CSDE

CONNECTICUT STATE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

*Performance Office 2019-20*

# ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES

for Administering

Next Generation Science Standards Assessments

Smarter Balanced Assessments

Connecticut SAT School Day

Connecticut Alternate Assessments

- Students Who Receive Special Education Services
- Students Identified as Disabled Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Students Identified as English Learners
- Students Receiving Designated Supports

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# INTRODUCTION

This document includes revisions through October 2019 and is intended to provide guidance for Connecticut school district personnel who must make decisions about testing special student populations on the Smarter Balanced Assessments, the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) Assessments, the Connecticut Alternate Assessments (CTAA) for English Language Arts and Mathematics, and the Connecticut Alternate Science (CTAS) Assessments. These special student populations include students identified as eligible for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), students identified as disabled under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and students who are identified as English learners (EL). This document also provides information regarding general education students who may require additional supports when taking standardized assessments.

If after reviewing this document you have questions about the special student populations, the criteria for participation in various assessment options, or allowable supports or accommodations, please contact Deirdre Ducharme or Janet Stuck from the Performance Office at 860-713-6860.

In addition to this document, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) continues to prepare teachers to administer the Smarter Balanced Assessments for English language arts (ELA) and mathematics to all students in Grades 3-8 in addition to the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System for those students who qualify. One component of the Connecticut's Assessment System includes understanding, selecting, and providing access to each unique subtest. Resources related to student supports and accessibility needs are available on the Connecticut Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal.

# I. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: EXPECT STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES TO ACHIEVE GRADE-LEVEL ACADEMIC CONTENT STANDARDS

Federal legislation, the Every Student Succeeds Act signed in 2015 reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). This act reaffirms and requires that each state institute challenging content and performance standards for its public school students. These performance standards establish the level at which students are expected to master the material included in the state's content standards. The ESEA requires that all states have quality assessments established in reading, mathematics, and science to determine the extent to which students have mastered the material outlined in the state's content standards. This requirement addresses a key element of the Title I program, i.e., a high-quality assessment system that is aligned with a state's content and performance standards to ensure that all students are held to the same high academic standards.

Connecticut has long advocated that, to the extent possible, students with disabilities should participate in both the general education curriculum and the standard administration of the state assessments; this has often not been the case nationally. It was only with the Public Law 105-17, 1997 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that having high expectations for students with disabilities became a national priority. The 1997 IDEA amendments required that these students be included in appropriately challenging curriculums and in districtwide and statewide assessments, and that states and school districts publicly account for the progress of these students. Clearly, two goals of IDEA are: 1) the participation of a high percentage of students with disabilities in standard districtwide and statewide testing and related accountability efforts; and 2) the availability of an alternate assessment for those few students who cannot appropriately participate in the standard assessment program.

Federal legislation, in the form of both ESEA and the IDEA, and state legislation in the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) Section 10-14, and the relatively recent implementation of the Connecticut Core Standards (CCS) is consistent in the vision that is being promoted, i.e., high expectations, uniform standards, and public accountability for the performance of all students, including those with disabilities and limited English proficiency. Connecticut's statewide assessment program is just one component of an overall accountability system that is intended to assess the effectiveness of Connecticut schools and lead to greater success for all students.

To understand this educational accountability system, one must consider the progress of all students on a number of key indicators. For more information, the publication *The Condition of Education in Connecticut* is available for download.

# II. DESCRIPTION OF THE CONNECTICUT ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

## A. SMARTER BALANCED ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

In the 2014-15 school year, Connecticut, as a member of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, administered assessments for English language arts and mathematics to students in Grades 3-8 and 11, with the exception of special education students with significant cognitive disabilities participating in Connecticut's Alternate Assessments. The Smarter Balanced Assessment System was developed by the member states of the Consortium, including Connecticut, to align to the Connecticut Core Standards. In the 2019-20 school year, the Smarter Balanced Assessments will again be administered to students in Grades 3-8, while students in Grade 11 will participate in the Connecticut SAT School Day (which became Connecticut's accountability assessment in lieu of Smarter Balanced during the 2015-16 school year).

