

Accommodations Guidelines

- **Keystone Exams**
- **PSSA**



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Introduction

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

This school year marks many new firsts for Pennsylvania state assessments. Changes to the state assessment system for the 2012-2013 school year require updates to accommodations guidelines as reflected in this manual. This manual has been reorganized and reflects the following changes:

- Keystone Exams replace the Grade 11 PSSA test
- Elimination of the PSSA-M test
- Option of on-line testing available for Keystone and PSSA tests, all grades
- Field testing of PACC Items for grades 3, 4, 5 for math and ELA which include additional read aloud options

Accommodations and Test Features

This manual addresses accommodations for students with IEPs, 504 plans, ESL plans, and test features available for all students. More detailed information for ELLs can be found in the *Accommodations Guidelines for ELLs*. This guide also addresses what options are available for all students; these are referred to as “test features”. A test feature can also be an accommodation if the student has demonstrated a need in order to participate in the test, and it is documented on the IEP or in the student’s record.

For example, any student may request the read aloud of a word, phrase, or test item on the math/algebra and science/biology tests. Since this is allowable for all students, it is considered to be a test feature. However, the read aloud of these allowable test parts is considered an accommodation when identified as a need in order for the student to participate in the assessment. Therefore, it should be documented on the IEP. Another example is the use of highlighting. In the online assessment, a highlighter is available for use by any student and is considered a test feature. If a student does not have a demonstrated need for use of a highlighter in order to participate in the assessment, it is not necessary to include it on the IEP. However, the student may use the online highlighter at will.

Links to Accommodations Guidelines for ELL, Keystone, and PSSA

ELL: http://www.education.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/testing_accommodations_security/7448

Keystone: <http://www.pdesas.org/module/assessment/Keystone.aspx>

PSSA: http://www.education.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/pennsylvania_system_of_school_assessment_%28pssa%29/875

PART 1

Expect 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; and
- 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.

Most states, including Pennsylvania, have adopted Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English language arts and mathematics. To access the PA Common Core State Standards (PACC) go to <http://www.pdesas.org/>

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 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA).

Reauthorization of Elementary and Secondary Education Act

Stronger accountability for educational achievement results is one of the four basic education reform principles contained in ESEA. This law complements the provisions in providing public accountability at the school, district, and state levels for all students with disabilities. ESEA explicitly calls for the participation in such assessments of all students [Sec. 1111 (3) (C) (i)]. (The term “such assessments” refers to a set of high-quality, yearly student academic assessments.) It also requires that these assessments provide for the reasonable adaptations and accommodations for students with disabilities—as defined under Section 602(3) of IDEA—necessary to measure the academic achievement of such students relative to state academic content and state student academic achievement standards [Sec. 1111 (3) (C)(ii)].

The April 2007 regulations on alternate assessments based on modified achievement standards included the following statements about accommodations:

“. . . a State’s (or in the case of district-wide assessments, an LEA’s) guidelines must require each child to be validly assessed and must identify, for each assessment, any accommodations that would result in an invalid score. Consistent with Title I . . . a student taking an assessment with an accommodation that invalidates the score would not be reported as a participant under the IDEA.” (U.S. Department of Education, 2007, p. 17750)

One of the basic reform principles of ESEA is stronger accountability for educational achievement results for all students. Through this federal legislation, in addition to other state and local district initiatives, assessments aimed at increasing accountability provide important information with regard to

- how successful schools are including all students in standards-based education;
- how well students are achieving standards; and
- what needs to be improved upon for specific groups of students.

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, Title 22 regulations:

22 PA Code

<http://www.pacode.com/secure/data/022/022toc.html>

Chapter 4

<http://www.pacode.com/secure/data/022/chapter4/s4.51.html>

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

<http://www.pacode.com/secure/data/022/chapter14/chap14toc.html>

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

<http://www.pacode.com/secure/data/022/chapter15/chap15toc.html>

This chapter addresses a school district'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. School districts 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 nonhandicapped 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.

Link to access Pennsylvania Accountability Plan:

[http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/pennsylvania_accountability_system_\(pas\)/8752](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/pennsylvania_accountability_system_(pas)/8752)

PART 2

Learn About 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 ESL 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 postsecondary education and at work. As ELLs 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, 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 ESL Plans.

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

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. In essence, 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.

Link to access PA State Board of Education approved State Academic Standards:

http://www.education.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/state_academic_standards/19721

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 in order 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.

Universally designed general assessments may reduce the need for accommodations and alternate assessments; however, universal design cannot eliminate the need for accommodations and alternate assessments.



Universal design of assessments does not simply mean that tests are administered on computers. As assessments move toward becoming more consistently administered on computers, accommodations and universal design considerations may change. 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 test features because they 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 for 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

Select Accommodations for Instruction and Assessment for Individual Students

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 particular problems for IEP teams that follow good IEP practices. With information obtained from the required summary of the student's present level of educational performance (PLEP), the process of identifying and documenting accommodations should be a fairly straightforward event. The PLEP 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.

