

Accommodations Guidelines

2027 Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) and Keystone Exams



Pennsylvania
Department of Education

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Forum Building, 607 South Drive

Harrisburg, PA 17120

<https://www.pa.gov/education>



Pennsylvania
Department of Education

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Josh Shapiro, Governor

Department of Education
Dr. Carrie Rowe, Secretary

Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
Amy Lena, Deputy Secretary

Bureau of Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction
Brian W. Campbell, Director

Division of Assessment and Accountability
Brian Truesdale, Chief

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) does not discriminate in its educational programs, activities, or employment practices, based on race, color, national origin, [sex] gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, ancestry, union membership, gender identity or expression, AIDS or HIV status, or any other legally protected category. Announcement of this policy is in accordance with State Law including the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act and with Federal law, including Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the Pennsylvania Department of Education's nondiscrimination policies:

For Inquiries Concerning Nondiscrimination in Employment:

Pennsylvania Department of Education
Equal Employment Opportunity Representative Bureau of Human Resources
Voice Telephone: (717) 783-2024

For Inquiries Concerning Nondiscrimination in All Other Pennsylvania Department of Education Programs and Activities:

Pennsylvania Department of Education
School Services Unit Director
607 South Drive, 5th Floor, Harrisburg, PA 17120
Voice Telephone: (717) 783-3750, Fax: (717) 783-6802

If you have any questions about this publication, contact:

Pennsylvania Department of Education
Bureau of Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction
607 South Drive, 4th Floor, Harrisburg, PA 17120
Voice: (717) 705-6359, Fax: (717) 234-4071
<https://www.pa.gov/agencies/education>

All Media Requests/Inquiries: Contact the Office of Press & Communications at (717) 783-9802

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	iii
Introduction	1
New for 2027	1
Frequently Asked Questions	2
Links to Additional Resources	5
Using Accommodations on State Summative Assessments	6
Students with Disabilities	6
English Learners	6
Checklist for Administering Accommodations on State Assessments	7
Special Circumstances for Accommodation Usage	11
Universal Test Features	13
Accommodations Tables	16
Table A: Accommodations Overview	17
Table B: Designated Accommodations	20
Table C: Unique Accommodations	47
Appendix A: Unique Accommodation Assurance Submission Process	58
Appendix B: Distributors of Word-to-Word Dictionaries and Translation Sheets	60
Appendix C: Sample Vignettes for Full ELA/Literature Reading Support	61
Appendix D: Confidentiality Agreement for Language Interpreters/Sight Translators and Educational Sign Language Interpreters	62
Appendix E: PSSA/Keystone Multiplication Table	63
Appendix F: Read Aloud Guidelines	64
Guidelines for All Subjects	65
Guidelines for PSSA English Language Arts and Keystone Literature Read Aloud	66
Guidelines for PSSA Mathematics/Keystone Algebra I Read Aloud	69
Guidelines for PSSA Science/Keystone Biology Read Aloud	72
Appendix G: Scribing Guidelines	74
Guidelines for All Subjects	75
Guidelines for ELA PSSA Grades 4-8 Text-Dependent Analysis Prompts	75
Appendix H: Transcription Guidelines	77
Guidelines for All Subjects	77
Appendix I: Supplemental Guidelines for Device Lock-Down	79
Appendix J: Federal and State Laws Requiring Participation by Students with Disabilities	80
Appendix K: Federal and State Laws Requiring Participation by English Learners	83
Appendix L: Supplemental Tools and Resources	84
PART 1: Expecting Students with Disabilities to Achieve Grade-Level Academic Content Standards	84
PART 2: Understanding Accommodations for Instruction and Assessment	85
PART 3: Selecting Accommodations for Instruction and Assessment Based upon Individual Student Need	88
PART 4: Implementing Accommodations During Instruction and Assessment	94

PART 5: Evaluating and Improving Use of Accommodations	100
Contact Information	103
Acknowledgements	104

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.

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, 504 teams, and/or English Language Support teams can view the test platform in the [Online Tools Training](#), which may aid in making accommodations decisions for students.

New for 2027

Highlighted below are the major changes to the 2027 Accommodations Guidelines. Minor changes may appear for specific accommodations, so please still read the guidelines carefully.

Change	Overview of Change	Relevant Links
Frequently Asked Questions	Find answers to questions asked to PDE regarding assessment accommodations below this chart.	FAQs
Checklist for Accommodation Administration	A helpful checklist for school assessment coordinators to be sure all steps are followed in implementing assessment accommodations is now available in these guidelines. This checklist may be printed.	Checklist
Full ELA/Literature Reading Support	This is a name a change to the former “Audio for Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone Exam.” This is a highly limited accommodation for students meeting specific criteria. See Table C for more details.	Full ELA/Literature Reading Support
English Learner Accommodations	The Accommodations Guidelines for English Learners has been embedded in this document. Specific accommodations for ELs are listed in Tables A and B. Information about the participation of English Learners in state assessment can be found in Appendix K.	Table A Table B Appendix K
Read Aloud, Scribing, and Transcription	The Read Aloud Guidelines, Scribing Guidelines, and Transcription Guidelines for test administrators and proctors administering those accommodations can now be found in the appendices of this guide. They are no longer a separate document.	Appendix F Appendix G Appendix H

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the difference between embedded and nonembedded accommodations?

Embedded accommodations refer to those embedded in the online test portal. These are noted in [Table A](#). Nonembedded accommodations are those provided to students by the school staff but are not embedded in the test portal, such as a small group setting or a human scribe.

When a student uses an embedded accommodation, they are directed to a specific test form that has been written and edited specifically for use with that accommodation. Therefore, it is essential that the accommodation is entered in the portal before test tickets are generated. If a student begins a test on the wrong form, there is no way to “turn on” the accommodation. The test ticket must be regenerated by the test vendor, causing student responses to be deleted. Likewise, an accommodation cannot be “turned off” for a student once testing has started, without having the test ticket regenerated. A code for the accommodation will print on the student’s test ticket.

Nonembedded accommodations are also documented in the test portal. Changes to these accommodations can be made before or after testing, as long as it is within the testing window. These accommodations will not be included on the student’s test ticket.

What is local documentation?

Some accommodations require documentation in an IEP or 504 plan. Some even require specific diagnostic measures documented in the IEP or 504 plan. Others only require local documentation, which means the school has documented that the student needs and uses the accommodation in regular classroom instruction and assessment, and that the accommodation has been evaluated and is effective. Tools D, F, and G in [Appendix L](#) can be used for this purpose but are not required if another method of documentation is used.

What is a Unique Accommodation?

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. See [Table A](#) and [Table C](#) for more information about which accommodations are considered Unique Accommodations. A [Unique Accommodation Assurance](#) must be submitted for any student requiring a unique accommodation.

Do I need to complete a Unique Accommodation Assurance for a student that needs to keep their cell phone to use for medical monitoring?

No, an assurance is no longer required for the medical monitoring accommodation. The accommodation should be selected in the portal. Follow the guidelines for the [medical monitoring accommodation](#) in Table B.

Are Voice-to-Text tools embedded in the test platform?

No, voice-to-text (also called “speech-to-text” or “talk-to-text”) tools are not embedded in the test platform. Students requiring this accommodation must use a separate device to access the assistive technology application they use in regular classroom and assessment. The response must then be transcribed into the online test platform. Please follow the instructions for the [voice-to-text](#) and [transcription](#) accommodations.

What is the difference between Scribing and Transcription?

The [Scribing](#) accommodation is used when a student cannot compose the open-ended responses through handwriting, keyboarding, voice-to-text, or another Assistive Technology Device, and must verbalize the response out loud. The scribe types the verbalized response directly into the test.

The [Transcription](#) accommodation is used when a student cannot compose the open-ended responses by keyboarding the response into the online test platform, but can complete the response by handwriting, or using voice-to-text or another Assistive Technology Device. The transcriber copies the student's response exactly as written into the online assessment.

Please follow the instructions for each of these accommodations at the links provided.

Should a student who needs to handwrite the open-ended items use the Print-on-Demand Paper Form?

A student should only use the [Print-on-Demand Paper Form](#) if the entire test must be completed on paper. If the student only needs to complete the open-ended items on paper, they should use the [Transcription](#) accommodation. The student will read the question in the test platform and answer the open-ended response on paper. The transcriber will transcribe the response into the online test.

Can all students use audio for mathematics and science?

[Audio for Mathematics and Science, as well as Writing Items on the English Language Arts \(ELA\) PSSA](#), is considered an intensive intervention available for a student who uses it in classroom instruction and assessment. Therefore, the student must have documentation in the IEP, 504, English Language Development Plan, or other local documentation to use the audio accommodation.

The accommodation functions by reading all text aloud to the student. The student can pause the accommodation, but it will begin reading aloud again on the next screen. Therefore, using this function may be frustrating to students who do not need the accommodation.

Any student may have an [allowable word, phrase, or item read aloud by the test administrator upon request](#). This is not an accommodation but part of the universal design of the test.

Must IEP wording match the wording in the Accommodations Guidelines?

Whenever possible, please refer to the Accommodations Guidelines for the current year and update any language when the IEP is reviewed. (This is also true for any other documentation of accommodations.) However, IEP teams should use their best judgment in matching the intent of the accommodation in the IEP to the accommodation in these guidelines. For example, a student's IEP may list Read Aloud as an accommodation, but the student typically uses embedded audio in the course material during class instruction, not a human reader. In this case, the student should use the Audio accommodation embedded in the online test platform, as this most closely matches how the accommodation is administered in classroom instruction and assessment.

What if a student uses an accommodation not listed in these guidelines?