When focusing on the Smarter Balanced summative assessments, it is important to understand its test design and the activities associated with the test-taking situation. The Smarter Balanced summative assessment for English language arts and mathematics requires students to:

- Participate in an online assessment comprised of two components: a computer adaptive test (CAT) for both ELA and math; and a performance task (PT) for math. The tests are not timed, however, recommended test session lengths of 40 to 120 minutes, depending on content area and grade level, are provided in the Test Administration Manual;
- Demonstrate critical-thinking and problem-solving skills; and
- Accurately respond to various item response types using a keyboard and mouse or touchpad.

## B. CONNECTICUT SAT SCHOOL DAY

On October 7, 2015, the Connecticut State Board of Education adopted the SAT (created by the College Board) as the annual state assessment for eleventh graders in Connecticut. All students in Connecticut must be tested once in high school for English language arts and mathematics using the same assessment for all students. This is a requirement of federal and state law. By adopting the SAT, Connecticut eliminates duplicate testing and eleventh grade students in Connecticut will have an opportunity to take the SAT free of charge during the school day. The SAT assesses the critical thinking skills students need for academic success. Students are able to use their SAT scores for both the state school accountability system and for college admission.

Accommodations on the Connecticut SAT School Day are ONLY available for students with special needs, as documented by an active Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a Section 504 Plan. These accommodations should be consistent with those accommodations provided

during instruction and on class, district, and statewide assessments per the 504 Plan or per Page 8 of the IEP. See Section VIII in this document for more information.

The Connecticut SAT School Day is composed of the following subtests:

- Evidence-Based Reading and Writing, consisting of two subtests: a Reading Test; and a Writing and Language Test. Each test is composed of multi-paragraph passages and multiple-choice questions.

  Time allotted:

  - 65 minutes for Reading
  - 35 minutes for Writing and Language

- Math: Includes one portion that permits calculator use and one that does not. Each portion is composed of multiple-choice and student-produced response questions.

  Time allotted:

  - 25 minutes for Math Test-No Calculator
  - 55 minutes for Math Test-Calculator

Most students will test in one or two days, and the test schedules are specified by the Connecticut SAT School Day Coordinator Manual. However, there may be some students who will require more time (refer to The Coordinator's Manual for more detail).

## C. NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS ASSESSMENT

Connecticut's legacy science assessments, known as the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) Science (administered to students in Grades 5 and 8) and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) Science (administered to students in Grade 10), were replaced with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) Assessment in Grades 5, 8, and 11 during the 2017-18 school year. The new science assessments, aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) adopted by the Connecticut State Board of Education in November 2015, identify core scientific ideas, practices, and concepts that all students should master. A variety of embedded tools and designated supports are available to students, while accommodations are available for students with special needs, as determined by an IEP or a Section 504 Plan. Supports are also available to students who are English Learners (ELs).

For more information on the test design and content, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal.

## D. CONNECTICUT ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is committed to promoting student success for all students. The Connecticut Alternate Assessment System is designed exclusively for a small percentage of special education students with a disability or multiple disabilities that

significantly impact intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior, requiring intensive instruction and substantial supports. Generally, one percent or less of the tested student population is expected to participate in alternate assessments and eligibility is determined by the student's Planning and Placement Team (PPT). Members of the PPT ensure appropriateness using evidence explicitly documented throughout the student's IEP in conjunction with the Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form, which documents required data capturing the student's intellectual impairment, adaptive behavior, and the confirmation that the student receives extensive, repeated, individualized instruction and academic support across all academic and non-academic areas. Refer to the *Frequently Asked Questions and Answers about the Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form* for additional information.

*Frequently Asked Questions and Answers about the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System* is intended to provide Local Education Agencies (LEAs), parents, advocacy organizations, and other interested parties with information regarding the requirements for serving Connecticut's children with significant cognitive disabilities participating in alternate assessments. This document represents the current understanding of the CSDE on this topic. This guidance does not impose any additional requirements beyond those required under applicable law and regulations.

The *Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Participation Guidance for Planning and Placement Teams flowchart* provides the PPT with guidance on eligibility for student participation in the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System. More information is available on the Alternate Assessment web page located on the Connecticut Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal.