Link to access PA IEP template:

http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/special_education/7465/assessment/607491

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 by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. [29 U.S.C. Sec. 794]

Link to Chapter 15 Service Agreement:

http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/pa_codes/7501/implementation_of_chapter_15/507370

Document Accommodations in a non-IEP Student’s Record

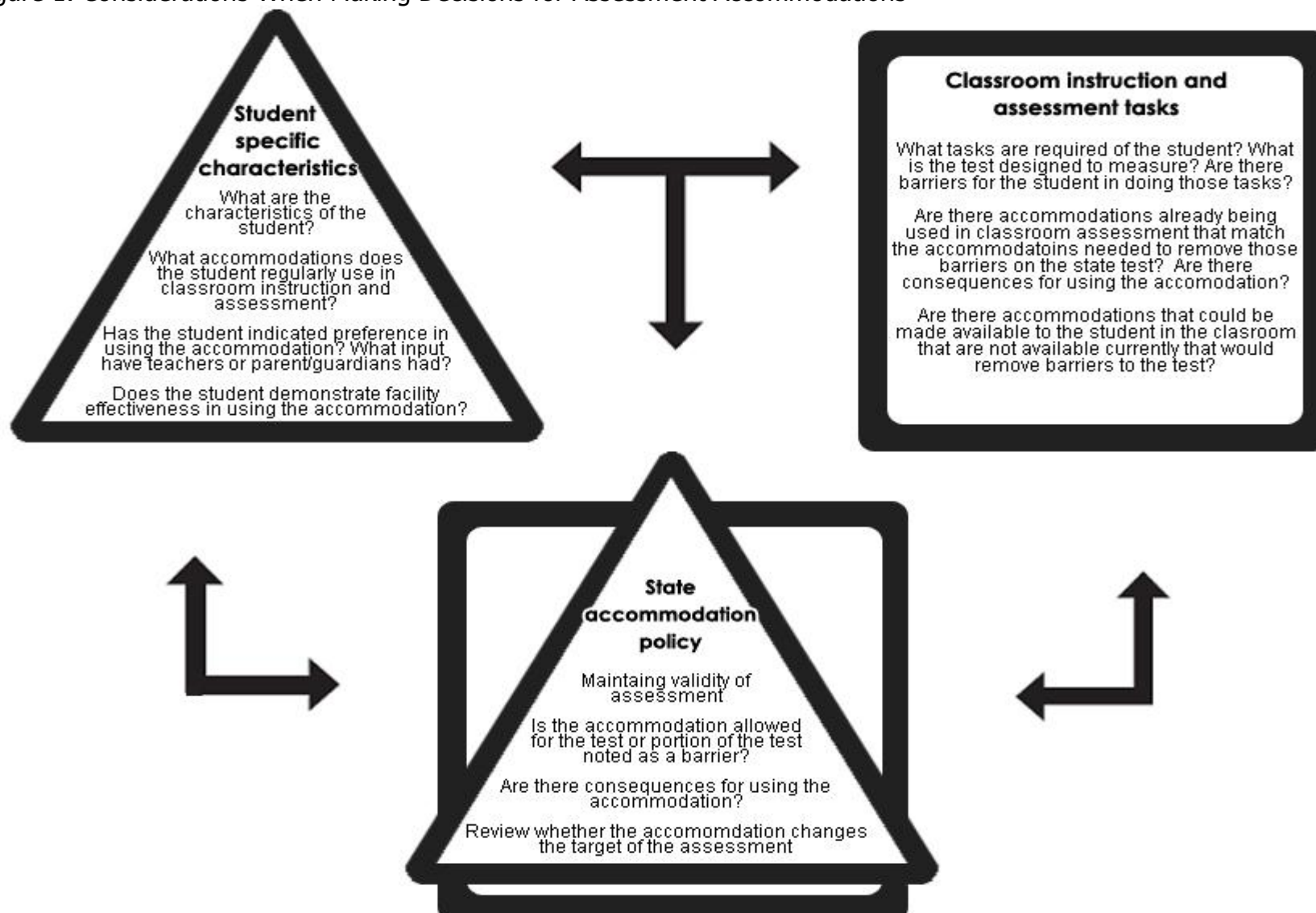
Some students without an IEP may still require an allowable accommodation for the state test. Documentation of the allowable accommodation used by the student for the state test must be kept in the student record file (e.g., Tools 5 and 7). This allows instructional team monitoring of the effectiveness of the accommodation and provides necessary documentation for state monitoring purposes. It is important to note that test features, as explained in this document, are available to all students. Independent learning and assessment is the goal for all students. It should not be assumed that struggling readers need accommodations.

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



PART 4

Administer 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 Insight testing platform, 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 Common Core expectation for all students to compose essays for the new PACC PSSA tests. Also, constructed responses continue to be a part of the Keystone and PSSA tests.

Link to access online tools training platform:

http://insight-client.drccdirect.com/Download/DRC_INSIGHT_Setup_OnlineToolsTraining.exe

Students enrolled in the online test versions will have access to a practice tutorial.

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.



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 testing 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.

Refer to Tools 5, 6, and 7.

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.

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; and
- 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.

The 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. The Accommodations Tables and Tool 2 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.

In a paper-and-pencil test, test security can become an issue when accessible test formats are used (e.g., Braille, enlarged print) or when someone other than the student is allowed to see the test (e.g., interpreter, reader, scribe). In order 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.



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.

Refer to Tools 1 and 2 for additional considerations.