Please email the Unique Accommodations account at RA-EDUNIQUEACCOM@pa.gov for further guidance.

What is the difference between Read Aloud by a Human Reader and Audio?

Please read about these accommodations in their entirety before administering.

The [Audio accommodation](#) is embedded in the online test and reads the test material to the student. Students cannot access this accommodation unless it is selected in the test portal before test tickets are generated. The student can control the pacing of the audio and can test in a small group or with the general test population, as long as the student wears headphones.

If a student needs a [Read Aloud by a Human Reader](#), the student must be tested in a one-on-one setting so that they can control the pacing of the reading (i.e., can ask the reader to slow down, re-read, etc.) Tests may no longer be despiraled for reading aloud in small groups. If the student cannot use Audio and must have a Human Reader, this must be documented in the IEP. The Human Reader must use the [Read Aloud Guidelines](#) in the appendices when administering the test.

How do English Learners new to the U.S. receive a waiver for the ELA PSSA or Literature Keystone?

EL students who have been enrolled in a school in the US (not including Puerto Rico) fewer than 12 cumulative months automatically receive a waiver on the ELA PSSA, ELA PASA, or Keystone Literature test. PIMS student data is used to determine eligibility. The student can simply not test. If the LEA chooses to test the student, the student will receive a score report. The student's score will not be used to determine performance for federal accountability status.

All EL students must complete the required Mathematics and Science PSSA or Algebra I and Biology Keystone Exams, regardless of enrollment date.

Can English Learners use digital translators instead of paper dictionaries and translation guides?

No, due to security and validity issues, digital translation devices are not allowable at this time.

Can translation services be provided by a remote service or teleservice?

No, due to security issues, [translation services](#) must be provided in person.

Why aren't English Learner accommodations (Spanish form, translation dictionaries, translator/interpreter) allowable on the ELA PSSA and Literature Keystone?

A purpose of the ELA PSSA and Literature Keystone assessments is to determine how EL students can understand and comprehend English passages, including English vocabulary. A purpose of the language multiple-choice items of the ELA PSSA exam is to determine how well students have mastered English language arts skills, including how to edit and revise sentences/passages, applying English mechanical conventions and the rules of English grammar. Translating the ELA PSSA or Literature Keystone Exam for the student into another language would invalidate the intended construct of the test and therefore the student's score.

Will the listed accommodations be allowable every year?

There is a growing body of research on accommodations. PDE will update these guidelines annually as new research about accommodations is published. PDE will inform administrators of any changes prior to the administration of the PSSA and Keystone Exams.

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.”

- Guidelines for Selection and Use of Accommodations on State Assessments Webinar
- Supplemental Guidelines for American Sign Language in the Video Sign Language Accommodation
- Directions for Administration Guidance for Paper/Pencil Testing (to be released before Spring 2027 testing).

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 2027 testing).
- Pennsylvania Calculator Policy

The following resources are provided by the test vendor:

- [Online Tools Training and Tutorials](#)
- [PSA Assessments - Accommodations](#) includes a webinar to set up the student management portal for accommodations
- [Sign-In – DRC INSIGHT](#) – The portal guide under use documents includes instructions for adding accommodations in the student management 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

Students with Disabilities

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 J](#).

English Learners

An English Learner (EL) is one who:

- was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English and comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; or
- is a Native American or Alaska Native who is a native resident of the outlying areas and comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the student's level of English language proficiency; or
- is migratory and whose native language is other than English and comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant,

AND

- has sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing or understanding the English language;
- has difficulties that may deny the student the opportunity to participate fully in society, or to learn successfully in classrooms where the language of instruction is English.

Federal and state laws require the participation of students who are English Learners in standards-based instruction and assessment initiatives. An exception is made for English Learners who were enrolled in a school in one of the 50 states in the United States or the District of Columbia fewer than 12 cumulative (not consecutive) months, who have the option to not take the ELA PSSA or Literature Keystone Exam. More information about laws regulating the inclusion of EL students in state summative assessment can be found in [Appendix K](#).

Participation for Students Requiring Accommodations

To ensure participation of students with disabilities and English Learners, LEAs should:

- Expect students with disabilities and English Learners 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 L](#).

Checklist for Administering Accommodations on State Assessments

The following checklists are meant to aid school and district assessment coordinators and special education coordinators in meeting requirements for administering accommodations on the PSSA and Keystone Exams. This list is not meant to be exhaustive or to take the place of reading the Accommodations Guidelines. Specific accommodations may require additional actions.

Checklist 1: Familiarizing Yourself with PSSA and Keystone Accommodations

Actions	Time Frame
☐ Read or review the Introduction and Appendix J and Appendix K to understand participation requirements and usage of accommodations.	Prior to updating student accommodations in the IEP, 504, or English Language Development Plan in the testing year
☐ Review the Table of Contents to familiarize yourself with the content of this document.	Prior to updating student accommodations in the IEP, 504, or English Language Development Plan in the testing year
☐ Read the New for 2027 section of this document.	Prior to updating student accommodations in the IEP, 504, or English Language Development Plan in the testing year
☐ Watch the required Selection and Use of Accommodations on State Assessments webinar .	Prior to updating student accommodations in the IEP, 504, or English Language Development Plan in the testing year, and prior to completing the PSTAT
☐ Ensure testing accommodations are addressed in IEP or 504 meetings or before creating the English Language Development (ELD) plan. Attempt to use the language in these guidelines that best described the student's individualized accommodation needs.	During IEP or 504 meetings or when creating the ELD plan.
☐ Utilize the Online Training Tools with the student to determine accessibility of the online test when determining testing accommodations.	Just before or during IEP or 504 meetings or when creating the ELD plan.

Checklist 2: Preparing to Administer Accommodations

Actions	Time Frame
☐ Read about the accommodation in the guidelines to determine usage and considerations for administration. Use the links in Table A to easily access more information about each accommodation.	Ongoing, but at least 8 weeks prior to testing
☐ Make a plan to administer each accommodation. ○ Acquire or gather school-supplied materials (e.g., headphones, dictionaries for EL students, etc.) ○ Prepare to meet setting requirements for the accommodation (e.g., one-on-one, small group) ○ Be sure required staff is available to administer accommodations as necessary ○ Create test rosters accordingly	At least 8 weeks prior to testing
☐ Notify the test vendor by phone or email if you need any of the following specially ordered test materials. ○ Spanish test in Large Print (Math, Algebra I, Science, and Biology only) ○ Braille codes other than the ones listed with the braille accommodation.	No later than 6 weeks before testing. Note: These items are only created by request and may not be available if ordered later than 6 weeks before testing.
☐ Complete a Unique Accommodation Assurance for any students utilizing a Unique Accommodation. Maintain the required documentation and submission receipt.	No later than 6 weeks before testing. Note: Late assurances due to recent injury or change to the IEP/504 are acceptable. Please submit as soon as possible.
☐ Complete additional materials ordering through the test portal for the following items, as needed. ○ Large Print ○ Braille ○ Tactile Braille Graphic Packets (to use with Refreshable Braille) ○ Spanish DFAs and Formula Sheets ○ Additional rulers (Grade 3) and protractors (Grade 4) for Paper/Pencil testing, if needed. (a limited number are provided)	Opens 4 weeks before testing. Complete as soon as possible to ensure timely delivery. Secure materials will arrive closer to the testing window.
☐ Enter test accommodations in the portal. ○ See the Student Management Portal User Guide and Accommodations Portal Webinar for assistance.	Opens 4 weeks before testing. Accommodations embedded in the test MUST be entered before test tickets are generated.

Actions	Time Frame
☐ Generate and print test tickets and rosters and store in a secure location. ○ Check tickets and rosters for embedded accommodation codes. ○ If embedded accommodations are missing, be sure to update the portal and re-print before testing begins. ○ Double check that students are assigned to the required setting (one-on-one, small group) for their accommodations. ○ Roster students to required test administrator to administer accommodation, as needed.	Opens 4 weeks before testing.
☐ Print any Paper Print-On-Demand test materials and store in a secure location.	Opens 2 weeks before testing.
☐ Use the Online Training Tools with the student to practice using the accommodation and choosing the correct settings so they can begin testing smoothly on test day. This may include: ○ Choosing the preferred color combination in Color Chooser ○ Understanding how to stop, start, and change volume and speed in the Audio accommodation ○ Choosing the appropriate magnification level ○ Understanding where to see the English translation in the Spanish form	Can be used year-round but accommodation use and set up should be reviewed with the student close to the testing window.
☐ Provide a list of students that need accommodations to test administrators and be sure the test administrator is prepared to administer the accommodation. Train the test administrator to administer the accommodation, including providing Read Aloud , Scribing , or Transcription Guidelines as needed.	Can be done as part of general test administrator training. Test administrators administering a Read Aloud accommodation, sign language interpreters and language translators may preview the test up to three school days prior to administering.

Checklist 3: Administering Accommodations During and After Testing

Actions	Time Frame
☐ If a student's embedded accommodation is assigned incorrectly and the student has not started testing, STOP testing, assign the correct accommodation in the accommodations portal, and reprint the test ticket. The code must appear on the test ticket. If the code is still not appearing, call the test vendor's PA Customer Service for assistance. If the student logged in but did not begin the test, the test vendor may need to regenerate the test ticket.	Immediately after it is discovered that the student's accommodation is not functioning.
☐ If a student's embedded accommodation is assigned incorrectly and the student has already started testing, the student will have to either continue without the accommodation or with an alternate non-embedded accommodation, or start the test over with a regenerated test ticket. Take the following actions: ○ Work with members of the student's team to determine the best course of action. ○ Notify parents or guardians of the error in test administration and include them in decision making. ○ Report the error in test administration to the Test Irregularity account. ○ If the student will be re-testing, contact the test vendor's PA Customer Service to regenerate the test ticket. ○ If needed, email the Unique Accommodations account. PDE staff can offer guidance with alternate accommodations that may prevent the student from re-testing.	Immediately after it is discovered that the student's accommodation is not functioning.
☐ Transcribe any test responses according to guidelines	Within 24 hours of administering a test requiring transcription
☐ Securely destroy any paper test materials after transcription and submission, including Paper Print-on-Demand, Large Print, and Braille assessments. Securely and completely delete or destroy any digital responses created on Assistive Technology Devices.	As soon as the material has been transcribed and submitted.
☐ Update any non-embedded accommodations in the portal.	Can be changed until the end of the test window. Completed assessments that used an embedded accommodation cannot be changed.