## Connecticut Alternate Assessment (CTAA) for English Language Arts and Mathematics

The CTAA for ELA and math is available for eligible students in Grades 3-8 and 11. This assessment is presented to each student individually by a CSDE trained teacher via an online test delivery system. The CTAA, including the supporting resources, was developed with Connecticut teachers and administrators working closely with other national state members and experts in the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC). More information and resources about NCSC can be found at http://www.ncscpartners.org/. More information about the CTAA can be found on the Connecticut Student Assessment Web page. Teachers and parents with students who may be eligible for the CTAA are encouraged to access the CTAA Practice Site to become familiar with the online environment, test format, and the accessibility features available.

## Connecticut Alternate Science (CTAS) Assessment

If a student is determined eligible for the CTAA by the PPT, the student will also participate in the CTAS when enrolled in Grades 5, 8, and 11. Unlike the CTAA, the CTAS is a non-secure test intended to be administered throughout the year as teachers work with students to rate their performance on the NGSS standards. The CTAS is organized into six Storylines for each assessed grade that are linked to NGSS Standard Performance Expectations through the derived Connecticut Alternate Science Essence Statements and the corresponding Core Extensions. Each Storyline includes a Performance Task with a series of assessment activities in the following content areas: Earth Science, Life Science, and Physical Science. These activities ask students to make sense of real-world phenomena and/or engage with an engineering design problems. Similar to the CTAA, the CTAS is specifically designed for this specialized population by expert teachers from across Connecticut who work with these students. For more information on the test design

and content, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal to access related Connecticut Alternate Assessment System resources.

## E. ENGLISH PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

**LAS Links Assessment**

Historically, Connecticut's students identified as English learners have participated in statewide assessments with designated supports if needed. These students acquiring English as a second language are required to meet the same academic performance standards expected of students whose first language is English. In addition to statewide academic assessment participation in Grades 3-8 and 11 (and science in Grades 5, 8, and 11), all ELs must participate annually in the standardized English Language Proficiency Assessment. In Connecticut, students who are identified as ELs are assessed using the LAS Links Assessment to demonstrate their level of English language proficiency. Students who are English learners must meet mandated exit requirements on the LAS Links Assessment to exit bilingual and/or English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) programs.

## F. NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), is often called the "Nation's Report Card." It is the only measure of student achievement in the United States that allows for the comparison of Connecticut students to their peers in all other states. This national assessment, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, has been conducted since 1969 and produces results that are widely reported by the national and local media.

Every year, some Connecticut schools are selected to participate in the NAEP. For each NAEP administration, representative samples of fourth, eighth, and twelfth-graders in states and territories of the United States are tested in selected content areas. In odd-numbered years (e.g., 2021), the number of participating schools increases and the results are used to assess achievement for the state as a whole. Since it is critical that participants accurately represent Connecticut's public school population, students with disabilities and those designated as English learners must be included in the testing.

School personnel are expected to make every effort to include all selected students with disabilities and English learners in the assessments. Many of the universal tools and embedded and non-embedded accommodations available for the Smarter Balanced and NGSS are also available for the NAEP. As school personnel make specific decisions regarding how to include students in NAEP, there are several important factors to consider:

- Scores are not produced for individual students and participation in NAEP is anonymous;
- The NAEP Assessments do not impose any consequences for students, teachers, schools, or districts, and are intended solely to provide an overall measure of educational achievement for the nation and individual states;

- Participating students are not required to complete the entire test and may skip any test question. Even when a student does not complete the entire test, valuable information is obtained from the responses provided; and
- Schools send a notification letter home to families of selected students. The letter explains the importance of NAEP, and lets parents know that they may decide that their child will not participate.

Annually, Connecticut's NAEP State Coordinator provides the schools selected to participate in the NAEP with detailed information about available accommodations specific to the assessments that will be administered. Specific questions concerning NAEP accommodations should be directed to Renée Savoie, NAEP State Coordinator, at 860-713-6858.

# III. WHO SHOULD BE TESTED?

## A. UNDERLYING INTENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE MANDATES AND POLICY DIRECTIVES

All Connecticut public school students should be assessed in accordance with federal and state regulations. Students must be tested by the district when students are included in the Public School Information System (PSIS) collection, and the district assumes fiscal responsibility for that student by documenting at least some local costs, including eligible in-kind services for the student's education, and the student is enrolled to the extent the district is responsible for educational placement and record keeping. These rules apply to students taking the Smarter Balanced Assessments, the Connecticut Alternate Assessments, the NGSS, the Connecticut SAT School Day, and the LAS Links.