Link to access PA Test Security Procedures:

http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/testing_accommodations_security/7448/pssa_test_security_procedure/507625

Part 5

Evaluate and Improve Use of Accommodations

Accommodations must be selected on the basis of the individual student's needs and must be used consistently for instruction *and* assessment. Collecting and analyzing data on the use and effectiveness of accommodations are 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 engine and the color contrast function.

For the paper-and-pencil assessment, information on the use of accommodations is coded on the answer booklet with other student information.

Questions to Guide Evaluation of Accommodation Use at the School or District Levels

1. Are there policies to ensure ethical testing practices, standardized administration of assessments, and that test security practices are followed before, during, and after the day of the test?
2. Are there procedures in place to ensure test administration procedures are not compromised with the provision of accommodations?
3. Are students receiving accommodations as documented in their IEPs and 504 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 well 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 the students not

having had access to 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 Tools 3 and 7 for strategies for evaluating use of accommodations.

Part 6

Accommodation Tables

Two accommodations tables are provided in this section. Table A is designed to familiarize test coordinators, test administrators and teachers with “who” is permitted an allowable accommodation. The table is categorized as all students, students with IEPs and 504 plans, and ELL students. An additional category is provided to indicate availability of the accommodation provided by the online system.

Table B is designed to familiarize test coordinators, test administrators and teachers with accommodations in two ways:

1. Types of accommodations available (presentation, response, setting, and timing)
2. Identification of test version where accommodation is available (paper and pencil or online)

TABLE A



ACCOMMODATION AND/OR TEST FEATURE	ALLOWABLE FOR ALL	ALLOWABLE FOR IEP/504	ALLOWABLE FOR ELL	PROVIDED BY ONLINE SYSTEM (English Only)
<i>*Restrictions apply. Must follow directions regarding implementation of accommodation and/or test feature.</i>				
Amplification Device		X	X With IEP/504	X
*Audio	See "Audio" and "Small Group" in Category Tables	X	X	X
Audio Recorder for Responses		X	X With IEP/504	
Augmentative Alternative Communication Device		X	X With IEP/504	
Braille		X	X With IEP/504	
Braille, Note Taker		X	X With IEP/504	
*Calculators	X			
Changed Test Schedule	X			
Color Chooser/Contrast		X	X With IEP/504	X
*Computer Assistive Technology		X	X With IEP/504	
*Dictionary			X	
Enlarged Print		X	X With IEP/504	
Extended Time	X			
Frequent Breaks	X			X
Hospital/Home	X			
Interpret, Sign Directions		X	X	
*Interpret, Sign Entire Test		X	X With IEP/504	
*Interpret, Sign Test at Student Request		X	X	
Keyboarding or Word Processor	X			
Manipulatives		X	X With IEP/504	



ACCOMMODATION AND/OR TEST FEATURE	ALLOWABLE FOR ALL	ALLOWABLE FOR IEP/504	ALLOWABLE FOR ELL	PROVIDED BY ONLINE SYSTEM (English Only)
<i>*Restrictions apply. Must follow directions regarding implementation of accommodation and/or test feature.</i>				
*Monitor Test Response		X	X With IEP/504	X
One-on-One	X			X
Pointing by Student to Answer Choice	X			
Read Aloud Directions	X			X
*Read Aloud Test	X			
Responding in Test Booklet	X			
*Scribe Student's Dictated Responses	X			
*Small Group	X			
Spanish-English version			X	
Student Reads Test Aloud to Self	X			
*Transcribe Student's Written Responses	X			
*Unique Accommodation	X			
*Visual/Graphic Organizers	X			X




**These online tools are available to all online test-takers:**



Pointer, cross-off pencil, highlighter, sticky note, magnifier, line guide, calculator, graphing tool, ruler, formula sheets & conversion tables

TABLE B




PRESENTATION ACCOMMODATION	ALLOWABLE FOR PAPER	ALLOWABLE FOR ONLINE	PROVIDED BY ONLINE SYSTEM
 Amplification Device e.g., hearing aid, personal sound amplifier	X	X	X Volume control only
 Audio This must be pre-ordered and downloaded separately The online audio function is limited to individual students who have a documented need for the ENTIRE test to be read aloud Requires the use of headphones and/or one-on-one setting to eliminate distraction to others The audio function is available for Mathematics, Algebra, Science, and Biology tests in English only		X	X English voice only Individual words or phrases cannot be selected
Braille Braille users may order the online audio version in addition to the paper braille version when determined appropriate by IEP team	X		




PRESENTATION ACCOMMODATION	ALLOWABLE FOR PAPER	ALLOWABLE FOR ONLINE	PROVIDED BY ONLINE SYSTEM
<p>Computer Assistive Technology (CAT)</p> <p>e.g., electronic screen readers, Kurzweil, Read & Write Gold, Text Help</p> <p>Intended for those students with a severe disability that precludes them from accessing instructional and testing materials through typical means such as the hard copy test booklet</p> <p>Requires PDE prior approval</p> <p>NOTE: online accommodations and tools may provide sufficient support; see online tutorial p. 16</p>	<p>PDF version provided on secure CD for CAT software</p>		<p>The online system is not interoperable with assistive devices and/or software</p> <p>See "Unique Accommodations" for more information</p>
<p> Color Chooser/Contrast</p>		<p>X</p>	<p>X</p> <p>Background color and text color may be changed to make text more readable</p>
<p>Enlarged Print</p> <p>18 point font; exact replica of standard test pages; extra-large size test booklet</p> <p>Must be ordered through DRC; may not be enlarged locally</p>	<p>X</p>		
<p> Magnification</p> <p>e.g., CCTV, hand held magnifier, online magnifier tool</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p> <p>Magnifier tool enlarges only small portion of text—not entire screen</p>