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 Writing Items/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 test 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 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 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 a 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 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	IEP/504 Documentation Required	Allowable with documentation for English Learners	Embedded in Online System	Unique (requires Assurance to PDE)
Amplification Device	X			Volume Control with Audio	
Assistance with Selected Response	X				
Assistive Technology Device (ATD)		X			X
Audio for Mathematics, Science, and Writing Items	X		X	X	
Augmentative or Alternative Communication (AAC)		X			X See ATD
Braille (Paper), Braille		X		Must be selected in portal to access	
Braille (Refreshable)		X		X	
Calculators (Adaptive)	X				
Color Chooser	X			X	
Cueing System for On Task Behavior	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		
Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone Reading Support		X plus diagnostic documentation		X	X
Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone		X plus diagnostic documentation			X

Accommodation	Allowable with Local Documentation	IEP/504 Documentation Required	Allowable with documentation for English Learners	Embedded in Online System	Unique (requires Assurance to PDE)
Reading Support by a Human Reader					
Hospital or Home Setting	X				
Interpret/Translate – Native Language for EL Students			X in first 3 years	See Spanish version	
Interpret/Translate – Sign Language		X		X See VSL	
Large Print (Paper)		X		Must be selected in portal to access	
Magnification	X			X	
Math Manipulatives	X				
Medical Monitoring with Smartphone or Smartwatch	X				
Monitor Test Response		X			
Noise Cancelling Headphones/Earplugs	X				
One-on-One Setting	X		X		
Paper/Pencil Mode (Print-on-Demand)		X See Table C for eligibility		Must be selected in portal to access	X
Read Aloud All Mathematics, Science, and Writing Items by a Human Reader		X	X		
Read Aloud to Self (Student)	X		X		
Scribing for 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 for Writing Items/ELA PSSA Text-Dependent Analysis (Grades 4-8)		X See Table C for exceptions			X

Accommodation	Allowable with Local Documentation	IEP/504 Documentation Required	Allowable with documentation for English Learners	Embedded in Online System	Unique (requires Assurance to PDE)
Sensory/Self-Regulation Tool	X				
Small Group (2-12)	X		X		
Smart Glasses	X See Table C for eligibility				X
Spanish Version			X in first 3 years	X	
Test Administrators, Proctors, PCAs, TSS	X		X		
Transcription	X		X		
Translation of Non-Secure Test Materials			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

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.

Usage: The test administrator may wear the device when giving test directions.

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.

Students are able to control the volume of the embedded audio of the test in the test platform.

If the device used for amplification connects to the internet, a Unique Accommodation Assurance form should be submitted for an Assistive Technology Device.

Type: Presentation

Documentation Required: Local Documentation

Embedded Online: No

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: Only if the device connects to the internet. Submit as an Assistive Technology Device.

Assignment in Accommodations Portal:
Assistive Technology Device

Related Accommodations:
[Assistive Technology Device](#)

Additional Resources:
[Appendix A: Unique Accommodation Assurance](#)

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](#)
[Appendix G: Scribing Guidelines](#)

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.

Note that Audio is not offered with the Spanish test form. Eligible students may use a Spanish translator or a human reader in English.

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 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

Type: Presentation

Documentation Required: Local Documentation

Embedded Online: Yes (Ticket Code: AU)

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: No

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Audio

Related Accommodations:

[Read Aloud All Mathematics, Science, and Writing Items by a Human Reader](#)
[Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone Reading Support](#)

Additional Resources:

[Online Tools Training](#)
[Appendix L: Supplemental Tools and Resources](#)

Braille (Paper), Braille

Definition: A paper braille form is available from the test vendor. The paper braille form includes accessible graphics.

Usage: The braille paper/pencil test must be ordered through the additional materials ordering system in the test portal. All test forms are available in UEB Contracted. Grades 3-5 PSSAs and the Literature Keystone are also translated in UEB Uncontracted. Grades 6-8 PSSAs and the Algebra I and Biology Keystone Exams are also translated in UEB Contracted with Nemeth. Contact the test vendor no less than 6 weeks before testing if a different braille code is required.

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.

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 transcription if the student is using a braille.

Type: Presentation, Response

Documentation Required: IEP or 504 Documentation

Embedded Online: Yes, must be selected in portal to access the correct form for transcription (Ticket Code: PAPERBR).

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: No

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Braille – Paper Form

Related Accommodations:[Braille \(Refreshable\)](#)[Paper/Pencil Print-on-Demand](#)[Transcription](#)**Additional Resources:**[Appendix H: Transcription Guidelines](#)**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 accommodation 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 REFBRAILLE. 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. JAWS may work with any test form, but the Refreshable Braille form has been optimized and verified to present the test material accurately through JAWS. Therefore, it is important that the accommodation is selected in the portal before the test ticket is generated.

Considerations: The Online Tools Training website and the JAWS website are valuable sources 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 by a human reader 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
(Ticket Code: REFBRAILLE)

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: No

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Refreshable Braille/Accommodated Form

Related Accommodations:[Braille \(Paper\)](#)**Additional Resources:**[Online Tools Training](#)[Freedom Scientific Vispero 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:

[Appendix A: Unique Accommodation Assurance](#)
[Appendix E: Paper Multiplication Chart](#)
[Online Training Tools](#)
[Pennsylvania Calculator Policy](#)
[DESMOS Calculator](#)

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 (Ticket Code: CC)

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: Word-to-word dictionaries and/or subject-specific word-to-word translation sheets must be without definitions or pictures. Electronic translation applications and devices are not allowed on any PSSA or Keystone tests.

Word-to word translation dictionaries do not include definitions, pictures, phrases, or internet connection.

Students may also use a published version of a subject and grade-level specific word-to-word translation sheet. These can be used in addition to a word-to-word dictionary.

Usage: This accommodation is available for English Learners on the Mathematics PSSA or Algebra I Keystone and the Science PSSA or Biology Keystone only. It is not available for any part of the ELA PSSA or Literature Keystone Exam.

Students should be comfortable using word-to-word dictionaries and translations sheets and should have used them in the past at school and/or at home. Students should not be exposed to word-to-word dictionaries or translation sheets for the first time when they take the test.

Considerations: A list of distributors of word-to-word dictionaries can be found in Appendix B. The school assessment coordinator is responsible for ensuring that all bilingual dictionaries meet the requirements listed above. Appendix B also includes a link to free, printable grade and subject specific translation sheets.

At this time, for confidentiality and test security purposes, translation applications and devices are not eligible for use on the PSSA or Keystone Exam. If this is what a student commonly uses in the classroom, it may be necessary to replace that application or device with a paper word-to-word dictionary and/or translation sheet for testing. However, the student should have experience using these paper resources before testing day.

Type: Presentation, Response

Documentation Required: Local Documentation or Documentation in the ELD Plan, Documentation of EL Status

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:

[Appendix B: Distributors of Word-to-Word Dictionaries and Translation Sheets](#)
[Appendix K: Federal and State Laws Requiring Participation by English Learners](#)

Frequent Breaks

Definition: A student needs to take planned frequent breaks within a regularly scheduled test session as an accommodation for a disability or medical reason.

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.

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.

Type: Timing

Documentation Required: Local Documentation

Embedded Online: No

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: No

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Frequent Breaks

Related Accommodations:

[Small Group Setting](#)

[Extraordinary Time](#)

Hospital or Home Setting

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.

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.

Considerations: It is the LEA's responsibility to ensure testing of hospitalized and homebound students occurs.

Type: Setting

Documentation Required: Local Documentation and/or Medical Documentation

Embedded Online: No

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: No

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Hospital/Home Setting

Related Accommodations:

[Frequent Breaks](#)

[Extraordinary Time](#)

Additional Resources:

[Handbook for Assessment Coordinators](#)

Interpret/Translate – Native Language for EL Students

Definition: An interpreter works with oral language and a translator works with written language. Another term in use is "sight translator," a person who reads text in one language and renders it into spoken form in another language on the spot. The work that is performed for the PSSA or Keystone is essentially a sight translation. This section uses the word "interpreter" to designate the person who performs the sight translation, translating orally the meaning of the allowable parts and subjects of the PSSA and Keystone Exams and/or clarifying directions orally to ELs. On the allowable parts and subjects of the tests, the interpreter also interprets students' non-English oral responses into written English.

The LEA provides a qualified language interpreter for a student requiring 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 content and 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. Interpreters/translators must follow the Read Aloud Guidelines and Scribing Guidelines.

Interpreters may not answer clarifying questions that might be asked about test questions and/or test content. The only clarifications that may be offered in English or in the native language are clarifications of the test directions. Translations should be as accurate as possible. They should be literal where appropriate. Where a literal translation might create confusion, the meaning should be rendered faithfully but no elaboration or explanation should be provided.

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. Interpreters must not change the meaning of the response or make any corrections in the response. Student responses may NOT be translated for the ELA PSSA or Literature Keystone.

