



State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards



Accommodations Manual

How to Select, Administer, and Evaluate
Use of Accommodations for Instruction
and
Assessment of Students with Disabilities

Third Edition

Produced by:
Assessing Special Education Students (ASES)
State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS)

THE COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is a nonpartisan, nationwide, nonprofit organization of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions. CCSSO provides leadership, advocacy, and technical assistance on major educational issues. The Council seeks member consensus on major educational issues and expresses their views to civic and professional organizations, federal agencies, Congress, and the public.

ACCOMMODATIONS MANUAL: HOW TO SELECT, ADMINISTER, AND EVALUATE USE OF ACCOMMODATIONS FOR INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Third Edition

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Table of Contents

Why a 2011 edition?

Step 1: Expect Students with Disabilities to Achieve Grade-Level Academic Content Standards	1
Step 2: Learn About Accommodations for Instruction and Assessment	6
Step 3: Select Accommodations for Instruction and Assessment for Individual Students	12
Step 4: Administer Accommodations During Instruction and Assessment	20
Step 5: Evaluate and Improve Accommodations Use	24
Tool 1: Do's and Don'ts When Selecting Accommodations	27
Tool 2: Good Practices and Resources for All Students	30
Tool 3: Assessment Adaptations Grid	31
Tool 4: Accommodations from the Student's Perspective	49
Tool 5: Parent Input in Accommodations	51
Tool 6: Accommodations Use in the Classroom	53
Tool 7: After-Test Accommodations Questions	54
Tool 8: Assessment Accommodation Plan	55
Tool 9: Assessment Accommodations Agreement	57
Tool 10: Logistics Planning Checklist	58
Tool 11: Accommodations Journal for Teachers.....	60

Why a 2011 edition?

The Council of Chief State School Officers' *Accommodations Manual: How to Select, Administer, and Evaluate the Use of Accommodations for Instruction and Assessment of Students with Disabilities* was first developed to establish guidelines for states to use for the selection, administration, and evaluation of accommodations for instruction and assessment of students with disabilities. The first and second editions represent the best thinking about accommodations at the time they were written.

This third edition of the *Accommodations Manual* represents an update of the previous editions. With Race to the Top (RTTT) initiatives, many states have joined consortia to work together on common assessment systems using technology-based testing platforms. New policy and implementation issues with regard to accommodations for students with disabilities necessitate a revision to this manual.



Throughout this edition of the *Accommodations Manual*, attention has been given to addressing issues related to providing accommodations on technology-based platforms. Often, these issues have been marked with the symbol of a computer mouse.

Accommodations Manual: How to Select, Administer, and Evaluate Use of Accommodations for Instruction and Assessment of Students with Disabilities represents the best thinking of 2011. We continue to learn more about the effective education of students with disabilities every day, and we expect these materials to evolve and improve every year.

STEP 1

Expect Students with Disabilities to Achieve Grade-Level Academic Content Standards

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

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

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

1. Instruction is provided by teachers who are qualified to teach in the content areas addressed by state standards and who know how to differentiate instruction for diverse learners.
2. IEPs for students with disabilities are developed to ensure the provision of specialized instruction (e.g., specific reading skills, strategies for “learning how to learn”).
3. Appropriate accommodations are provided to help students access grade-level content.

Most states have adopted Common Core Standards (CCS) for English language arts and mathematics. CCS and common assessments across states that are based on those standards present an unprecedented opportunity for educators to accomplish the goal of including all students with disabilities in grade-level content.

The selection, administration, and evaluation of accommodations for instruction and assessment are the focus of the *Accommodations Manual: How to Select, Administer,*

and Evaluate Use of Accommodations for Instruction and Assessment of Students with Disabilities.

Federal and State Laws Requiring Participation by Students with Disabilities

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

Reauthorization of Elementary and Secondary Education Act

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

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

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

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

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

There are several critical elements in ESEA that hold schools accountable for educational results:

- Academic content standards (what students should learn) and academic achievement standards (how well students should learn the content) form the basis of state accountability systems.
- State assessments are the mechanism for checking whether schools have been successful in students attaining the knowledge and skills defined by the content standards.
- States must provide assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics for all students, including students with disabilities, in grades 3–8 and once in high school.
- States must also provide science assessments in at least one grade in each of three grade spans (3–5, 6–9, 10–12) each year.
- School, district, and state accountability are based on measuring success in educating all students and determining what needs to be improved for specific groups of students.
- The accountability system is defined in terms of adequate yearly progress (AYP), a way to measure the improvement in achieving standards for all students and designated subgroups each year.
- Schools, districts, and states are held accountable for improvements on an annual basis by public reporting and ultimately through consequences if AYP is not achieved.

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 districtwide 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)].

Supported by ongoing educational reform efforts, such as Race to the Top (RTTT) and other initiatives passed by states, the use of assessments for accountability purposes will likely continue in the future, supported by other legislative initiatives passed by states in their efforts to implement educational reform.

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.

CURRENT STATE REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS TO MEET GRADE-LEVEL ACADEMIC CONTENT STANDARDS COULD BE INSERTED HERE.

CURRENT STATE WEBSITE FOR ALL CONTENT STANDARDS COULD BE INSERTED HERE.

CURRENT STATE-SPECIFIC POLICIES ABOUT THE PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN STATE ASSESSMENT COULD BE INSERTED HERE.

STEP 2

Learn About Accommodations for Instruction and Assessment

What Are Accommodations?

Accommodations are practices and procedures that ensure that educators, as well as students and parents, have a valid measure of what students with disabilities know and can do. Accommodations use begins in the classroom. In addition, students with IEPs or students on Section 504 plans may also be provided with assessment accommodations.

Accommodations do not reduce expectations for learning.

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

Typically, accommodations use does not begin and end in school. Students who use accommodations will generally also need them at home, in the community, and as they get older, in postsecondary education and at work.

Who Is Involved in Accommodations Decisions?