PRESENTATION ACCOMMODATION	ALLOWABLE FOR PAPER	ALLOWABLE FOR ONLINE	PROVIDED BY ONLINE SYSTEM
 Interpret/translate test directions for ELL for any language other than English LEA provides qualified interpreter/ translator ELLs enrolled in U.S. schools for fewer than 3 years are eligible Read aloud of the test directions is included in the Directions for Administration manual. This is standard and not bubbled as an accommodation.	X	X Directions included in Directions for Administration manual <u>only</u>	
 Read aloud test directions in English Read aloud of the test directions is included in the Directions for Administration manual. This is standard and not bubbled as an accommodation.	X	X Directions included in Directions for Administration manual <u>only</u>	X
 Sign test directions LEA provides qualified signer Read aloud of the test directions is included in the Directions for Administration manual. This is standard and not bubbled as an accommodation.	X	X Directions included in Directions for Administration manual <u>only</u>	


PRESENTATION ACCOMMODATION	ALLOWABLE FOR PAPER	ALLOWABLE FOR ONLINE	PROVIDED BY ONLINE SYSTEM
<p> Interpret/translate individual word, phrase, sentence or test item for any language other than English at student request</p> <p> See Small Group (2-5) for read aloud of ENTIRE test</p> <p>LEA provides qualified interpreter/translator</p> <p>ELLs enrolled in U.S. schools for fewer than 3 years are eligible</p> <p>Allowable for Math, Algebra, Science, and Biology; essay prompts for Writing and Text Dependent Analysis essay prompt in Grades 4-5 Reading test</p> <p>Interpreters may not clarify, elaborate, paraphrase, provide assistance to or cue a student through uneven voice inflection or description</p>	X	X	<p>Interpreter/translator may read aloud to an <u>individual</u> student the item as it appears on the computer screen</p>





PRESENTATION ACCOMMODATION	ALLOWABLE FOR PAPER	ALLOWABLE FOR ONLINE	PROVIDED BY ONLINE SYSTEM
<p>NEW FOR 2013 GRADES 3-5 STANDALONE WRITING FIELD TEST</p> <p>Interpret/translate any individual word, phrase, sentence, multiple choice, short answer questions and answer choices, and/or writing prompt for any language other than English at student request</p> <p>LEA provides qualified interpreter/translator</p> <p>ELLs enrolled in U.S. schools for fewer than 3 years are eligible</p> <p>Interpreters may not clarify, elaborate, paraphrase, provide assistance to or cue a student through uneven voice inflection or descriptive interpretations</p>	X	The Grades 3-5 Standalone Field Test is not available online	

PRESENTATION ACCOMMODATION	ALLOWABLE FOR PAPER	ALLOWABLE FOR ONLINE	PROVIDED BY ONLINE SYSTEM
<p> Read aloud any individual word, phrase, sentence or test items by test administrator in English at student request</p> <p> See Small Group (2-5) for read aloud of ENTIRE test</p> <p>Readers may not clarify, elaborate, paraphrase, assist or cue a student through uneven voice inflection Test may NOT be read aloud to whole class</p> <p>Allowable for Math, Algebra, Science, and Biology; essay prompts for Writing and Text Dependent Analysis essay prompt in Grades 4-5 Reading test</p>	X	<p>X</p> <p>Human reader may read aloud to an <u>individual</u> student the item as it appears on the computer screen</p>	
<p>NEW FOR 2013 GRADES 3-5 STANDALONE WRITING FIELD TEST</p> <p>Read aloud any individual word, phrase, sentence, multiple choice, short answer item, and/or writing prompt by test administrator in English at student request</p> <p> See Small Group (2-5) for read aloud of ENTIRE test</p> <p>Readers may not clarify, elaborate, paraphrase, provide assistance to or cue a student through uneven voice inflection Test may NOT be read aloud to whole class</p>	X	The Grades 3-5 Standalone Field Test is not available online	


PRESENTATION ACCOMMODATION	ALLOWABLE FOR PAPER	ALLOWABLE FOR ONLINE	PROVIDED BY ONLINE SYSTEM
<p> Sign individual word, phrase, sentence or test item at student request</p> <p> See Small Group (2-5) for read aloud of ENTIRE test</p> <p>LEA provides qualified signer</p> <p>Allowable for the Mathematics, Algebra, Science, and Biology; essay prompts for the Writing and English Composition tests; and Text Dependent Analysis essay prompt in Grades 4-5 Reading test</p> <p>Signers may not clarify, elaborate, paraphrase, provide assistance to or cue a student through emphasis or sign</p>	X	<p>X</p> <p>Signer may sign the item as it appears on the computer screen for an <u>individual</u> student</p>	
<p>NEW FOR 2013 GRADES 3-5 STANDALONE WRITING FIELD TEST</p> <p>Sign any individual word, phrase, sentence, multiple choice, short answer item, and/or writing prompt by test administrator in English at student request</p> <p> See Small Group (2-5) for sign ENTIRE test</p> <p>Readers may not clarify, elaborate, paraphrase, provide assistance to or cue a student through uneven voice inflection</p> <p>Test may NOT be read aloud to whole class</p>	X	The Grades 3-5 Standalone Field Test is not available online	