Interpreters may work with one student or small groups of students depending on the test setting.

Interpreters may preview assessment materials up to three school days prior to test administration in a secure location in the school building 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. It is strictly prohibited for test materials, login tickets, or notes to be removed from the building or shared with anyone in a way that would violate test security. Schools will receive extra logins for interpreter/translator delivery and preparation and parent reviews. Call the test vendor for additional logins for interpreter/translator delivery and preparation if needed.

Interpreters can act as test administrators if they meet all other test administrator requirements and complete all required trainings as outlined in the Handbook for Assessment Coordinators. Interpreters who do not meet test administrator requirements or who have not completed all required training may not act as a test administrator, and a qualified and trained test administrator must be in the room during testing. All interpreters should participate in the school assessment coordinator's local training and sign the confidentiality agreement.

Considerations: The use of interpreters/translators is an LEA decision. LEAs should try to provide these accommodations to the extent practicable and to the extent that they are typically used with students during the school year.

It is up to the LEA to screen an individual's qualifications, including an assessment of the person's language proficiency. LEAs may use formal measures such as the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), which is an over-the-phone language proficiency testing program developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), or they may use less formal measures such as screening by a qualified staff member or other contracted personnel or with a locally developed screening instrument. LEAs may also contract with an interpreting agency. When setting up a contract with an agency, LEAs should ask for information about the process used to screen interpreters and about any training provided by the agency. In any case, LEAs must document the process and/or criteria used to select interpreters.

LEAs may use community members, family members, and paraprofessionals as qualified interpreters. However, the LEA must certify that the individual is a qualified interpreter as outlined above. Interpreters must receive the school assessment coordinator's training. It is the LEA's responsibility to ensure that individuals who are deemed qualified interpreters receive the appropriate training. Family members (parents, siblings) may not serve as the interpreter for a child in their family but may serve as an interpreter for students outside the family unit. Extended adult family members may serve as an interpreter if the LEA determines that the individual is objective and does not have a stake in the results of the test.

Spanish versions of the test are available for the Mathematics and Science PSSA, Algebra I Keystone, and Biology Keystone. It is recommended that this version be used with students who require translation into Spanish. Note also that the Spanish language version may be read aloud to the student by the test administrator, if the student's level of literacy requires this.

Type: Presentation, Response

Documentation Required: Local Documentation as part of an ELD Plan, Documentation of eligibility (enrollment in US school for fewer than three years)

Embedded Online: No

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: No

Assignment in Accommodations Portal:

For Presentation - Test item/question interpreted for EL, or Text-dependent analysis prompts interpreted for EL.
For Response - Qualified interpreter translated, transcribed, and/or scribed EL student responses.

Additional Resources:

[Appendix D: Confidentiality and Test Security Certification Form](#)

[Appendix F: Read Aloud Guidelines](#)

[Appendix G: Scribing Guidelines](#)

Interpret/Translate – Sign Language

Definition: The LEA provides a qualified sign language interpreter for a student requiring sign language interpretation.

Usage: Test Directions may be signed for all tests. Test items may be signed 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 signed. No part of the Keystone Literature exam may be signed. Interpreters may not clarify, elaborate, paraphrase, assist, or cue a student through signing and non-manual expressions. Interpreters/translators must follow the Read Aloud and Scribing Guidelines.

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 logins for interpreter/translator delivery and preparation and parent reviews. Call test vendor for additional logins for interpreter/translator delivery and preparation.

Interpreters can act as test administrators if they meet all other test administrator requirements and complete all required trainings as outlined in the Handbook for Assessment Coordinators. Interpreters who do not meet test administrator requirements or who have not completed all required training may not act as a test administrator, and a qualified and trained test administrator must be in the room during testing. All interpreters should participate in the school assessment coordinator's local training and sign the confidentiality agreement.

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

Type: Presentation, Response

Documentation Required: For Sign Language – IEP or 504 Documentation.

Embedded Online: Video Sign Language

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: No

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

Related Accommodations:

[Video Sign Language](#)

Additional Resources:

[Appendix D: Confidentiality and Test Security Certification Form](#)

[Appendix F: Read Aloud Guidelines](#)

[Appendix G: Scribing Guidelines](#)

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: Yes, must be selected in the portal to access correct form.
(Ticket Code: LP)

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 (Ticket Code: MAG)

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: In addition to Universal Features available to all students, 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. A limited number of rulers (Grade 3) and protractors (Grade 4) are provided for students using the Paper/Pencil Print-on-Demand form. More can be ordered through additional materials ordering.

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:

[Appendix A: Unique Accommodation Assurance](#)

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 Guidelines.

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 forms.

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. Students may use the accommodated form in the Online Training Tools to determine if the Audio accommodation will meet their needs.

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](#)

Additional Resources:

[Online Training Tools](#)
[Appendix F: Read Aloud 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 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 Scribing 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.

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 – Native Language](#)

[Interpret/Translate – Sign Language](#)

[One-on-One Setting](#)

[Scribing for Writing Items/ELA PSSA](#)

[Transcription](#)

[Voice-to-Text](#)

Additional Resources:

[Appendix G: Scribing Guidelines](#)

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 for the following:

- Audio with headphones
- Translation and signing
- Distractibility
- Frequent breaks
- Providing planned extra time
- 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. The Audio accommodation is not compatible with the Spanish form.

The Spanish version of these tests will be entirely in Spanish. Students may access an English version of each question of the test using a pop-up box in the assessment.

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.

The Audio accommodation is not compatible with the Spanish form. A student requiring test material to be read aloud will need to use the Read Aloud by a Human Reader accommodation or the Interpret/Translate accommodation.

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. The print-on-demand document file will also include an English version for the student to use as a reference, if the LEA chooses to print and provide it for the student. 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.

It is recommended that Spanish language students be literate in their native language for this accommodation to be beneficial. However, the Spanish language form of the Mathematics, Algebra I, Science, and Biology assessments may be read aloud to an eligible EL student who can benefit from receiving the assessment in Spanish (for example, an EL with prior education in Spanish who is also dyslexic). See the Read Aloud by a Human Reader accommodation in the Accommodations Guidelines.

Type: Presentation, Response

Documentation Required: Local Documentation as part of an ELD Plan, Documentation of enrollment

Embedded Online: Yes (Ticket Code: SPAN)

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: No (except for Spanish Paper Form)

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

Related Accommodations:

[Interpret/Translate -Native Language](#)

[Word-to-word Dictionary](#)

Additional Resources:

[Appendix K: Federal and State Laws for the Participation of 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: A student may be assigned to a test administrator who is their special education or EL teacher who is familiar with the student's accommodations. PDE strongly encourages school entities not to allow teachers to be test administrators and/or proctors of their own students. When there is a reason for the student to be placed with the classroom teacher for accommodations purposes, PDE recommends that an additional 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:

[Appendix D: 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 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.
- 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 test platform, as their written responses will not fit if they are over the limit.

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

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Transcription

Related Accommodations:

[Assistance with Selected Response](#)

[Assistive Technology Device](#)

[Interpret/Translate – Native Language](#)

[Interpret/Translate – Sign Language](#)

[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 Writing Items/ELA PSSA](#)

[Voice-to-Text](#)

Additional Resources:

[Appendix H: Transcription Guidelines](#)

[Handbook for Assessment Coordinators](#)

Translation of Non-Secure Test Materials

Definition: Non-secure test materials, including formula sheets and scoring guidelines for the Mathematics PSSA, Science PSSA, Algebra I Keystone, and Biology Keystone, and Directions for Administration for all tests may be pre-translated and printed for use by English Learners during testing.

Usage: Anyone trained as a test administrator may have the following documents located on the PDE website translated for an EL student to use during testing:

- Algebra I Keystone Formula Sheet and Constructed Response General Description of Scoring Guidelines
- Biology Keystone Constructed Response General Description of Scoring Guidelines
- Mathematics 3-8 PSSA Formula Sheets and Constructed Response General Description of Scoring Guidelines
- Science 5 and 8 PSSA Constructed Response General Description of Scoring Guidelines
- Directions for Administration script for all tests

Note: These documents are already available in Spanish on the PDE website.

LEAs can find the eligible documents on the PDE website. The translation must be coordinated by a certified school assessment coordinator or test administrator that has completed test administration training and the PSTAT. No additional text may be added to the documents. The documents may be translated in whatever manner the school typically translates instructional materials for students. The documents must be printed for student use. Online test takers may not access the materials digitally.

Considerations: No part of the secure test itself may be pre-translated and printed for the student. Students using the translation accommodation on the Math and Science PSSA and Algebra I and Biology Keystone Exams must use a human translator.

Additionally, no Constructed Response General Description of Scoring Guidelines may be printed for the ELA PSSA or the Literature Keystone Exam.

Students may have no additional materials during testing other than the documents listed above and the word-to-word dictionary and/or translation sheet.

Type: Presentation

Documentation Required: Local Documentation or Documentation in the ELD Plan, Documentation of EL Status

Embedded Online: No

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: No

Assignment in Accommodations Portal:

Other – Presentation

Related Accommodations:

[Interpret/Translate – Native Language](#)

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 (Ticket Code: VSL)

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: No

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Video Sign Language

Related Accommodations:

[Interpret/Translate – Sign Language](#)

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 (ATD)

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](#)

[Augmentative or Alternative Communication](#)

[Calculator \(Adaptive\)](#)

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

[Voice-to-Text](#)

[Transcription](#)

Additional Resources:

[Appendix A: Unique Accommodation Assurance](#)

[Appendix I: Supplemental Guidelines for Device Lock-Down](#)

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:

[Appendix A: Unique Accommodation Assurance](#)
[Appendix I: Supplemental Guidelines for Device Lock-Down](#)

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:

[Appendix A: Unique Accommodation Assurance](#)
[Appendix I: Supplemental Guidelines for Device Lock-Down](#)

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 or Homebound Setting](#)

[One-on-One Setting](#)

Additional Resources:

[Universal Test Features – Extended Time](#) [Appendix A: Unique Accommodation Assurance](#)

Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone Reading Support

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 Full ELA PSSA or Literature Keystone Reading Support would also typically require the use of a voice-to-text or scribing accommodation.