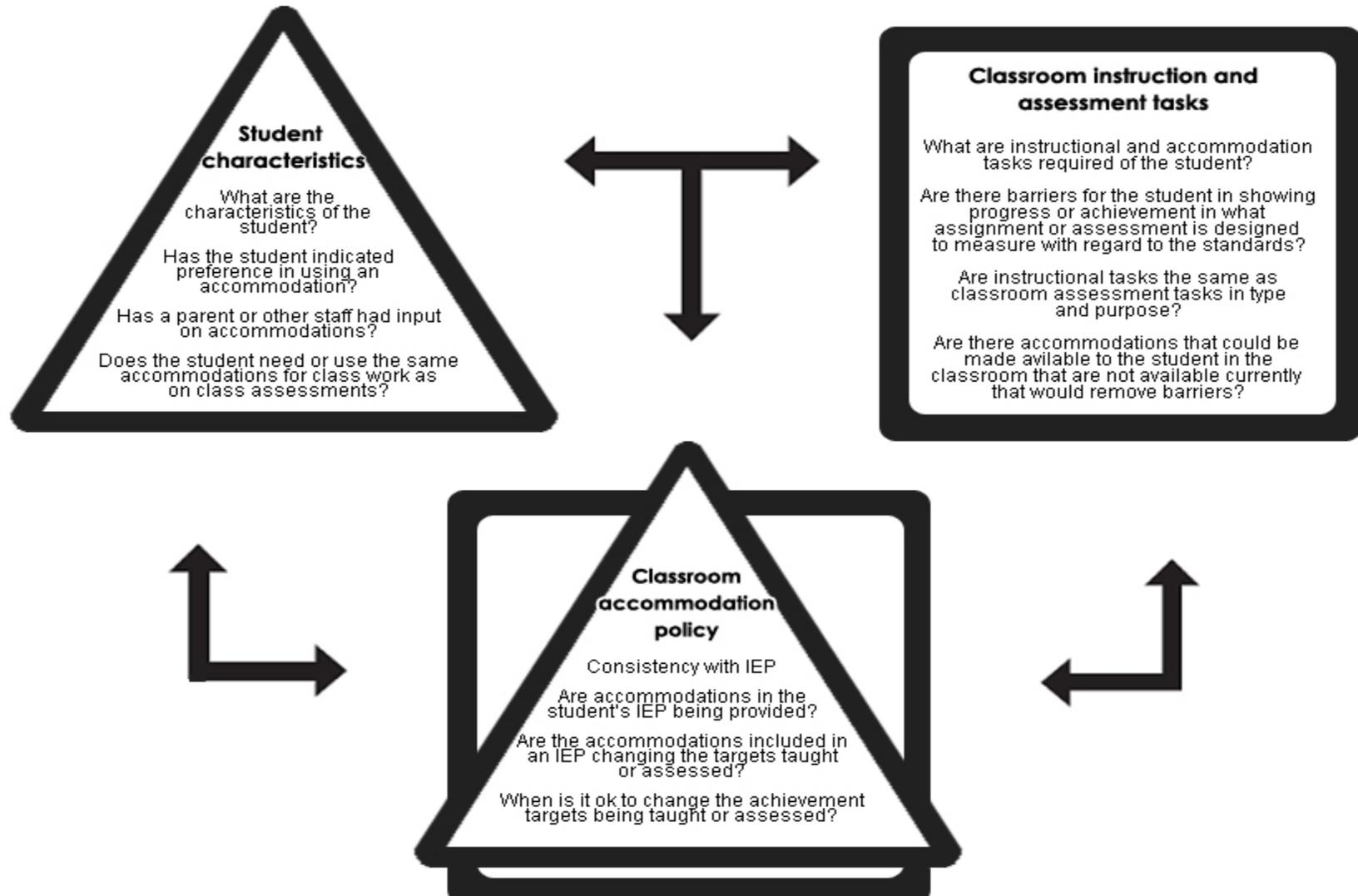
IEP teams must make assessment and accommodation decisions for students based on individual need in accordance with state and federal guidelines. Students with IEPs and 504 plans must be provided accommodations based on individual need as long as the accommodations do not invalidate the assessment. Accommodations should be documented in IEPs and 504 plans.

IEP Team Considerations for Instruction Accommodations

To assure students with disabilities are engaged in standards-based instruction, every IEP team member needs to be familiar with the state's standards. In essence, the process of making decisions about accommodations is one in which the IEP team members attempt to level the playing field so that students with disabilities can participate in the general education curriculum. In leveling the playing field, the team should consider the following (see also figure 1):

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.

Figure 1. Considerations When Making Decisions for Instructional Accommodations



Accommodations and Universal Design

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

Universally designed general assessments may reduce the need for accommodations and alternate assessments; however, universal design cannot eliminate the need for accommodations and alternate assessments. Universal design CAN provide states with more cost-effective assessments, and universal design CAN provide educators with more valid inferences about the achievement levels of students with disabilities, as well as the achievement of their peers without disabilities.



Universal design of assessments does not simply mean that tests are administered on computers. As assessments move toward becoming more consistently administered on computers, accommodations and universal design considerations may change. Traditionally, we have thought of universal design as coming first, and accommodations being applied during testing. With current technology, we can build some accommodations into the design of the test itself. Some of these features may be accommodations (available to students with disabilities and English language learners) and others may be good testing practices (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.

Good Practices for Instruction and Assessment and Resources Available to All

For both instruction and assessment, there are resources and strategies that should be allowable for all students, and therefore not classified as accommodations. These good practices should be used whenever possible for all students. In addition, there may be other resources that can be made available to all students, to be used based on student preference. The use of these resources may not be considered an accommodation. See tool 2 for a tool that can be used to develop a state-specific list of good practices and resources.

Accommodations and Modifications

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

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

- requiring a student to learn less material (e.g., fewer objectives, shorter units or lessons, fewer pages or problems)
- reducing assignments and assessments so a student only needs to complete the easiest problems or items
- using an accommodation that invalidates the intended construct
- revising assignments or assessments to make them easier (e.g., crossing out half of the response choices on a multiple-choice test so that a student only has to pick from two options instead of four)
- giving a student hints or clues to correct responses on assignments and tests

Providing modifications to students during classroom instruction and classroom assessments may have the unintended consequence of reducing their opportunities to learn critical content. If students have not had access to critical, assessed content, they may be at risk of not meeting graduation requirements. Providing a student with a modification during a state accountability assessment 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.

IEP Team Considerations for Instructional Accommodations

To ensure that students with disabilities are engaged in standards-based instruction, every IEP team member needs to be familiar with state policies. The team should consider

- student characteristics and needs (see tool 1 in appendix);
- instructional tasks expected of students to demonstrate proficiency in grade-level content in state standards; and
- consistency between accommodations documented in the standards-based IEP that is used for classroom instruction and those used on assessments.

IEP team members should ask, Does the student really need 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.

STEP 3

Select Accommodations for Instruction and Assessment for Individual Students

To assure students with disabilities are engaged in standards-based instruction and assessments, every IEP 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 that simply engage people in checking boxes on a state or local compliance document are neither conducive to sound decision making practices, nor do they advance equal opportunities for students to participate in the general education curriculum.

Document Accommodations on a Student's IEP

For students with disabilities served under IDEA, determining appropriate instructional and assessment accommodations should not pose any particular problems for IEP teams that follow good IEP practices. With information obtained from the required summary of the student's present level of educational performance (PLEP), the process of identifying and documenting accommodations should be a fairly straightforward event. The PLEP is a federal requirement under which IEP team members must state "how the child's disability affects the child's involvement and progress in the general education curriculum—the same curriculum as non-disabled children" [Sec. 614 (d) (1) (A) (i) (I)].

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

1. "Consideration of Special Factors" [Sec. 614 (d) (3) (B)]. This is where communication and assistive technology supports are considered.
2. "Supplementary Aids and Services" [Sec. 602 (33) and Sec. 614 (d) (1) (A) (i)]. This area of the IEP includes "aids, services, and other supports that are provided in regular education classes or other education-related settings to

enable children with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled children to the maximum extent appropriate.”

3. “Participation in Assessments” [Sec. 612 (a) (16)]. This section of the IEP documents accommodations needed to facilitate the participation of students with disabilities in general state- and districtwide assessments.