PRESENTATION ACCOMMODATION	ALLOWABLE FOR PAPER	ALLOWABLE FOR ONLINE	PROVIDED BY ONLINE SYSTEM
<p>Spanish-English Mathematics, Science, Algebra, and Biology tests</p> <p>Identical test items presented on opposing pages in two languages with Spanish on left and English on right</p> <p>ELLs enrolled in U.S. schools for 3 years or less are eligible</p>	X	The Spanish-English test version is not available online	
<p> Student reads test aloud to self</p> <p>Requires separate setting</p> <p>Reads test aloud to self (may also use a whisper phone) and writes answers in answer booklet</p> <p>Reads test aloud to self and records on audio recording device; student transcribes answers into answer booklet</p> <p>See Audio Recorder for test administrator transcribes responses</p> <p>“Other” is bubbled for this accommodation.</p>	X	X	Online system is not interoperable with voice-to-speech technology


PRESENTATION ACCOMMODATION	ALLOWABLE FOR PAPER	ALLOWABLE FOR ONLINE	PROVIDED BY ONLINE SYSTEM
<p> Visual organizers</p> <p>e.g., color overlay, keyboard overlay, index card, reading guide, wiki stix, highlighters, underlining, color stickers</p> <p><u>Students</u> may use these throughout the assessment</p> <p><u>Test administrators</u> may use highlighters, underlining, and colored stickers ONLY in the procedural assessment directions, e.g. "GO ON", "STOP", "Turn to page 00 of your answer booklet. Complete question 00."</p> <p><u>Test administrators</u> may NOT use highlighters, underlining, and 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."</p> <p>"Other" is bubbled for this accommodation.</p>	X	X	X


RESPONSE ACCOMMODATION	ALLOWABLE FOR PAPER	ALLOWABLE FOR ONLINE	PROVIDED BY ONLINE SYSTEM
 Audio Recorder Student uses a tape/CD/electronic recorder (with NO speech recognition) to record test responses rather than writing on paper Responses must be transcribed verbatim into student's regular answer booklet Recording must be permanently deleted When used for the Writing PSSA test, student must transcribe <u>own</u> recorded short answer or essay response	X	X Student must transcribe own responses into online system	Online system is not interoperable with audio recording devices
 Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC) Device Responses must be transcribed into student's regular test booklet	X		Online system is not interoperable with AAC devices
 Braille, Note Taker Responses must be transcribed verbatim into student's regular answer booklet. IEP team determines if online audio version is appropriate for student to use along with the braille version.	X		Online system is not interoperable with assistive technology software
 Calculators Allowed on calculator test sections only. This is standard and not bubbled as an accommodation. Paper multiplication chart and adaptive calculator are allowed on calculator test sections. Not allowed at all on Grade 3 test.	X	X	X Online tool calculator available Online system is not interoperable with assistive calculators




RESPONSE ACCOMMODATION	ALLOWABLE FOR PAPER	ALLOWABLE FOR ONLINE	PROVIDED BY ONLINE SYSTEM
<p>Computer Assistive Technology (CAT)</p> <p>e.g., electronic screen readers, Kurzweil, Read & Write Gold, Text Help, Dragon Naturally Speaking</p> <p>Responses must be transcribed verbatim into student's regular answer booklet</p> <p>Student must be severely limited or prevented from performing the skill without this accommodation, i.e. not simply performing below grade-level expectations. Examples include students with low vision or multiple disabilities.</p> <p>Student dictates text into the computer or gives commands to the computer (e.g., opening application programs, pulling down menus, or saving work)</p> <p>Requires PDE prior approval</p> <p>NOTE: online accommodations and tools may provide sufficient support; see online tutorial p.16</p>	X		<p>The online system is not interoperable with assistive devices and/or software</p> <p>See "Unique Accommodations" for more information</p>



RESPONSE ACCOMMODATION	ALLOWABLE FOR PAPER	ALLOWABLE FOR ONLINE	PROVIDED BY ONLINE SYSTEM
 Dictionary LEA provides allowable translation dictionary Word-to-word translation dictionaries without definitions and pictures allowed for ELL students May not be web-based Not allowed for any part of the <u>Reading or Writing PSSA or Keystone Literature tests</u>	X	X	
Enlarged Print Responses written in enlarged test booklet must be transcribed into regular answer booklet by testing coordinator or designee	X		
Interpreter <u>scribes</u> student's signed response LEA provides qualified interpreter Responses must be scribed verbatim directly in student's regular answer booklet Allowable for Math, Algebra, Science, and Biology tests Not allowable for the Writing essay response or Text Dependent Analysis essay prompt in the Grades 4-5 Reading test	X		