A student who uses the Full PSSA/Literature Keystone Reading Support accommodation must:

- Have a documented disability that severely limits or prevents that student's ability to 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, Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone Reading Support will not be appropriate for every student who receives the Audio or Read Aloud 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 Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone Reading Support by a Human Reader for more information.

Type: Presentation

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

Embedded Online: Yes (Ticket Code: AUFL)

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: Yes

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Full ELA/Literature Reading Support

Related Accommodations:

[Audio for Mathematics, Science, and Writing Items](#)

[Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone Reading Support 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:

[Appendix A: Unique Accommodation Assurance](#)

[Appendix C: Sample Vignettes for Full ELA/Literature Reading Support](#)

[Appendix F: Read Aloud Guidelines](#)

[Online Tools Training](#)

Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone Reading Support 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 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 Full ELA PSSA or Literature Keystone Reading Support by a Human Reader would also typically require the use of a voice-to-text or scribing accommodation.

A student who uses the Full PSSA/Literature Keystone Reading Support by a Human Reader accommodation must:

- Have a documented disability that severely limits or prevents that student's ability to 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, Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone Reading Support by a Human Reader will not be appropriate for every student who receives the Audio or Read Aloud 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.

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: Full ELA/Literature Reading Support 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](#)

[Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone Reading Support](#)

[Scribing for Writing Items/ELA PSSA](#)

Additional Resources:

[Appendix A: Unique Accommodation Assurance](#)

[Appendix C: Sample Vignettes for Full ELA/Literature Reading Support](#)

[Appendix F: Read Aloud Guidelines](#)

[Online Tools Training](#)

Paper/Pencil Mode (Print-on-Demand)

Definition: Paper/pencil testing is only 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 (these tests are not Print-on-Demand - see guidelines for those accommodations in Table B).

Students requiring Paper/Pencil for open-ended items only should NOT use the Print-on-Demand Paper/Pencil Mode. These students should use the transcription accommodation.

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 (DFA) document will be available on the PDE website. The supplemental DFA will outline directions for administration specific to paper/pencil testing. The Transcription Guidelines give directions for correctly transcribing responses 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 Technology Enhanced 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.

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.

Type: Presentation

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

Embedded Online: Yes, must be selected to access the correct test form for transcription. (Ticket Code: POD, SPPOD for Spanish)

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](#)

[Appendix A: Unique Accommodation Assurance](#) [Appendix H: Transcription Guidelines](#)

Scribing for Writing Items/ELA PSSA Text-Dependent Analysis (Grades 4-8)

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.

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.

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. 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 Scribing 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.

Type: Response

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

Embedded Online: No

Unique Accommodation Assurance Required: Yes

Assignment in Accommodations Portal: Scribing for Open-Ended

Related Accommodations:

[Assistance with Selected Response](#)

[Interpret/Translate – Sign Language](#)

[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:

[Appendix A: Unique Accommodation Assurance](#) [Appendix G: Scribing Guidelines](#)

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:

[Appendix A: Unique Accommodation Assurance](#)

Voice-to-Text (Speech-to-Text, Talk-to-Text)

Definition: A student who requires this accommodation responds orally to test items, and an application produces a written response. The student 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 Writing Items/ELA PSSA Transcription](#)

Additional Resources:

[Appendix A: Unique Accommodation Assurance](#)

[Appendix I: Supplemental Guidelines for Device Lockdown](#)

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. The assurance process does **NOT** add the accommodation for the student in the test portal or order additional accommodated materials. These actions still must be completed by the school assessment coordinator or designee.

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 and may be subject to additional review by PDE/BSE.
6. A Unique Accommodation Assurance submission is good for all Keystone testing windows, including Winter 2026-2027, Spring 2027, and Summer 2027. For PSSAs and Keystone Exams, 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.

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.

2027 PSSA/Keystone Unique Accommodation Assurance Required Information

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)
 - Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone Reading Support, online or with a Human Reader (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 Writing Items/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 in the Accommodations Guidelines

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: Distributors of Word-to-Word Dictionaries and Translation Sheets

[Amazon](#)

[Barnes and Noble](#)

[Bilingual Dictionaries, Inc.](#), P.O. Box 1154, Murrieta, CA 92564, Phone: 951-296-2445

[Educa Vision](#), 755- NW 47th Avenue Coconut Creek, FL 33073 Phone: 954-968-7433

[Hippocrene Books, Inc.](#), 171 Madison Avenue, Suite 1602, New York, NY 10016 Phone: 718-454-2366

[Schoenhof's Foreign Books](#), 76A Mount Auburn Street Cambridge, MA 02138, Phone: 617-547-8855

[ThriftBooks](#)

[Tuttle Publishing](#), 364 Innovation Drive, North Clarendon, VT 05759 Phone: 800-526- 2778

[Velazquez Press](#), 9682 Telstar Avenue, Suite 110 El Monte, CA 91731, Phone: 626- 448-3448

[The Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools](#) - Offers free printable translation sheets that are subject and grade level specific in a number of languages.

Appendix C: Sample Vignettes for Full ELA/Literature Reading Support

Use the vignettes below to help determine if a student is eligible for the Full ELA/Literature Reading Support accommodation.

Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone Reading Support - 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.

Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone Reading Support - 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 in a one-on-one setting but is not able to read independently. He also uses a scribe for written, open-ended assignments. He uses these accommodations 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.

Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone Reading Support - 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: 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)
Title	Address	Telephone
Signature	Date	
Signature (principal or assessment coordinator)	Date	

Appendix E: 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 F: Read Aloud Guidelines

The focus of the Read Aloud Guidelines is to provide procedures for human readers who read aloud the entire test, or test administrators who read aloud words, phrases, or test items. The purpose of this document is to ensure consistency in the administration of the read-aloud accommodation for students in classrooms throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, in order to maintain fairness for all students. Providing these accommodations incorrectly or to ineligible students can affect test security and score validity.

These guidelines should be used as procedures for:

- Providing the accommodation to [Read Aloud of all Math, Science and Writing Items by a Human Reader](#);
- providing Read Aloud by a Human Reader of the full ELA PSSA or Literature Keystone as part of the [Full ELA/Literature Reading Support accommodation](#);
- providing a [signed translation](#) or an [oral translation for EL students](#) of allowable parts of the test.
- any students who ask for an [allowable word, phrase, or item to be read aloud](#). “Allowable” items include directions, any materials on the mathematics or science assessments, and the TDA prompt and Conventions of Standard English items on the ELA PSSA. No parts of a reading passage or associated items besides the TDA may be read aloud by student request. Reading aloud an allowable word, phrase, or item must be done at student request only.

Do not administer a full read aloud to a student who is not eligible.

These guidelines must be provided to any test administrator or proctor who is to administer a Read Aloud Accommodation. This appendix may be printed, and test administrators and proctors may use these guidelines as a resource during the test administration. These guidelines are not needed for administration of the Audio accommodation. Test administrators and proctors administering a Read Aloud accommodation may preview assessment materials up to three days prior to test administration in a secure location with a signed [Confidentiality Agreement](#). Any notes taken to prepare for Read Aloud must be kept in a secure location with testing materials and must be destroyed after testing.

For all content areas and subjects, human readers may **not** clarify, elaborate, paraphrase, assist, or cue a student through uneven voice inflection. Of utmost importance when reading aloud any item or portion thereof is that the validity of the item be maintained. Any portion of an item that might cue the correct answer or provide inappropriate assistance for the test taker must **not** be read aloud.

The administration of a Read Aloud Accommodation by a Human Reader must occur in a one-on-one setting. Test forms may not be despiraled.

Guidelines for All Subjects

Answer Choices

- For multiple-choice questions, read the answer choice letter, pause briefly, then read the answer choice. Pause again before reading the next answer choice letter.
- For technology-enhanced items, read the answer choice, pause briefly, then read the next answer choice.
- Do **not** say anything prior to the answer choice letter, such as “answer choice” or “option”.

Emphasis in Test Items

- Emphasize words that are underlined or bolded as a part of the question being asked (e.g., not, best, or most) using voice inflection.
- Emphasize titles that are underlined, in quotation marks, or in italics by briefly pausing before and after the emphasis.
- Do **not** emphasize individual words or phrases that are underlined as part of a stimulus or answer choice.
- Do **not** use emphasis to cue students.

Fill in the Blank

- Read the blank element as “blank” preceded and followed by a pause. For example, “I would like to have either an apple (pause) blank (pause) a banana to eat with my lunch.”
- If the space to be filled in has a number, read it as “blank number x” where x is the number on the line.

Guidelines for PSSA English Language Arts and Keystone Literature Read Aloud

For the ELA PSSA, questions measuring writing are eligible for a read aloud accommodation or for a student to request a word, phrase, or item read aloud as a universal test feature. These include the Conventions of Standard English items and the TDA prompt. There are no writing items on the Keystone Literature exam.

A read aloud for items measuring reading is only allowed as a Unique Accommodation to a very small portion of the population eligible for this accommodation. See [Full ELA/Literature Reading Support](#).