Document Accommodations on a Student’s 504 Plan

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires public schools to provide accommodations to students with disabilities even if they do not qualify for special education services under IDEA. The definition of a disability under Section 504 is much broader than the definition under IDEA. All IDEA students are also covered by Section 504, but not all Section 504 students are eligible for services under IDEA. Section 504 states the following:

No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. [29 U.S.C. Sec. 794]

Examples of students who may receive assessment accommodations based on their 504 accommodations plan include students with the following conditions:

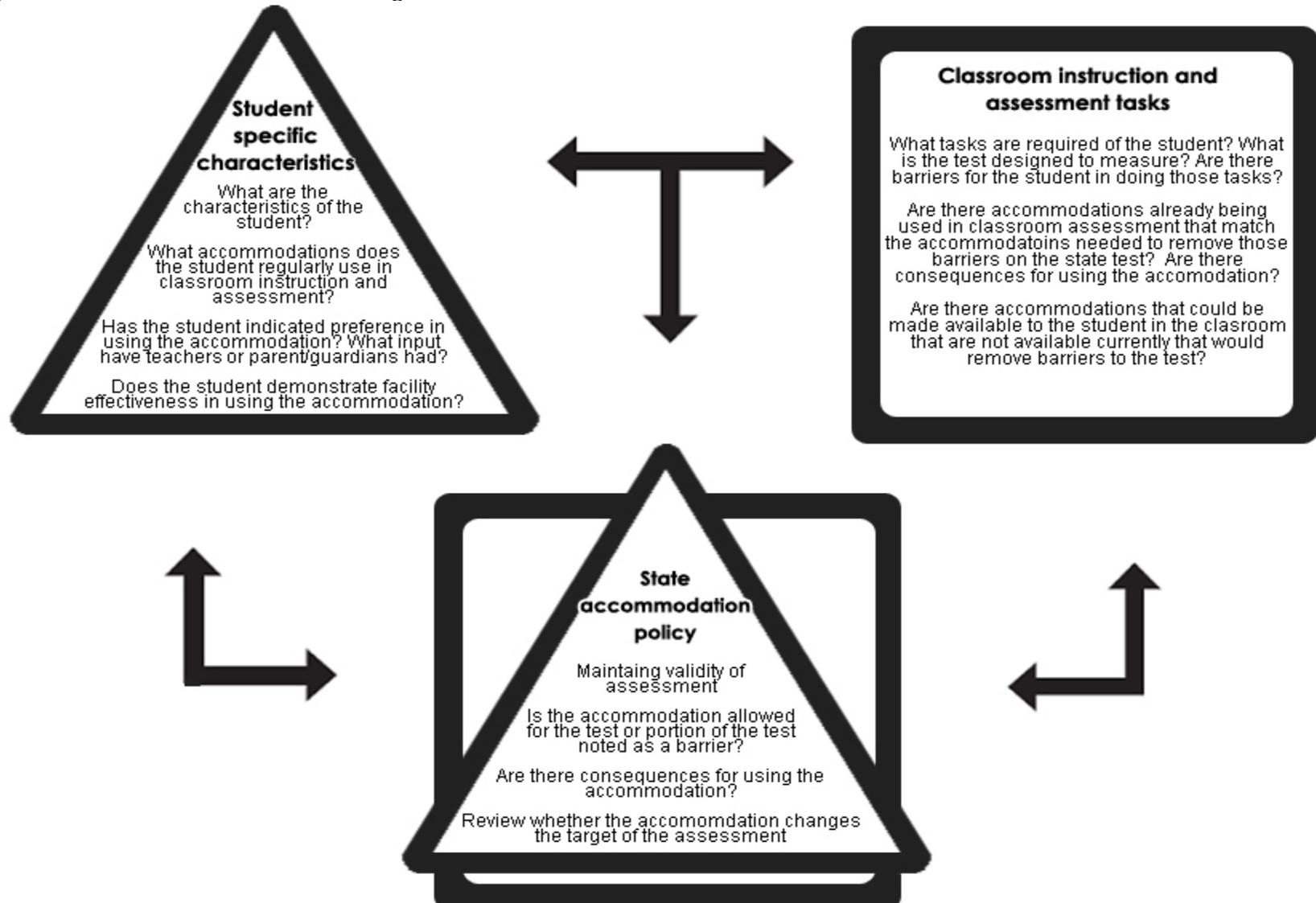
- allergies or asthma
- attention difficulties
- communicable diseases (e.g., hepatitis)
- drug or alcoholic addictions (as long as they are not currently using illegal drugs)
- environmental illnesses
- temporary disabilities from accidents, which may require short-term hospitalization or homebound recovery

The Decision Making Process

The decision making process for state assessment accommodations should include consideration of at least these three factors (see figure 2):

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

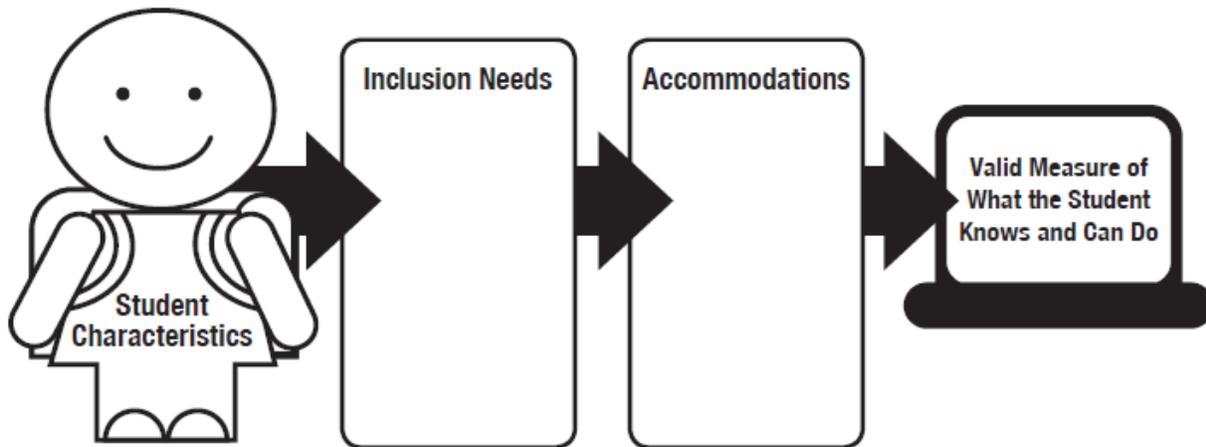
Figure 2. Considerations When Making Decisions for Assessment Accommodations



Student Characteristics

Selecting accommodations for instruction and assessment is the role of a student's IEP team or 504 plan committee. Accommodations should be chosen based on the individual student's characteristics and the student's need for the accommodation (see figure 3). After considering the student's individual characteristics, the IEP team or 504 plan committee should identify inclusion needs that require accommodations. When these accommodations are used according to plan, the student should be able to validly demonstrate what he or she knows and can do for both instruction and assessments.

Figure 3. Student Characteristics and Needs



There are several questions an IEP team or 504 plan committee can ask to help identify inclusion needs and match accommodations to those needs.