RESPONSE ACCOMMODATION	ALLOWABLE FOR PAPER	ALLOWABLE FOR ONLINE	PROVIDED BY ONLINE SYSTEM
<p>Interpreter/translator scribes ELL student's dictated non-English response.</p> <p>LEA provides qualified interpreter/translator</p> <p>Responses must be scribed verbatim into English directly in student's regular answer booklet</p> <p>Allowable for the Mathematics, Algebra, Science, and Biology tests</p> <p>Not allowable for the Reading, Writing, or Literature tests</p> <p>ELLs enrolled in U.S. schools for fewer than 3 years are eligible</p>	X		
<p>Keyboarding or word processor</p> <p>e.g., computer, NEO Alpha Smart</p> <p>Use of spell/grammar checker, autocorrect, word prediction with topic specific dictionary functions, internet functions, stored files, and other supports is not allowed</p> <p>Responses that are separately written or typed must be transcribed verbatim into student's answer booklet by testing coordinator or designee</p>	X		<p>The online system is not interoperable with assistive devices and/or software</p> <p>See "Unique Accommodations" for more information</p>



RESPONSE ACCOMMODATION	ALLOWABLE FOR PAPER	ALLOWABLE FOR ONLINE	PROVIDED BY ONLINE SYSTEM
 <p>Manipulatives Cranmer abacus and <i>Math Window</i> for braille users Number lines</p>	X	X	
<p>Monitor Test Response This accommodation is intended for a small number of students who have an IEP, 504 Plan or documented need. Some students may benefit from having a test administrator monitor placement of their responses to ensure they are actually responding to the intended question</p> <p>Blanks and/or incorrect placement of student responses on answer sheet may be brought to student's attention orally e.g., "Check to make sure you have matched answer number 12 with question number 12"; "Please make sure you have answered all questions."</p> <p>Test administrator may not point to test items on student's test or answer booklet</p>	X	<p>Not applicable</p> <p>Online system presents only 1 question per page</p> <p>Test administrator may not point to test items on computer screen</p>	
<p>Pointing Students with limited manual dexterity may point to response choice in booklet or to separate answer choice cards, i.e., A card; B card; C card; D card</p> <p>Responses must be scribed verbatim into student's regular answer booklet</p>	X		

RESPONSE ACCOMMODATION	ALLOWABLE FOR PAPER	ALLOWABLE FOR ONLINE	PROVIDED BY ONLINE SYSTEM
<p>Responding in test booklet</p> <p>Responses must be transcribed verbatim into student's answer booklet by testing coordinator or designee</p>	X		
<p>*Scribe</p> <p>Student dictates response to test administrator. Response is written verbatim directly into test answer booklet. Allowable for all subjects except Writing.</p>	X		
<p>Spanish-English Mathematics, Science, Algebra, and Biology tests</p> <p>Student responds in corresponding answer booklet in English OR Spanish</p> <p>ELLs enrolled in U.S. schools for 3 years or less are eligible</p>	X		
<p>Transcribe</p> <p>Responses that are separately written or typed must be transcribed verbatim into student's answer booklet by testing coordinator or designee</p>	X		
<p> Visual/graphic organizers</p> <p>Blank graph paper, large-squared paper, scratch paper, may be used throughout the assessment at student's request</p> <p><u>Students</u> may create their own graphic organizer on the scratch paper at the time of testing</p>	X		

SETTING ACCOMMODATION	ALLOWABLE FOR PAPER	ALLOWABLE FOR ONLINE	PROVIDED BY ONLINE SYSTEM
<p>Hospital/home</p> <p>LEA must provide secure location for daily return of test materials by test administrator</p> <p>Arrangements should be made to allow for the testing of a student who is a patient in a hospital or who is confined to the home during the testing period and is receiving educational services</p>	X		
<p> One-on-One</p> <p>Some students benefit from a separate setting to reduce distractions and/or provide read aloud, signing, or translation</p> <p>Online test with audio <i>without</i> headphones requires one-on-one setting</p>	X	X	<p style="text-align: center;">X</p> <p>English voice only</p> <p>Individual words or phrases cannot be selected</p>
<p> Small group (2-12)</p> <p> See Small Group (2-5) for read aloud of ENTIRE test</p> <p>Some students benefit from a separate setting to reduce distraction</p> <p>Scheduled extended time requires a separate setting to reduce distractions</p>	X	X	<p style="text-align: center;">X</p> <p>English voice only</p> <p>Individual words or phrases cannot be selected</p>

SETTING ACCOMMODATION	ALLOWABLE FOR PAPER	ALLOWABLE FOR ONLINE	PROVIDED BY ONLINE SYSTEM
<p> Small group (2-5)</p> <p>Some students benefit from a separate setting to accommodate adaptive devices and/or other unique needs</p> <p> Must be used for read aloud, signing, or translation of ENTIRE test to a group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensive intervention for a few students only • Requires the same test form number • Principal and/or testing coordinator must work closely with special education teacher to supervise the assignment of students to groups that will have all test questions read aloud to them • Only principal and/or testing <u>coordinator</u> are permitted to de-spiral any test booklets (individual test administrators may NOT de-spiral test booklets) • Keep in mind that reading aloud the entire test to a group of students may artificially pace the students • Keep in mind some students may be reluctant to ask the test administrator to slow down or repeat the question in a group setting 	X	<p style="text-align: center;">X</p> <p>Online testers must use audio function for read aloud of ENTIRE test</p> <p>Human readers may not read aloud the ENTIRE test for online testers</p>	X