Conventions of Standard English (Writing) Multiple-Choice/Technology Enhanced Questions on the PSSA ELA

Conventions of Standard English multiple-choice and technology-enhanced questions are found in sections 1 and 3 of the English Language Arts PSSA. Conventions of Standard English items may not be translated into any other language.

Stimulus Sentences

In some cases, sentences within a larger stimulus will be sequentially numbered for ease of reference for the students. When reading these paragraphs or groups of sentences, do not read or refer to the sentence numbers.

Example:

Read the paragraph.

(1) The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania encourages citizens to plant rain gardens. (2) Rain gardens capture storm water so that the water does not flow into storm drains. (3) Existing low spots or shallow pits lined with gravel make ideal locations for rain gardens. (4) If you use native plants in your rain garden, it will be easy to take care of and might even have attracted birds and butterflies.

Which sentence in the paragraph has an error?

- A. sentence 1
- B. sentence 2
- C. sentence 3
- D. sentence 4

The question above should be read aloud as follows:

“Read the paragraph. (pause) The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania encourages citizens to plant rain gardens. Rain gardens capture storm water so that the water does not flow into storm drains. Existing low spots or shallow pits lined with gravel make ideal locations for rain gardens. If you use native plants in your rain garden, it will be easy to take care of and might even have attracted birds and butterflies. (pause) Which sentence in the paragraph has an error? (pause) A (pause) sentence 1, (pause) B (pause) sentence 2, (pause) C (pause) sentence 3, (pause) D (pause) sentence 4.”

Punctuation Items

- Do not say the name of any punctuation used in test questions (Exceptions can be made for students using the accommodation due to blindness and visual impairment).
- For end punctuation, read the sentence with normal inflection.
- Do not add unnatural inflections that may cue a student.
- Do not indicate quotation marks or apostrophes in any manner.
- For commas, briefly pause wherever a comma appears in a sentence.

Example:

Which sentence is punctuated correctly?

- A. He said "My new kitten loves to roll in the grass."
- B. "He said My new kitten loves to roll in the grass."
- C. He said, "My new kitten loves to roll in the grass."
- D. "He said, My new kitten loves to roll in the grass."

The question above should be read aloud as follows:

"Which sentence is punctuated correctly? (pause) A. (pause) He said my new kitten loves to roll in the grass. (pause) B. (pause) He said my new kitten loves to roll in the grass. (pause) C. (pause) He said (pause) my new kitten loves to roll in the grass. (pause) D. (pause) He said (pause) my new kitten loves to roll in the grass."

Capitalization Items

Do **not** provide a verbal indication of capitalization within items. (Exceptions can be made for students using the accommodation due to blindness and visual impairment).

Example:

Which sentence has a mistake in capitalization?

- A. We enjoyed reading the book *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*.
- B. Our class loudly sang the song "It's a Small World" at the show.
- C. My favorite chapter in the book is called "First Day of Spring."
- D. I read the book *Two little Trains* three times already today.

The question above should be read aloud as follows:

"Which sentence has a mistake in capitalization? (pause) A. (pause) We enjoyed reading the play (pause) if you give a mouse a cookie. (pause) B. (pause) Our class loudly sang the song (pause) it's a small world (pause) at the show. (pause) C. (pause) My favorite chapter in the book is called (pause) first day of spring. (pause) D. (pause) I read the book (pause) two little trains (pause) three times already today."

Spelling Items

- Speak the word rather than the individual letters in the word.
- Pronounce misspelled words as though they were spelled correctly. (Exceptions can be made for students using the accommodation due to blindness and visual impairment).

Example:

Read the sentence.

Several students were siting under the tree.

Which word in the sentence is **not** spelled correctly?

- A. students
- B. were
- C. siting
- D. under

The question above should be read aloud as follows:

“Read the sentence. (pause) Several students were sitting under the tree. (pause) Which word in the sentence is **not** spelled correctly? (pause) A (pause) students, (pause) B (pause) were, (pause) C (pause) sitting, (pause) D (pause) under”

Text-Dependent Analysis: PSSA ELA Grades 4–8

It is permissible to read aloud the TDA prompt (or a word or phrase from the TDA prompt) found at the end of Section 2 and Section 3 of the PSSA English Language Arts. The prompt should be read word for word. No part of the accompanying passage may be read aloud to the student unless the student has a Full ELA/Literature Reading Support accommodation.

Reading Questions: Keystone Literature and PSSA ELA

Only students who are eligible for the [Full ELA/Literature Reading Support](#) accommodation are eligible for this portion of the test to be read. Reading passages and questions may not be translated into any other language.

- Passages must be read verbatim without emphasizing or changing words. The passage should be read clearly and without inflections that could cue the student or provide them clues about the text’s meaning or responses to the questions. Occasionally, a passage may include a chart, table, or diagram. If this is the case, follow the guidelines for reading [Graphs/Tables/Keys](#) or [Diagrams/Figures/Flowcharts](#) in the Science section below.
- Readers may spell any words at the request of the student receiving the accommodation. If a word is a homophone for another word, the reader may spell the word after reading it if the different meaning could cause confusion.
- Readers should follow the General Read Aloud Guidelines above to read aloud the reading passages, multiple-choice, evidence-based student response, technology-enhanced, and short answer/constructed response questions.

Guidelines for PSSA Mathematics/Keystone Algebra I Read Aloud

A read aloud accommodation or reading aloud a word, phrase, or item at student request is permitted for both the PSSA Mathematics Tests and the Keystone Algebra I Exams for all multiple-choice and technology-enhanced questions (and answer choices) and open-ended/constructed-response questions. A translated read aloud in a language other than English is permitted on the Mathematics PSSA and Algebra I Keystone for eligible EL students.

Symbols

Symbols should be read in a way that does **not** cue the correct answer or provide inappropriate assistance for the test taker.

The following symbols are each read as follows:

$+$ plus	$\bullet$ times or multiplied by
$-$ minus	$\div$ divided by
$\times$ times or multiplied by	$=$ equals or is equal to

The symbols $\overline{AB}$, $\overleftrightarrow{AB}$, or $\overrightarrow{AB}$ would be read as “segment A B,” “line A B,” or “ray A B.” Pause between speaking the letters.

Exponents should be read as “x to the n” for x^n .

For a number or variable followed by a grouping symbol, read the number/variable followed by “times the quantity” (e.g., $3(x + 7)$ would be read as “3 times the quantity x plus 7”).

For grades 3-5: The symbols $<$ and $>$ would be read as “a symbol”. (e.g., $3 < 7$ would be read as “three symbol seven.”). If $<$ and/or $>$ appear in the answer choices with other symbols, **all** symbols should be read as “a symbol.”

For grades 6-8 and Algebra I: The symbol $<$ should be read as “less than” and the symbol $>$ should be read as “greater than.” (e.g., $3 < 7$ would be read as “three is less than 7”).

Example

A number sentence comparing two expressions is shown below.

$$0.4 + 0.09 + 12.6 \text{ ____ } 0.4 + 0.9 + 12.6$$

Which symbol would go in the blank to correctly complete the number sentence?

- A. $+$
- B. $=$
- C. $<$
- D. $>$

For grades 3-5, the question above would be read as follows:

“A number sentence comparing two expressions is shown below. (pause) Zero point four plus zero point zero nine plus twelve point six blank zero point four plus zero point nine plus twelve point six. (pause) Which symbol would go in the blank to correctly complete the number sentence? (pause) A (pause) a symbol, (pause) B (pause) a symbol, (pause) C (pause) a symbol, (pause) D (pause) a symbol.”

Numbers

Numbers should be read in a way that does **not** cue the correct answer or provide inappropriate assistance for the test taker. **Place value is relevant** when students are asked to round, and when students are either given or asked to identify the word form of a number and/or the expanded form of a number. It is also relevant in problems where students are asked to determine which symbol would make a number sentence true. If the question is assessing a student's knowledge of place value, read the number using the following examples:

- 2,224—read as “two, comma, two, two, four”
- 10.205—read as “one, zero, point, two, zero, five”

For questions where the **place value is not relevant**, read the numbers in standard form (e.g., 1,234 would be read as one thousand, two hundred thirty-four). Decimal numbers that are not dollar amounts should be read as “(whole number), point, (individual decimal digits).” (e.g., 18.24 would be read as “eighteen, point, two, four”).

Monetary values should be read as “(dollar amount) dollars and (change amount) cents.” (e.g., \$18.24 would be read as “eighteen dollars and twenty-four cents.”)

Fractions, including improper fractions, should be read as “the fraction (numerator) over (denominator)” (e.g., $\frac{3}{4}$ would be read as “the fraction three over four”, $\frac{11}{3}$ would be read as “the fraction eleven over three”).

Mixed numbers should be read as “(whole number) and the fraction (numerator) over (denominator)” (e.g., $2\frac{1}{4}$ would be read as “two and the fraction one over four”).

Negative numbers are read as “negative (number).”

Abbreviated scientific units should be described using the full word(s). For example, 3 m should be read as “three meters,” and 9.8 m/s^2 should be read as “nine point eight meters per second squared.” (Note that this is different than the Science and Biology assessments.)

Graphs/Tables/Charts/Grids

First read the title. “The title of the [type of graph or table] is [title].”

Number lines: “The title of the number line is [title]. The label below the number line is [label.] The numbers below the number line are [numbers]. The letters above the number line are [letters].”

Line plots: “The title of the line plot is [title]. The label below the line plot is [label]. The numbers below the line plot are [numbers].”

Tally charts: Read the title and headings. Refer to the tally marks as “some tally marks are shown” rather than the number of tally marks shown. For one tally mark, read “one tally mark is shown” and for zero tally marks, read “no tally marks are shown.”