The following questions may be helpful for IEP teams and 504 plan committees in identifying accommodations for instruction and assessment:

- What are the student's learning strengths and areas of further improvement?
- How do the student's learning needs affect the achievement of grade-level content standards?
- What specialized instruction (e.g., learning strategies, organizational skills, reading skills) does the student need to achieve grade-level content standards?
- What accommodations will increase the student's access to instruction and assessment by addressing the student's learning needs and reducing the effect of the student's disability?
- What accommodations are regularly used by the student during instruction and assessments?

- What were the results of assignments and assessments when accommodations were used and not used?
- What is the student's perception of how well an accommodation worked?
- Are there effective combinations of accommodations?
- What difficulties did the student experience when using accommodations?
- What are the perceptions of parents, teachers, and specialists about how the accommodation worked?
- Should the student continue to use an accommodation, are changes needed, or should the use of the accommodation be discontinued?

Of the accommodations that match the student's needs, consider:

- the student's willingness to learn to use the accommodation;
- opportunities to learn how to use the accommodation in classroom settings; and
- conditions for use on state assessments.

Involving Students in Selecting, Using, and Evaluating Accommodations

It is critical for students with disabilities to understand their disabilities and learn self-advocacy strategies for success in school and throughout life. Some students have had limited experience expressing personal preferences and advocating for themselves. Speaking out about preferences, particularly in the presence of authority figures, may be a new role for students, one for which they need guidance and feedback. Teachers and other IEP team members can play a key role in working with students to advocate for themselves in the context of selecting, using, and evaluating accommodations.

The more that students are involved in the selection process, the more likely the accommodations will be used, especially as students reach adolescence and the desire to be more independent increases. Self-advocacy skills become critical here. Students need opportunities to learn which accommodations are most helpful for them, and then they need to learn how to make certain those accommodations are provided in all of their classes and wherever they need them outside of school.

See tools 5 and 7, which can be used with students.

Prior Accommodations Use

Accommodations should not be used for the first time on a state test. Instead, it is important to address these instructional concerns ahead of state assessment:

- Plan time for student to learn new accommodations.
-  When a student is taking assessments in a technology-based setting, be sure that the student knows how to use the accommodation when it is provided as part of the platform.
- Plan for evaluation and improvement of accommodations use (see step 5).

Accommodations for Instruction vs. Assessment

Sometimes accommodations used in instruction may not be used on an assessment:

- Plan time for students to practice NOT using certain accommodations before the state assessment.
- Some instructional accommodations may alter what a test is designed to measure.

In some cases, the accommodations used in instruction may not be allowed on a test because they would invalidate the results of the test (i.e., when the performance no longer reflects what the test was designed to measure). In these instances, teachers should be sure to allow the student ample opportunities to perform on classroom tasks and assessments without the use of the accommodation.

If the accommodation is considered a necessary step in scaffolding grade-level content instruction, having some practice without the accommodation during classroom work would be an expected practice to gauge student progress independent of the accommodation and would also provide student opportunities to practice not using an accommodation before the state assessment. If the instructional accommodation is more permanent in nature and is not permitted on a state assessment, decision makers should consider whether the accommodation alters what the test measures. If after considering these steps the appropriateness of using an accommodation is not clear, contact district or state personnel about its use.

Individual Test Characteristics: Questions to Guide Accommodations Selection

After considering student characteristics, it is important to look at the task students are being asked to do on the various state and district assessments. Below are more questions to ask:

- What are the characteristics of the test my student needs to take? Are the test tasks similar to classroom assessment tasks or does the student have the opportunity to practice similar tasks prior to testing?
- Does the student use an accommodation for a classroom task that is allowed for similar tasks on the state or district tests?
- Are there other barriers that could be removed by using an accommodation that is not already offered or used by the student?

State Accommodations Policies: Maintaining Validity of Assessments

When selecting accommodations for state assessments with a student, it is important to keep in mind both the accommodation policies set to maintain the validity of an assessment and to know the consequences of the decisions. If the IEP team determines that a student should use a certain accommodation during an assessment but the student refuses to use the accommodation, the validity of the assessment is compromised.

Consideration for longer-term consequences is important for IEP teams as well. For example, as students with disabilities begin to make postsecondary choices, these may factor into the nature of accommodation choices and availabilities open to them. The IEP team may want to discuss whether or how this affects decisions about accommodations for assessments.

Plan how and when the student will learn to use each new accommodation. Be certain there is ample time to learn to use instructional and assessment accommodations before an assessment takes place. Finally, plan for the ongoing evaluation and improvement of the student's use of accommodations.

Refer to tools 1, 4, 5, and 6 for additional information in completing this step.

STEP 4

Administer Accommodations During Instruction and Assessment

Accommodations During Instruction

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



As states and consortia move to providing assessments on technology-based platforms, IEP teams must take care to ensure that students have opportunities to become familiar with the technological aspects of the assessment process. In addition to taking practice tests using the same testing platform, it is also important for educators to provide opportunities for all students to use technology for learning.

Accommodations during Assessment

Planning for Test Day

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

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



Current designs of technology-based testing platforms may allow for accommodations to be provided on the testing platform itself. Through a process of

creating a student profile, an IEP team may be able to program the test to provide certain accommodations, like colored backgrounds, templates, and sign interpretation. Providing these accommodations through the testing platform can guarantee that the provision of accommodations is standardized from student to student and district to district. However, it is important to monitor the provision of accommodations on test day to ensure that accommodations are delivered and the technology is working as it should.

Refer to tools 6, 7, and 8.

Administering Assessments and Accommodations

State and local laws and policies specify practices to assure test security and the standardized and ethical administration of assessments. Test administrators, proctors, and all staff involved in test administration must adhere to these policies.

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

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

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

Ethical Testing Practices

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

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. In the accommodations grid (tool 2), guidelines for standardization are provided.

Test Security

Test security involves maintaining the confidentiality of test questions and answers; it is critical in ensuring the integrity and validity of a test.

In a paper-and-pencil test, test security can become an issue when accessible test formats are used (e.g., Braille, large print) or when someone other than the student is allowed to see the test (e.g., interpreter, reader, scribe). In order to ensure test security and confidentiality, test administrators need to keep testing materials in a secure place to prevent unauthorized access, keep all test content confidential and refrain from sharing information or revealing test content with anyone, and return all materials as instructed.



Some of the same considerations for test security apply when students are taking a technology-based assessment. For example, ensuring that only authorized personnel have access to the test and that test materials are kept confidential are critical in technology-based assessments. 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.

Refer to tool 1 for additional considerations.

³ National Council on Measurement in Education. (1995). *Code of Professional Responsibilities in Educational Measurement*. Washington, DC: Author.

INSERT CURRENT STATE POLICY ON TEST SECURITY AND TEST IRREGULARITIES.

STEP 5

Evaluate and Improve Accommodations Use

Accommodations must be selected on the basis of the individual student's needs and must be used consistently for instruction *and* assessment. Collecting and analyzing data on the use and effectiveness of accommodations are necessary to ensure the meaningful participation of students with disabilities in state- and districtwide 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.