TIMING ACCOMMODATION	ALLOWABLE FOR PAPER	ALLOWABLE FOR ONLINE	PROVIDED BY ONLINE SYSTEM
<p> Extended Time</p> <p>Keystone and PSSA tests are untimed, therefore any student may be given additional time beyond the scheduled test session</p> <p>Students must have sufficient time to complete a section prior to end of the school day</p> <p>Students may not revisit a section of the test on subsequent days</p> <p>Test sections must be administered in sequence</p> <p>Students may request extended time beyond the regular test time as long as they are working productively</p> <p>Mark "Extended time" bubble for students who require more time than the rest of the regular testing group and may need to move to the extended time area (or remain longer than other students in the testing area) in order to complete the test</p> <p>Mark "Extended time" bubble for students who require scheduled extended time</p> <p>Do not mark "Extended time" bubble for students who require small amount of extended time in regular testing room which does not interrupt regular testing schedule</p>	X	X	

TIMING ACCOMMODATION	ALLOWABLE FOR PAPER	ALLOWABLE FOR ONLINE	PROVIDED BY ONLINE SYSTEM
<p> Frequent breaks</p> <p>Refers to frequent breaks within a regularly scheduled test session</p> <p>Do not mark “Frequent breaks” bubble for regular breaks between sections or modules of a test</p> <p>Consider a separate setting for students who require frequent breaks within a test section, e.g. every 15 minutes</p> <p>Students must be monitored during all breaks</p>	X	X	
<p> Changed test schedule</p> <p>Test is administered in time of day to accommodate student’s medical or learning needs</p> <p>Some schools schedule more than one test session in a single day, and student requires single day sessions to accommodate medical or learning needs</p>	X	X	

GUIDELINES FOR SPECIFIC ACCOMMODATIONS

Unique Accommodations

Unique accommodations may be requested for a very few students who would not otherwise be able to access the test material. Examples of unique circumstances include:

- a student with a significant motor, communication, or other disability that disallows the student from writing or typing his/her own response for the compositional writing essay
- a student with a severe health-related disability that prevents the completion of a test section in one day

Because such an accommodation might alter the test item content, IEP teams need to be aware that the test results must be interpreted with caution. PDE *must* be contacted regarding a request for any unique accommodation. See p. 46 for contact information.

Read Aloud Test Directions, Words, Phrases, Sentences, and Items

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. 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. Readers should use even inflection so that the student does not receive any cues by the way the information is read. It is important for readers to read test items/questions and text word-for-word, exactly as written. Readers may not clarify, elaborate, or provide assistance to students.

Read Aloud Entire Test

It is permissible to read aloud test item(s), as requested by the student, on the math, algebra, science, and biology tests, and the writing essay prompts on the writing test. However, teachers should work closely with special education students to identify those students who need the most intensive intervention of having the entire test read aloud by the test administrator. These are the students (no more than 5 in the group) who may need the same form of the test read aloud to them by the test administrator. Keep in mind that reading aloud the entire test to a group of students may artificially pace the students. Some students may be reluctant to ask the test administrator to slow down or repeat the question in a group setting.

Occasionally, a non-IEP student requires the entire test to be read aloud. This may be a student who has not yet been identified as needing special services, and may be included in the small group of 2-5 with IEP students. Documentation must be kept in the student record of the need for this intensive accommodation for both instruction and assessment. Tools 6 and 8 may be used for record keeping.

GUIDELINES FOR SPECIFIC ACCOMMODATIONS

Test Administrators, Proctors, PCAs, TSS

Some students may feel less anxious in a particular setting outside of the regular classroom and require an additional person to be present. It must be noted that these persons may not coach, or provide feedback (e.g., answer any questions pertaining to the content of the test, review rough drafts, or give any kind of feedback including indicating to students any items that need a second look) during or after completion of the test. This prohibition applies to test administrators, proctors, paraprofessionals, Personal Care Aide (PCA), Therapeutic Support Staff (TSS), or any other one-on-one aide who is assigned to a student during the administration of the state assessments.

Note: A paraprofessional is permitted to administer the Keystone/PSSA tests with training. A PCA or TSS is *not* a test administrator and may not administer the PSSA tests or interact with test materials in any way whatsoever.

Extended Time

Since the Keystone and PSSA are untimed tests, decisions must be made prior to testing that take into consideration the student's typical test-taking time requirements. For example, if the student typically remains with the regular test population during assessments, it might not be necessary to provide extended time beyond which the regular test population receives. However, it is imperative that each student's profile is given close consideration when determining the amount of extended time required and to provide that student with extended time beyond the regular untimed test situation.

Computer Assistive Technology (CAT)

CAT may include, but is not limited to, electronic screen readers, Kurzweil, Read & Write Gold, Text Help, Dragon Naturally Speaking, etc. Use of CAT is intended for a student with a disability that precludes him/her from accessing instructional and testing materials through typical means such as the hard copy test booklet. It is not intended for the student who is simply performing below grade level. The student uses CAT routinely during classroom instruction and assessment in this subject (both before and after the test is administered). The use of an electronic reader is documented in the student's IEP or 504 plan. PDE MUST approve the CAT and all program functions PRIOR to paper/pencil Keystone and PSSA test window. See p. 46 for more information.

