylvania Department of Education

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717-783-6913

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National Council on Measurement in Education. (1995). *Code of Professional Responsibilities in Educational Measurement*. Washington, DC: Author.

Maryland Accommodations Manual for Use in Instruction and Assessment, 7/2/2012 Issue ID 201207

PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual: *Guidance for Districts and Decision-Making Teams to Ensure that PARCC Mid-Year, Performance-Based, and End-of-Year Assessments Produce Valid Results for All Students, First Edition*, PARTNERSHIP FOR ASSESSMENT OF READINESS FOR COLLEGE AND CAREERS (PARCC) Available on the World Wide Web at: <http://www.parcconline.org/parcc-assessment-policies>