Examination of the data may also indicate areas in which the IEP team, 504 plan committee, and test administrators need additional training and support. In addition to collecting information about the use of accommodations within the classroom, information also needs to be gathered on the implementation of accommodations during assessment. Data may include the following:

- observations conducted during test administration
- interviews with test administrators
- talking with students after testing sessions (helpful to guide the formative evaluation process at both the school and student levels)

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. IEP teams, schools, and districts should decide in advance what questions should be answered by the collection of accommodations data in order to apply resources efficiently.

In a paper-and-pencil assessment, information on the use of accommodations can be feasible to collect when it is coded on the test form with other student information.

Accommodation information can be analyzed in different ways. Here are some questions to guide data analysis at the district, school, and student levels. The lists of questions that follow are not exhaustive, but rather places to start.

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

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

Questions to Guide Evaluation at the Student Level

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

1. What accommodations are used by the student during instruction and assessments?
2. What are the results of classroom assignments and assessments when accommodations are used, versus when accommodations are not used? If a student did not meet the expected level of performance, is it due to not having access to the necessary instruction, not receiving the accommodations, choosing not to use the accommodation, or using accommodations that were ineffective? Or was there another reason?

3. What is the student's perception of how well the accommodation worked?
4. What combinations of accommodations seem to be effective?
5. What are the difficulties encountered in the use of accommodations?
6. What are the perceptions of teachers and others about how the accommodation appears to be working?

School- and district-level questions can be addressed by a committee responsible for continuous improvement efforts, while the student-level questions need to be considered by the IEP team and the student. It is critical to stress that evaluation of accommodations use is not the responsibility of just one individual. The entire IEP team should contribute to the information gathering and decision making processes.

Postsecondary Implications

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

Refer to tools 4 and 7 for strategies for evaluating accommodations use.

Tool 1

Do's and Don'ts When Selecting Accommodations

Do ... make accommodations decisions based on individualized needs.

Don't ... make accommodations decisions based on whatever is easiest to do (e.g., 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 or 504 plan.

Don't ... use an accommodation that has not been documented on the IEP or 504 plan.

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 necessary."

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 team or 504 planning committee 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.

A Note to States about Tools 2 and 3

State policies should establish clear guidelines to distinguish among good practices, resources that may be available to all students, and accommodations. Each state must make its own decision about what adaptations will or will not violate the construct being measured by the assessment.

States should customize tool 2 and tool 3 to fit current state guidelines. States may want to add items to the list of good practices and resources included in tool 2. States may also want to add items to the adaptations grid in tool 3.

States should plan to adjust the column headings in tool 3 to fit individual state needs in presenting accommodations policies. For example, some states may prefer to list only the allowed accommodations, with a check in the relevant boxes. Other states may, for example, want to describe each item as either allowed or prohibited depending on state policy.

States should remove any items from tool 2 and tool 3 that are not relevant to its policies.

Tool 2

Good Practices and Resources for All Students

In instruction, some practices of differentiating instruction or providing resources based on student needs should not be considered accommodations, but rather good instructional practices. Some of these tools and strategies apply to assessment as well.



In addition, some features of computer-based testing may be resources to be used by all students who want to use them, as long as their use does not violate the construct being measured.

Some examples of good practices include:

- ✓ Access to a clock, watch, or timer
- ✓ Allowing the student to sit where he or she is most comfortable
- ✓ Having directions read aloud prior to starting a task or test
- ✓ Increased white space
- ✓ Minimizing distractions
- ✓ Use of scrap or scratch paper
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____

Examples of resources for all students include:

- ✓ Changes in contrast, including use of a color overlay, reverse contrast, or change in background on a computer screen
- ✓ Highlighter
- ✓ Large diameter pencil
- ✓ Securing paper to work space
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____

<h1>Tool 3</h1> <h2>Assessment Adaptations Grid</h2>	Accommodation	Good Practice	Paper-based Resource
<p>Adaptive furniture Some students benefit from the use of adaptive or special furniture (for example, for sitting upright) during instruction or testing. Other students find it helpful to use a slant board or wedge to minimize eye strain and provide a better work surface.</p>			
<p>Adaptive writing tools While responding to instructional or test content, some students need assistance constructing narrative text. There are a number of methods for assisting students in generating narrative responses. Spelling and grammar devices can be used in both a paper and computer environment.</p> <p>Standardization: Writing tools include larger diameter pencil and pencil grip.</p> <p> A student may type on a word processor or alternate keyboard. Assistive technology that can be used for typing includes customized keyboards, mouth or headstick or other pointing devices, sticky keys, touch screen, and trackball. Speech-to-text conversion or voice recognition allows students to use their voices as input devices. Voice recognition may be used to dictate text into the computer or to give commands to the computer (e.g., opening application programs, pulling down menus, or saving work).</p>			
<p>Additional examples</p>			

<p>To better understand a task or test item, some students need to have additional examples provided.</p> <p>Standardization: In a paper-based instructional or testing environment, teachers may supply additional examples to assist the student.</p> <p> In a computer-based environment, predefined examples for instructional content or test items can be programmed and accessed by the student as needed.</p>			
<p>Alternate location</p> <p>In some circumstances, distractions for an individual student or for a group of students can be reduced by altering the location in which an individual student interacts with instructional materials or test content. For students who are easily distracted by the presence of other students, an alternate location accommodation allows the student to work individually or in small groups. Changes may also be made to a student's location within a room, such as away from windows, doors, or pencil sharpeners. Sitting near the teacher's desk or in the front of a classroom may be helpful for some students. Physically enclosed classrooms (classrooms with four walls) may be more appropriate than open classrooms, and study carrels might also be helpful. Some students may benefit from being in an environment that allows for movement, such as being able to walk around. In some instances, students may need to interact with instructional or test content outside of school, such as in a hospital or their home. The use of some accommodations, such as a human reader, sign interpreter or scribe, can distract other students. In addition, some students may perform better when they can read content aloud and think out loud or make noises that may be distracting to other students. To reduce distractions</p>			

<p>to other students when these strategies and/or accommodations are provided, an alternate location must be employed.</p> <p>Standardization: Provide a different location within the classroom or a different room.</p> <p> When providing a different location within the classroom or a different room, care must be taken to ensure that security of testing materials is maintained.</p>			
<p>Audio amplification Some students may require audio amplification devices in addition to hearing aids to increase clarity. A teacher may use an amplification system when working with students in classroom situations that contain a great deal of ambient noise.</p> <p>Standardization: Use headphones or test in a separate room.</p>			
<p>Audio description of content Students with vision needs may need assistance accessing instructional or test content represented graphically. Access to graphics for students with vision needs is often provided through auditory descriptions of tables, pictures, and graphics</p> <p>Standardization: Readers should use even inflection so that the student does not receive any cues by the way the information is read. It is important for readers to describe graphics and other symbols exactly as they appear. Readers may not clarify, elaborate, or provide assistance to students. Readers need to be familiar with the terminology and symbols specific to the content. This is especially important for high school mathematics and science. Graphic materials may be described</p>			