Stem-and-leaf plots: “The title of the stem-and-leaf plot is [title]. The numbers on the stem-and- leaf plot are [read each row from left to right]. Below the stem-and-leaf plot is a key. Key, [number] bar [number] equals [number].”

Double stem-and-leaf plots: “The title of the double stem-and-leaf plot is [title]. The numbers on the double stem-and-leaf plot are [read each row from left to right]. Below the double stem-and-leaf plot is a key. Key,

[number] bar [number] equals [number]; [number] bar [number] equals [number].”

Box-and-whisker plots: “The title of the box-and-whisker plot is [title]. The label below the box- and- whisker plot is [label]. The numbers below the box-and-whisker plot are [numbers from left to right].”

Bar graphs: “The title of the bar graph is [title]. The label to the left of the bar graph is [label]. The numbers to the left of the bar graph are [numbers]. The label below the bar graph is [label]. The words below the bars are [bar labels].”

Double bar graphs: “The title of the bar graph is [title]. The label to the left of the bar graph is [label]. The numbers to the left of the bar graph are [numbers]. The label below the graph is [label]. The words below the bars are [bar labels]. Below the bar graph is a key. Key, [label], [label].”

Circle graphs: “The title of the circle graph is [title]. The labels on the circle graph are [read the labels starting at the 12-o’clock position and going around clockwise].”

First quadrant graphs: “The title of the graph is [title]. The label to the left of the graph is [label]. The numbers to the left of the graph are [numbers]. The label below the graph is [label]. The numbers below the graph are [numbers].”

Coordinate grids: For grade 3-5: “The title of the (coordinate) (grid/plane)¹ is [title].² The numbers to the left of the coordinate grid are [read numbers on y-axis from bottom to top]. The numbers below the coordinate grid are [read numbers on x-axis from left to right]. The points marked on the grid are labeled [points].³ **For grade 6-8 and Algebra I:** “The title of the (coordinate) (grid/plane)¹ is [title].² The numbers on the y-axis are [read numbers on y-axis from bottom to top]. The numbers on the x-axis are [read numbers on x-axis from left to right]. The points marked on the grid are labeled [points].³

1. Use coordinate grid or coordinate plane based on what is referenced in the first part of the question.
2. If there is no title, replace the first sentence with “A coordinate grid is shown.”
3. Only read the point labels if they are words.

Graphics/Diagrams/Figures/Clocks

The read aloud of most graphics follows this pattern: “The title of the picture (or figure or diagram) is [title].” (Use picture, figure, or diagram based on what is referenced in the first part of the question. Other parts of the picture are only included if measurements or other pertinent information is included.)

An analog clock is referred to as a clock; a digital clock is referred to as a digital clock. If there is **no** title, then read “A (digital) clock is shown,” followed by any labels.

Guidelines for PSSA Science/Keystone Biology Read Aloud

A read aloud accommodation or reading aloud a word, phrase, or item at student request is permitted for both the PSSA Science Tests and the Keystone Biology Exams for all multiple-choice and technology-enhanced questions (and answer choices) and open-ended/constructed-response questions. A translated read aloud in a language other than English is permitted on the Science PSSA and Biology Keystone for eligible EL students.

Chemical Symbols

Symbols should be read in a way that does not cue the correct answer or provide a hint for the test taker. If a question includes both the name and the symbol of an element or formula of a compound, the symbol/formula may be read as the name in later instances within the test question. If only the symbol/formula appears within a test question, only the symbol/formula should be read (e.g., Cl_2 should be read as “C, L, two,” not as “chlorine gas” or “chlorine”).

Scientific Units

Abbreviated units should be read phonetically. For example, 3 m should be read as “three m,” and 9.8 m/s^2 should be read as “nine point eight m per s squared.” (Note that this is different from the Mathematics and Algebra I assessments.)

Graphs/Tables/Keys

For graphs, first read the title of the graph. Then read the label and the numbers on each axis, referring to the horizontal axis as the bottom of the graph and the vertical axis as the left side of the graph. The order will depend upon the content of the graph. Describe the key if there is one.

For data tables, first read the title of the data table, then the column headings from left to right, and then the data from left to right.

Headings with units should be read without an insertion of “in” between the measurement and the unit (e.g., “Distance (feet)” should be read as “Distance feet”).

Data tables should be read left to right by each row.

Science Scenarios

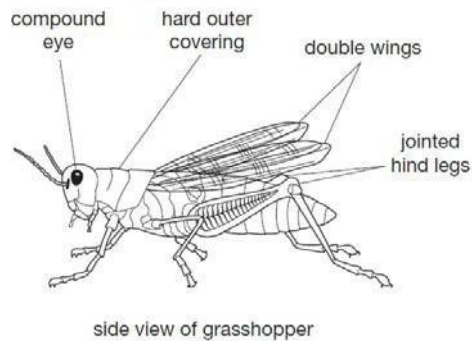
Read the directions above the scenario and then read the phrase “The title of the scenario is [title].”

If a picture/diagram/data table shown within the scenario is not referenced in the sentence prior to its appearance, use the phrase “A (picture/diagram/data table) is shown. The title of the (picture/diagram/data table) is [title].”

Diagrams/Figures/Flowcharts

Always read the title if there is one. “The title of the (diagram, figure, chart, food web, etc.) is [title].”

Diagrams with labels should be described in a concise format including all text/labels, as in the following example:



“The drawing shows a side view of a grasshopper. The labels from left to right are: compound eye, hard outer covering, double wings, jointed hind legs.”

Food webs should be described by starting at the bottom of the food web and reading all labels and describing the direction of arrows.

Flowcharts

- Horizontal flowcharts should be read left to right and include a description of the labels and arrow directions.
- Vertical flowcharts should be read in the direction indicated by the arrows and include a description of the labels. If arrows are not present, they should be read top to bottom and include a description of the labels.

Note: A graphic should be referenced by the reader the same way it is identified in the introduction of the item (or scenario), with the same term used consistently throughout the script. Picture, diagram, and drawing are **not** interchangeable.

Appendix G: Scribing Guidelines

The focus of the Scribing Guidelines is to provide procedures for scribes who write/type student oral responses. The purpose of this document is to ensure consistency in the administration of the scribing accommodation for students in classrooms throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, in order to maintain fairness for all students. Providing these accommodations incorrectly or to ineligible students can affect test security and score validity.

Scribing involves a scribe writing a response directly into the online test as a student dictates the response. This occurs during the administration of the assessment as students dictate the response orally or by gesturing or pointing to correct responses. This differs from [transcription](#), which occurs after the assessment is administered. These guidelines are not needed for administering a Voice-to-Text accommodation.

These guidelines should only be used for students who are eligible for the [Scribing accommodation](#).

These guidelines must be provided to any test administrator or proctor who is to administer a Scribing Accommodation. This appendix may be printed, and test administrators and proctors may use these guidelines as a resource during the test administration.

With the online version of the test, the student may be able to independently respond to selected-response questions by pressing the letter of the response on a keyboard, or by using a mouse. If the student needs the [Assistance with Selected Response accommodation](#), the scribe may also assist the student in selecting responses to multiple-choice and technology enhanced items as needed.

The following guidelines must be followed whenever scribing is used:

- The student must be tested in a separate one-on-one setting.
- The scribe must not give any help that might suggest the correct answer to a question.
- The scribe must not communicate that the student should “check” an answer or has answered an item correctly or incorrectly.
- The scribe must not edit or alter student work in any way and must record exactly what the student has dictated, according to the rules in these guidelines.
- The scribe may ask the student to restate words or parts of the answer as needed to ensure a correct transcription of the student’s response. The scribe must be careful to ensure that such requests are not communicated in any way that would indicate to the student that they should revise or correct the response.
- The scribe may respond to procedural questions asked by the student (e.g., If the student asks, “Do I have to use the entire space to answer the question?” the scribe can indicate “no.”)
- The scribe should draw attention to the character count for open-ended items and may respond if the student asks for the character count during the response.
- The scribe may not answer questions related to the content (e.g., “Can you tell me what this word means?” or “Is this the right way to set up the problem?”).
- The student reviews and edits what the scribe has written. The scribe may ask “Are you finished?” or “Is there anything you want to add, delete, or change?”

Guidelines for All Subjects

Interpreters may **not** translate student responses to any items on the ELA PSSA or Keystone Literature Exam from a non-English language into English. This includes student responses to the TDA prompts of the ELA PSSA test.

Interpreters may [translate](#) students' non-English oral responses into written English for the Mathematics, Algebra I, Science, and Biology assessments for eligible EL students. Interpreters must not change the meaning of the response or make any corrections in the response.

Multiple-Choice, Evidence-Based Selected-Responses, Technology-Enhanced Items, Short Answer/Constructed Responses, and Open-Ended Responses

The student dictates responses using the same manner that is used during instruction and assessment, which may include pointing to answer choices or lettered cards, and dictating open-ended responses. The scribe may not question or correct student answer choices or coach the student on the meaning or spelling of words. For multi-part questions, the scribe may clarify what the student wants written for each part, including showing the student's work for math problems. In addition to scribing into the test, the scribe should also write any work, organizing, brainstorming, etc., that the student dictates onto scratch paper.

Guidelines for ELA PSSA Grades 4-8 Text-Dependent Analysis Prompts

Because the TDA measures writing, the scribing accommodation for this response is considered a Unique Accommodation and requires the submission of an [assurance](#).