If approved, 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. Audio function is not available for reading and literature tests.

It should be noted that the availability of the new online version of the Keystone and PSSA tests may provide sufficient support and meet the needs of the student.

GUIDELINES FOR DE-SPIRALING TEST BOOKLETS

De-spiraling, or distributing the test booklets out of sequenced order, is not allowed for the PSSA tests. This practice interferes with valid and reliable test data. It is very important that all students be represented on all different forms of the Keystone and PSSA tests. Otherwise, a particular group (e.g. students with an IEP) may be under-represented on field test data. It is also important to remember that de-spiraling could precipitate a test security breach.

Exception to de-spiraling guidelines

De-spiraling the test forms is a special exception that must be documented and may NOT be done by the test administrator (i.e., the classroom teacher). Only test coordinators are permitted to de-spiral any test booklets. De-spiraling is only appropriate when the entire test must be read aloud, and only in a small group (no more than 5 students) setting.

Some circumstances that do NOT warrant de-spiraling:

- To accommodate students who need some test items read aloud
- To accommodate a teacher's "regular" classroom testing practice of reading all math and/or science test questions to the whole class

This exception to the de-spiraling rule is intended to assist those buildings that may have an unusually high number of students with an IEP who require the entire math and/or science test to be read aloud. PDE recognizes that this unusual circumstance may cause a hardship on both students and test administrators if these students all had a different form of the test that needed to be read aloud. Therefore, if you have this situation in your building this year, you may follow the above guidelines and/or call PDE for more clarification.

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL

To apply for the use of any computer assistive technology or a unique accommodation, an LEA must make a request to PDE no less than 8 weeks in advance of the testing window:

1. Contact the Division of Assessment by emailing 00testing@psupen.psu.edu
2. Or call the Bureau of Assessment and Accountability @ 717-787-4234 or 717-705-2343
3. Or call the Bureau of Special Education @ 717-783-2311
4. Initial email or phone call should include:
 - a. Student's enrolled grade,
 - b. School
 - c. District
 - d. Contact phone number
 - e. Email address
 - f. For which assessments would the accommodation be used?
 - g. Is it in the IEP and used regularly in instruction and assessment?
 - h. A description of disability
 - i. How is this student currently assessed for classroom tests, benchmarks, etc.?
 - j. Did the student use this accommodation for previous PSSA/Keystone assessments?
5. PDE will respond with a required approval form to be completed and returned to PDE, or PDE may request additional information
6. The LEA will receive final notice if the accommodation(s) is/are approved. The LEA must complete a confidentiality/test security form regarding the accommodation prior to testing.

SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

Tool 1

Guidelines for Selecting Accommodations

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, ESL Plan, or student record.

Don't ... use an accommodation that has not been documented on the IEP, 504 Plan, ESL 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, ESL, 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 2

Guidelines for Using Accommodations on the Keystone and PSSA Tests

Do ... place students in a small group of 1-5 for read aloud of the entire test.

Don't ... read aloud test items to the whole class.

Do ... place students in a small group of 1-12 for extended time, distractibility, changed test schedule, to replicate instructional setting.

Don't ... read aloud any part of the PSSA Reading or Keystone Literature Exam.

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 entire test 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.

Don't ... allow calculation devices for the non-calculator part of the test or for any part of the Grade 3 test.

Do... allow student to review and edit what the scribe has written.

Don't ... require a student to spell aloud every word in a dictated response.

Do ... provide testing for student who may be hospitalized or homebound as long as the student is receiving educational services.

Don't ... allow students to discuss test items during breaks.

Do ... contact PDE for guidance and/or approval for a unique accommodation.

Don't ... allow students to go to lunch, gym, library, etc., during a session.

Do ... contact PDE for guidance regarding special circumstances such as death in the family, serious illness, or medical condition.

Don't ... allow a test section to be completed on a separate day.

Tool 3

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 things in which 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 accommodation(s) 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 (<http://nichcy.org/pubs/stuguide/st1book.htm>). Retrieved July 28, 2005.

Tool 4

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?
- How are the staff members who work with my child providing accommodations (across regular, special education, or other staff)?

About Assessment

- 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?

Questions for 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.

Tool 5

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 accommodation(s) does the student use in the classroom? List them under "accommodation" in the chart. Then follow the questions in the chart.

Questions	List Accommodation(s)				
1. Is it noted in student's IEP?					
2. For what task(s) 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., paraprofessional, 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 6

After-Test Accommodations Questions

Use this form after a test to interview a student about the provided accommodation(s): 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 _____

Questions	Test Taken (List)			
Was the accommodation used?	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
Was the accommodation useful?	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
Were there any difficulties with the accommodation? Are adjustments needed?	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
Should the accommodation be used again?	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*.

Tool 7

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
1.	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____

Comments

Person responsible for arranging accommodations and due date:

	Person Responsible	Due Date
1.	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____

3. _____

4. _____

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.

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1-800-451-7849

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Acknowledgements

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