<p>but should also be made available in print or tactile formats. The state should standardize descriptions of all tables, pictures, and graphics.</p> <p> Provide prerecorded human voice recordings or synthesized voice recordings of descriptions of mathematics and science symbols and nomenclature and other graphics. Students benefit by listening to a fully approved, standardized human voice, assuring correct pronunciation of words, symbols, and equations. Systems should allow students to decide when they want to hear the text read to them and to play sound clips repeatedly.</p>			
<p>Auditory calming For students who focus better when receiving auditory input, background music or sounds can be provided while they access and interact with content.</p> <p>Standardization: Auditory calming can be provided by CD or mp3 player with headphones.</p> <p> Background music and sounds can be embedded into the system, so no extra hardware is needed, and there are no concerns about monitoring the content.</p>			
<p>Braille and tactile graphics Braille is a method of reading a raised-dot code with the fingertips. Not all students who are blind read Braille fluently or choose Braille as their primary mode of reading. Even if they use it as their primary mode of reading, Braille users should also build skills in using audiotope, compact discs, and speech synthesis.</p> <p>When auditory descriptions of graphics either violate the construct being measured or are cumbersome for a student to process, tactile overlays</p>			

<p>can be used to assist the student in accessing content through touch.</p> <p>Standardization: Decisions also need to be made about whether a student will use contracted or uncontracted Braille. Check to see if practice tests are available in Braille. If instructional tasks or assessments are timed, a Braille user may need additional time to complete the task.</p> <p>Tactile graphic images provide graphic information through fingers instead of eyes. Graphic material (e.g., maps, charts, graphs, diagrams, illustrations) is presented in a raised format (paper or thermoform). Tactile sensitivity (recognizing graphic images through touch) is less discriminating than visual reading, making many diagrams too complicated to understand without significant additional information. Additional information can be created through word descriptions.</p>			
<p>Brailier A Brailier is a Braille keyboard used for typing Braille that can then be printed in standard print or Braille (embosser). The Brailier is similar to a typewriter or computer keyboard. Paper is inserted into the Brailier and multiple keys are pressed at once, creating Braille dots with each press.</p> <p> Through an alternative computer port, newer Brailiers can simultaneously act as a speech synthesizer that reads the text displayed on the screen when paired with a screen reading program.</p>			
<p>Breaks Breaks may be given at predetermined intervals or after completion of assignments, tests, or activities. Sometimes a student is allowed to take breaks when individually needed.</p>			

<p>Standardization: In a paper-based environment, test booklets can be divided into shorter sections so students can take a break between sections of a test (sometimes referred to as “short segment test booklets”).</p> <p> In a computer-based environment, the number of items per session can be flexibly defined based on the student’s need. If the length of a break is predetermined, a timer might be used to signal the end of the break.</p>			
<p>Calculation assistance If a student’s disability affects mathematics calculation but not reasoning, a calculator or other assistive device, such as an abacus, arithmetic table, manipulatives, or number chart, may be used.</p> <p>Standardization: It is important to determine whether the use of a calculation device is a matter of convenience or a necessary accommodation. It is important to know the goal of instruction and assessment before making decisions about the use of calculation devices. In some cases, calculators may be adapted with large keys or voice output (talking calculators). In other cases, an abacus may be useful for students when mathematics problems are to be calculated without a calculator. The abacus functions as paper and pencil device for students with visual impairments.</p> <p> In a computer-based environment, calculators can be embedded into the delivery system and can be magnified and use read aloud features.</p>			

<p>Clarify/Repeat directions To accurately understand the task a student is being asked to engage in, some students need to have directions to a task or test simplified.</p> <p>Standardization: In a paper-based environment, teachers may clarify directions through restatement or simplification of language for the student.</p> <p> In a computer-based environment, directions can be reread and access to a simplified version of directions can be provided to students.</p>			
<p>Change in the order of activities Assessments and activities that require focused attention could be scheduled for the time of day when a student is most likely to demonstrate peak performance. To reduce fatigue and increase attention, activities or tests can be administered over multiple days—completing a portion each day.</p>			
<p>Color contrast Some students with visual needs are better able to view information through color contrast.</p> <p>Standardization: Students can choose from a variety of color transparencies, which are placed over the content. Alternatively, content can be printed using different colors.</p> <p> A content or test delivery system could allow students to alter the contrast in which content is presented in the following ways:</p> <p>Color overlays: Students can choose from a variety of color tints that are placed over the content, questions, and directions.</p>			

<p>Reverse contrast: Students reverse the colors for the entire interface.</p> <p>Color chooser: Students change the font and background colors for the content. Students pick the font and background color combinations that help them perceive text-based content. This differs from color overlay in that only the text and background colors change. Lines and graphics are not affected by the color changes.</p> <p>Note that these alterations in contrast may not work well together.</p>			
<p>Dictionary/Glossary</p> <p>To understand instructional or test content, some students may need to look up words in a dictionary, glossary, or thesaurus.</p> <p>Standardization: In a paper-based environment, students are provided with standard English dictionary, glossary, or thesaurus.</p> <p> A computer-based content and delivery system could embed dictionary, glossary, and thesaurus terms in the content for students to access as needed.</p>			
<p>Extended time</p> <p>Extended time may require a student’s IEP team to determine a fairly specific amount of extra time to complete assignments, projects, and assessments.</p> <p>Standardization: For timed tests, a standard extension may be time and one-half. This means that a student is allowed 90 minutes to take a test that normally has a 60-minute limit. Double time may also be allowed. Decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis, keeping in mind the type of accommodations being provided, the disability involved, and the type of assignments, assessments, and activities.</p>			

<p>Usually unlimited time is not appropriate or feasible. Sometimes students who request extended time end up not needing it because of the reduction in anxiety of simply knowing that plenty of time is available. Students who have too much time may lose interest and motivation to do their best work.</p>			
<p>Highlighting/Markers/Visual cues Highlighting, using markers, and providing visual cues can draw attention to key content.</p> <p>Standardization: Teachers or students may use markers, arrows, stickers, or highlighters to draw attention to key words in directions, content, or test items.</p>  <p>In a computer-based content and delivery system, visual cues such as arrows, markers, and highlighting can be predefined and activated at the teacher or student's request. In computer-based assessments, these accommodations are student selected only.</p>			
<p>Large Print/Magnification Students with visual impairments or other print disabilities may need assistance viewing content. Access for students with visual needs is typically provided through enlarging or magnifying content.</p> <p>Standardization: Large print: Large-print editions of instructional materials and tests are required for some students with visual impairments or print disabilities. It is recommended that regular print materials be manipulated to reformat test items and enlarge or change the font as needed. All text and graphic materials—including labels and captions on pictures, diagrams, maps, charts, exponential numbers, notes, and footnotes—</p>			