In addition to the general guidelines, the following scribing guidelines must also be followed for TDA prompts:

- The student must be given the opportunity to plan and draft an essay as any other student participating in the assessment. This means that the scribe may write an outline or plan as directed by the student. The scribe must write the words of the student exactly as dictated during the entire test administration. The scribe may not encourage the student to outline or plan the essay or suggest outlining strategies or formats.
- The scribe must write or type the student response verbatim, have the student review the response for punctuation, capitalization, spelling, word choice, and spelling, revise the response as directed by the student, and transcribe the final student-approved essay with no changes.
- The scribe must write all words as dictated. The student does not spell every word aloud.
- The scribe should not use capitalization or punctuation in the student's response, except as noted below. The student must proofread the response to add punctuation and capitalization. (This can be done all at once upon completion of the response or as the student dictates the response, based on the preference of the student. Proofreading must be conducted in such a way as to not interfere with the student's construction of the response.) The scribe must make all student-requested changes, even if they are incorrect.
- The scribe should capitalize the first word of any paragraph. (The student must indicate paragraph breaks. The student can do this by saying, for example, "The cat ran. New paragraph. The rabbit hopped." If the student does not indicate paragraph breaks during the writing of the essay, they can go back and add them later. The scribe must not add capitalization unless the student indicates a new paragraph.)
- The scribe should capitalize the first letter in the beginning of a sentence if the student has indicated punctuation ending the previous sentence. For example, if the student said, "The cat ran period. The cat jumped period." the scribe would write "The cat ran. The cat jumped." However, if

the student said, “The cat ran. The cat jumped.” the scribe would write “The cat ran the cat jumped”.

- The student must confirm the final response and indicate when they are ready to move on to the next item.

Appendix H: Transcription Guidelines

The focus of the Transcription Guidelines is to provide procedures for transcribers who transcribe student written responses into the online test. The purpose of this document is to ensure consistency in the administration of the transcription accommodation for students in classrooms throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, in order to maintain fairness for all students. Providing these accommodations incorrectly or to ineligible students can affect test security and score validity.

These guidelines should only be used for students who are eligible for the [Transcription accommodation](#). Transcription is used when a student must compose their test responses outside of the online test. This includes students who are taking a form of the test that must be transcribed into the online assessment, such as [Assistive Technology Device](#), [Large Print](#), [Braille](#), or [Print-on-Demand](#). This also includes the [translation](#) and transcription of student responses written in a language other than English on Mathematics, Science, Algebra I, and Biology Assessments.

The student responses must be entered into the test by a test administrator or designee. Transcription should not be confused with [scribing](#), which takes place in real time during the assessment.

These guidelines must be provided to any test administrators and assessment coordinators who are to complete test transcription. This appendix may be printed, and test administrators and proctors may use these guidelines as a resource during the test administration and transcription.

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).

When producing the response on a separate device, such as an Assistive Technology Device, students should be given the opportunity to review the response, then the 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 a non-secure printer or emailed for printing. All original student work must be securely destroyed or permanently deleted from the device by the school assessment coordinator.

Guidelines for All Subjects

Transcribing Open-ended Items

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 for transcription. They should not use the Paper Print-on-Demand accommodation.

When transcribing open-ended items:

- Make the student aware of the character limits for the item in the test platform, as the written response will not fit if it is over the character limit.
- Transcribe the student's response exactly as written, including mistakes in grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- Do not transcribe any erased or crossed out words.
- If a student has responded completely or partially with doodles, drawings, pictures, or marks that are clearly not words or letters, leave the item or portion of the item blank.
- If a student's response is completely illegible, type "ILLEGIBLE" in the response area. If the student's response is partially illegible, type the portion that can be read, and type "ILLEGIBLE" for the portion of text that cannot be read.
- If part of the student's response cannot be entered into the test platform for any other reason, leave that part blank. If none of the student's response can be entered into the test platform for any other reason, leave the entire response blank.
- When possible, the student response may be transcribed in the testing room and the student may have the opportunity to review the response before it is submitted.

Transcribing Selected Response Items

All PSSA and Keystone assessments include selected-response items (including multiple-choice and technology-enhanced items on all assessments, and evidence-based selected response on the ELA PSSAs). Technology-enhanced items will be adapted for paper presentation. These items are formatted so that the student's answer is clear, and the transcriber can easily transcribe them into the test platform.

When transcribing selected response items:

- Selected response items will require students to choose one or more responses. In the online assessment, transcribers should select the same response(s) that the student chose on the paper form.
- If the student's answer is unclear (e.g., the student selected too many responses, the student failed to clearly erase a response, etc.), an attempt may be made to clarify the intended response with the student. The transcriber may not cue the student in any way to the correct answer. Once the testing session has ended, the student may only clarify the intended response as needed. They are not permitted to re-do the question.
- If a student selected more than the allowable number of responses, the system will not allow the transcriber or student to enter more than the required number of responses. If the transcriber is unable to clarify the response with the student, the response should be left blank.
- If a student selected fewer responses than allowed, the transcriber should enter only the responses the student selected.
- Transcribers should make a good faith effort to interpret and transcribe student responses on corresponding Technology Enhanced questions. For example, if the student is asked to underline a response but they circle it, the transcriber should still transcribe the student's selected response.

Appendix I: 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 J: 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 standards.

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 K: Federal and State Laws Requiring Participation by English Learners

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) signed into law on December 10, 2015, allows EL students who were enrolled in a school in one of the 50 States in the United States or the District of Columbia fewer than 12 cumulative (not consecutive) months an option to not take the ELA PSSA or Literature Keystone Exam. A student's enrollment in a school in Puerto Rico is **not** to be considered as enrollment in a U.S. school.

It is incumbent upon the Local Education Agency (LEA) to determine a student's status. The eligible student will have been enrolled in a U.S. school less than or equal to 12 cumulative months by the end of the current school year PSSA ELA/Keystone Literature testing window.

PIMS student data will allow the LEA to determine if a student has already been exempted one time for the ELA or Literature tests. As long as PIMS data is up to date, nothing needs to be selected in the student management portal.

All ELs are required to participate in the Mathematics PSSA or Algebra I Keystone Exam and the Science PSSA or Biology Keystone Exam with accommodations as appropriate regardless of enrollment date.

The Mathematics and Science PSSA or Algebra I and Biology Keystone Exam scores of ELs in their first 12 months of enrollment in U.S. schools as defined above will not be used to determine performance (the percent proficient or higher) for federal accountability status.

Should ELs in their first 12 months in U.S. schools as defined above choose to participate in the ELA PSSA or Literature Keystone Exam, their performance will not be used to determine performance (the percent proficient or higher) for federal accountability status. Students who are expected to be reclassified from EL services in the current school year should be encouraged to take the ELA PSSA or Literature Keystone Exam.

The USDE guidance also provides flexibility in determining who can be included in the EL subgroup. Because EL students exit the EL subgroup once they attain English language proficiency, schools and LEAs may have difficulty demonstrating improvements on state assessments for these students. The USDE allows schools, LEAs, and states to include in the EL subgroup those students who have exited an ESL/bilingual education program within the past four years.

All ELs, K-12, are required to take the WIDA ACCESS for ELs English Proficiency Test.

Appendix L: 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 J](#) and [Appendix K](#) 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 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.

Additionally, even before an item appears on the test, that item has already been screened for linguistic, cultural, socioeconomic, and other forms of bias. After items have been field tested, PDE staff and educator committee representatives review any items that may not have performed as well as expected in order to determine whether the items should be rejected.

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]

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. For English Learners, these accommodations may be documented as part of the student's English language development plan. 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).
 - What are the characteristics of the student?
 - What accommodations does the student regularly use in classroom instruction and assessment?
 - Has the student indicated a preference in using the accommodation? What input have teachers and parent/guardians had?
 - Does the student demonstrate facility effectiveness in using the accommodation?
2. Classroom instruction and assessment tasks (i.e., knowledge about what tasks are required on assessments and ways to remove physical and other barriers to students' ability to perform those tasks).
 - What tasks are required of the student? What is the test designed to measure? Are there barriers for the student in doing those tasks?
 - Are there accommodations already being used in classroom assessment that match the accommodations needed to remove those barriers on the state test? Are there consequences for using the accommodation?
 - Are there accommodations that could be made available to the student in the classroom that are not available currently that would remove barriers to the test?
3. State accommodations policies for the assessment or for part of an assessment and consequence of decisions.
 - Does the accommodation maintain validity of the assessment?
 - Is the accommodation allowed for the test or portion of the test noted as a barrier?
 - Are there consequences for using the accommodation?
 - Does the accommodation change the target for the assessment?

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.**

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 the test portal. 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 Guidelines, Scribing Guidelines, 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 Guidelines, Scribing Guidelines, 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 Guidelines, Scribing Guidelines, 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 Guidelines](#), Scribing Guidelines, 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 Support 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 accommodation provided: 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

Bureau of Special Education

607 South Street

Harrisburg, PA 17120

717-783-6913

Acknowledgements

This document is modeled on the Accommodations Manual: How to Select, Administer, and Evaluate Use of Accommodations for Instruction and Assessment of Students with Disabilities, Third Edition developed in collaboration with members of the Professional Development and Communications Study Group of the Assessing Special Education Students (ASES) State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS). The SCASS ASES addresses the inclusion of students with disabilities in large-scale standards, assessments and accountability systems and the effects of these systems on related educational reform efforts.

This document was developed by the Bureau of Accountability and Assessment and the Bureau of Special Education of the Pennsylvania Department of Education in 2013. This document is revised annually by the Bureau of Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction.

Other References

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>

Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (2015). PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual 2015 – 2016, Fourth Edition. PARCC, Inc. Washington, DC: PARCC Assessment Consortia.

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (2015). Scribing Protocol for Smarter Balanced Assessments.

WIDA Consortium (2015). ACCESS for ELLs 2.0: [Frequently Asked Questions on Accommodations, Accessibility Tools, and Test Administration Procedures](#).