<p>must be presented in at least 18-point type for students who need large print. Students, working with their teachers, need to find an optimal print size and determine the smallest print that can still be read. (Copyright issues may need to be addressed). It is important for the print to be clear, with high contrast between the color of the print and the color of the background.</p> <p>Magnification: Students may use a magnifying glass or other device that allows them to magnify instructional or test content.</p> <p> A content or test delivery system could allow students to manipulate the size in which text and graphics are presented on the screen. It is important that the system is able to clearly enlarge all material, including narrative text, formulas and equations, information presented in scientific and mathematical nomenclature, tables, graphs, charts, figures, and diagrams. The system should also provide tools that allow students to either view material in magnified form on an occasional/as-needed basis or on a more permanent basis. Students should be provided the option of enlarging content at least eightfold. The system should allow students to easily move content that is forced off the screen into viewing mode. The system should also allow magnifying tools to work in conjunction with other accessibility tools and/or accommodations provided. Finally, students should have the option of enlarging the entire test interface, including navigation buttons, menu options, and directions, or only instructional or test content.</p>			
<p>Masking/Templates A common technique for focusing a student's attention on a specific part of a test item is provided by masking. Masking involves blocking off content that is not of immediate interest to the student.</p>			

<p>Standardization: Students may use a variety of methods to mask content, including masking templates, sticky notes, rulers or straightedges, or blank sheets of paper.</p> <p> A digital content delivery system may include tools that allow students to mask or hide portions of instructional or test content, as well as the interface, so that the student can focus on content that is of immediate interest. For a test, masking tools should allow students to cover and reveal individual answer options and all navigational buttons and menus. Tools should also be available that allow students to create custom masks that simulate the placement of sticky notes over any sized area of the screen (e.g., a graphic, chart, table, or narrative block of text). Students should be able to move, hide, and reposition any masking element placed on the screen.</p>			
<p>Minimize distractions While students are accessing and interacting with information presented in instructional or test content, some students need help reducing distractions and/or maintaining focus.</p> <p>Standardization: A teacher or proctor can highlight information, employ visual cues and organizers, monitor placement of responses, and prompt students. Altering the environment in which a student works on instructional or test content can reduce distractions to the student or to classmates.</p> <p> A content and test delivery system could have predefined highlighting, cues, and organizers that can be revealed when a student requests them. The system could be programmed to prompt students</p>			

<p>after a predefined number of minutes have elapsed since a student interacted with the item. Computer application of these methods to maintain focus standardizes delivery, decreases the burden on teachers and proctors, and empowers the student to access the tools when needed.</p> <p>Multiple breaks, extended time, and changing the order of activities are also tools to help students maintain focus and can be managed manually on paper or programmed into a computer-based environment. In addition, a student may wear buffers, such as earphones, earplugs, or headphones, to reduce distractions and improve concentration.</p>			
<p>Multiple or frequent breaks Breaks may be given at predetermined intervals or after completion of assignments, tests, or activities. Sometimes a student is allowed to take breaks when individually needed.</p> <p>Standardization: Test booklets can be divided into shorter sections so students can take a break between sections of a test (sometimes referred to as “short segment test booklets”).</p> <p> The number of items per session can be flexibly defined based on the student’s need. If the length of a break is predetermined, a timer might be used to signal the end of the break.</p>			
<p>Read aloud of text Students with reading-related disabilities may need assistance accessing instructional or test content by having all or portions of the content read aloud.</p> <p> In a computer-based environment, a content and test delivery system could allow students to have text read aloud while being</p>			

<p>highlighted. Students should be able to select pieces of text to have it reread when requested. A screen reader may also be utilized to read all information on the computer screen. This tool may be very helpful for instruction.</p> <p>Standardization: A qualified person may be provided to read orally to students who are unable to decode text visually. Readers should use even inflection so that the student does not receive any cues by the way the information is read. It is important for readers to read text word for word exactly as written. Readers may not clarify, elaborate, or provide assistance to students. Readers need to be familiar with the terminology and symbols specific to the content. This is especially important for high school mathematics and science. Readers must be provided to students on an individual basis—not to a group of students. A student should have the option of asking a reader to slow down or repeat text. This cannot occur when a person is reading to an entire group of students.</p> <p> Provide prerecorded human voice recordings or synthesized voice recordings for directions and test items to students. Students benefit by listening to a fully approved, standardized human voice or synthesized voice recordings that have been vetted for correct pronunciation, assuring accurate presentation of words, symbols, and equations. The system should allow students to decide when they want to hear the text read to them and allow them to play sound clips repeatedly. All components of the delivery interface containing text, such as buttons, menu options, and directions, should have read-aloud available for them.</p>			
<p>Response assistance For some students, responding to instructional or test content with text interferes with the construct being measured.</p>			

<p>Standardization:</p> <p>Audio recording: For students who have difficulty generating text in written form, a recording device may also be used to create an audio recording of a student's narrative response. The oral response can be recorded as an analog or digital file.</p> <p>Monitor responses: Students who are able to use bubbled answer sheets may benefit from having an adult simply monitor the placement of their responses to ensure they are actually responding to the intended question.</p> <p>Page turner: The student receives assistance turning the pages of the test booklet.</p> <p>Responding in test booklet: This accommodation allows a student to write directly in a test booklet rather than on an answer sheet (e.g., scannable bubble sheet).</p> <p>Pointing: Students who are not able to respond to items in an answer sheet or test booklet can point to responses and have a proctor transcribe the response onto an answer sheet.</p> <p>Scribe: A scribe is a skilled person who has been trained to write down what a student dictates by an assistive communication device, pointing, sign language, or speech. A scribe may not edit or alter student work in any way and must record word for word exactly what the student has dictated. The student must be able to edit what the scribe has written. Individuals who serve as a scribe need to carefully prepare to assure they know the vocabulary involved and understand the boundaries of the assistance to be provided. The role of the scribe is to write only</p>			
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what is dictated, no more and no less.



Assistive communication devices: For students who have difficulty manipulating a mouse or standard keyboard, there are a variety of assistive communication devices that allow them to control a computer program and record responses. These assistive communication devices include Intellikeys, sip-and-puff devices, single switch devices, eye tracking devices, and touch screens. A computer-based content and test delivery system could be programmed to function accurately with any and all assistive communication devices.

Speech-to-Text software: Speech-to-text conversion or voice recognition allows students to use their voices as input devices. Voice recognition may be used to dictate text into the computer or to give commands to the computer (e.g., opening application programs, pulling down menus, or saving work). Older voice recognition applications require each word to be separated by a distinct space. This allows the machine to determine where one word begins and the next stops. This style of dictation is called discrete speech. Continuous speech voice recognition allows students to dictate text fluently into the computer. These new applications can recognize speech at up to 160 words per minute.

Digital recording: For students who have difficulty generating text in written form, a recording device may also be used to create an audio recording of a student's narrative response. The oral response can be recorded as a digital file by a computer-based content or test delivery system.

Sign interpretation

Some students who are deaf or hard of hearing may need assistance

<p>accessing text-based instructional or test content. Access for these students is typically provided through sign language.</p> <p>Standardization: In a paper-based environment, access to content is provided by having a teacher sign content to an individual student or to a group of students in either ASL or Signed English. Sometimes an interpreter is only needed or allowed to sign instructions and to assist in communication. Some students may need all print materials interpreted while learning to read print. Interpreters need to be able to translate in the same method of sign language typically used by the student (e.g., American Sign Language, Cued Speech). Interpreters must not paraphrase, clarify, elaborate, or provide assistance with the meaning of words, intent of test questions, or responses to test items. Graphic materials may be described but should also be available in print or tactile formats. A standard video presentation of a test in sign language may be used to increase quality, consistency, pacing, and accuracy.</p> <p> In a computer-based environment, a content and test delivery system could allow students to have text signed by an avatar or video of human signing. The video and the test content can be viewed in close proximity to each other and to the student. Students can also be provided with individualized control over the size of the video displayed on their computer screen. Segments of video can also be linked to blocks of text or portions of an item (e.g., each answer option) such that a student can click on the text and the associated video is played automatically. Students may view portions of a video as many times as needed.</p>			
<p>Special paper Some students may benefit from having additional paper available to use during instruction or an assessment. This paper may be blank</p>			

<p>(scratch), lined, graph, or other paper as needed.</p> <p>Standardization: If paper is provided during an assessment, care must be taken not to violate the security of the test. All paper should be collected at the end of the assessment.</p> <p> In a computer-based environment, a content and delivery test system could allow for electronic special paper to be accessed as part of the online platform. In some cases, however, students may require access to paper outside of the testing platform. In these cases, paper must be collected at the end of the assessment.</p>			
<p>Spelling/Grammar device/Word prediction software While responding to instructional or test content, some students need assistance constructing narrative text.</p> <p>Standardization: Spelling and grammar can be checked with pocket spell checkers. Students enter an approximate spelling and then see or hear the correct spelling or correct use of a word.</p> <p> Students who use a word processor may be allowed to use a spell-check or other electronic spelling device. Spell-checking and grammar-checking devices may need to be turned off for writing tests. Students who have difficulty producing text due either to the speed with which they are able to enter keystrokes or who have difficulty with language recall may benefit from word prediction software. Word prediction software presents students with word options based on the partial input of characters and/or context and can be built into a computer-based content delivery system.</p>			

Add your state's assessment adaptation here.			
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Tool 4

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. Which is your best class?

2. Explain what you do well in this class.

The things you said you can do well above 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's the hardest part of this class for you?

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

These are all things in which an accommodation may be helpful for you.

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

Class List

Classes

Accommodations

This questionnaire was adapted from *A Student's Guide to the IEP* by the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (<http://nichcy.org/pubs/stuguide/st1book.htm>). Retrieved July 28, 2005.

Tool 5

Parent Input in Accommodations

Questions Parents Should Ask About Accommodations in Instruction and Assessments

About Instruction

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

About Assessment

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

Questions for Instruction and Assessment

Is the need for each accommodation documented in my child's IEP or 504 plan?

Are there too many or too few accommodations being provided?

What are my child's preferences for specific accommodations?

If my child needs accommodations, how will they be provided?

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

List other questions here.

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

Tool 6

Accommodations Use in the Classroom

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

Student _____ Date _____

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

Questions	List Accommodation(s)				
1. Is it noted in student's IEP?					
2. For what task(s) is it used (e.g., task type* or content/standard)?					
3. Does the student use it for that task every time? Note how often.					
4. Is the need for it fixed or changing?					
5. Does the student use it alone or with assistance (e.g., paraeducator, 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 7

After-Test Accommodations Questions

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

Student _____ Date _____

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

Student signature _____

Assistant signature (if applicable) _____

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

Tool 8

Assessment Accommodations Plan

Student Information

Name: _____

Date of Assessment: _____

Name of Assessment: _____

Case Information

Special Education Teacher: _____

School Year: _____

Building/School: _____

General Education Teacher: _____

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

	Accommodation	Date
1.	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____

Comments

Person responsible for arranging accommodations and due date:

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

3. _____

4. _____

Comments:

Room assignment for assessment:

Planners for this process (signatures):

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

Tool 9

Assessment Accommodations Agreement

Here is an example of a form a student could carry on test day. This type of format puts the student in charge (building self-advocacy skills) and sets the expectation that, with these accommodations, students can show what they know on the test. Some accommodations (e.g., special test editions) need to be arranged long before test day but should still be included on this list to make certain the student receives the correct test booklet. A similar form could be carried to class to remind teachers about daily accommodations. Different schools, teachers, and students might format these statements differently. Note that it is the responsibility of the student to list the necessary accommodations and to present this list to the test administrator or teacher. This experience is particularly important for students with disabilities who intend to pursue a postsecondary education.

I, _____,
(Student's name)

need the following accommodations to take part in this assessment:

If I need more information about these accommodations, I can talk to:

(Name of special education teacher, parent, principal, and/or related service provider)

Thank you for helping me to do my best on this test!

(Student signature)

(Date)

Tool 10

Logistics Planning Checklist

Directions: This checklist can be used in the planning and implementation of assessment accommodations for an individual student. Use the checklist by indicating Y (Yes), N (No), or NA (Not Applicable).

Accommodations throughout the Academic Year	Y	N	NA
1. Accommodations are documented on student's IEP or 504 plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Student uses accommodations regularly and evaluates use.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. A master accommodations plan/database listing assessment accommodation needs for all students tested is updated regularly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 Preparation for Test Day			
4. Special test editions are ordered for individual students based on information contained in master accommodations plan (e.g., audio tape, Braille, large print).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Test administrators/proctors receive a list of accommodation needs for students they will supervise (list comes from master accommodations plan/database).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Adult supervision is arranged and test administrators receive training for each student receiving accommodations in small group or individual settings, including extended time (with substitutes available).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Trained readers, scribes, and sign language interpreters are arranged for individual students (with substitutes available).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Special equipment is arranged and checked for correct operation (e.g., calculator, tape recorder, word processor).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 Accommodations on the Day of the Test			
9. All eligible students receive accommodations as determined by their IEP or 504 plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 10. Provision of accommodations is recorded by test administrator. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Substitute providers of accommodations are available as needed (e.g., interpreters, readers, scribes). | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. Plans are made to replace defective equipment. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Consideration after the Day of the Test

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 13. Responses are transferred to scannable answer sheets for students using special equipment and adapted test forms and response documents. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. All equipment is returned to appropriate locations. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. Students who take make-up tests receive needed accommodations. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16. Effectiveness of accommodations use is evaluated by test administrators and students, and plans are made for improvement. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Tool 11

Accommodations Journal for Teachers

One way to keep track of what accommodations work for a student is to support the student in keeping an accommodations journal. The journal lets the student be in charge and could be kept up to date through regular consultation with a special education teacher or other staff member. Just think how much easier it would be for an IEP team to decide which accommodations to document on a student's IEP if the student came to the IEP meeting with a journal documenting all of these things:

- accommodations used by the student in the classroom and on tests
- test and assignment results when accommodations are used and not used
- student's perception of how well an accommodation works
- effective combinations of accommodations
- difficulties of accommodations use
- perceptions of teachers and others about how the accommodation appears to be working

In the spaces below, design and organize the use of an accommodations journal for one of your students. Answer these questions:

1. What would you include as headings for the journal?

2. When would the student make entries in the journal, and what types of support would the student need to make these entries?

3. With whom would the student share journal entries, and when would it be done?

4. How could the journal be used in the development of a student's IEP?