Students who are eligible for special education services under the IDEA, students who are identified as Section 504, and English learners must be recorded PSIS system to allow for accurate reporting in the Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE) system.

The following chart describes testing policies based on the student's educational program.

| Student Circumstance | Testing Policy |
|---|---|
| Students entered into PSIS who are enrolled in State Approved Private Special Education Programs (APSEP) | Connecticut public school students who are enrolled in an APSEP are tested by the APSEP. The reporting district is accountable to test these students for the LAS Links with APSEP support. |
| Students entered into PSIS who are enrolled in Non-Approved Private Schools in Connecticut or out-of-state schools | The reporting district is accountable to test these students. Procedural information is provided to District Administrators for testing, English Learner Assessment Coordinators (ELACs) and SAT School Coordinators. |
| Students who move to another Connecticut public school in the same district or move to another Connecticut district during testing | Students who move to another Connecticut public school in the same district or move to another Connecticut district will have their tests follow them in TIDE upon the PSIS being updated. *For the Connecticut SAT School Day, students who do not take their test in the previous school on the primary test dates of March 25 or April 14, 2020, must take the test in their new school on the designated make-up day of April 28 or April 29, 2020. For the LAS Links testing, districts will access the Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) Insight Portal to manage student transfers for testing.* |
| Students who move to a private school or to an out-of-state school during testing **and** are exited from PSIS | Students who move to a private school or to an out-of-state school should be noted in PSIS as transferring from the Connecticut public school system. These students are **not** tested. |

| Student Circumstance | Testing Policy |
|---|---|
| Students hospitalized or homebound due to illness | Students who are hospitalized or homebound due to illness should be tested unless there are medical constraints that prevent them from testing (the student has received an approved medical exemption). Students taking the *Connecticut SAT School Day must be tested on the designated dates of March 25, 2020, or April 14, 2020 (depending on the date selected by the district), or make-up testing dates April 28 or April 29, 2020, at the school district's central administration offices by a certified school staff member who is fully trained in the proper test administration and security procedures.* |
| Students on homebound instruction due to suspension or expulsion | Students who are receiving homebound instruction due to a suspension or expulsion must be tested either at home or preferably at the school district's central administrative offices during the assessment specific testing window by a certified school staff member who is fully trained in the proper test administration and security procedures. *Connecticut SAT School Day must be tested on the designated dates of March 25, 2020, or April 14, 2020 (depending on the date selected by the district), or make-up testing dates April 28 or April 29, 2020, at the school district's central administration offices by a certified school staff member who is fully trained in the proper test administration and security procedures.* |
| Students who may qualify for a medical exemption | Requests for consideration of an Emergency Medical Exemption should be initiated by the District Administrator (DA in TIDE) for the Smarter Balanced and NGSS Assessments; by the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) Coordinator for the Connecticut SAT School day; or by the English Learner Assessment Coordinator (ELAC) for the LAS Links as needed during the appropriate test administration window. See Appendix B. |
| Home-schooled students | Home-schooled students are **not** public school students and are not eligible to be administered state assessments. |
| Students who are newly enrolled in a Connecticut public school after the district testing window has commenced | Students who are newly enrolled in a Connecticut public school after the first day of testing are required to be administered the state assessments. *Students who are taking the Connecticut SAT School Day who arrive after either primary test dates (March 25, 2020 or April 14, 2020) must take the test on April 28 or 29, 2020.* |
| Students registered in PSIS who are enrolled in Non-Approved Private Schools in Connecticut | The reporting district is responsible to test students registered in PSIS who attend non-approved private schools in Connecticut. This includes both general and special education students educated in non-approved private schools using public school funds. |

| Student Circumstance | Testing Policy |
|---|---|
| Students registered in PSIS who are enrolled in out-of-state schools | The reporting district is responsible to test students registered in PSIS and attending out-of-state schools. |
| If you have a student who is shared with another school district or program (i.e., reported in TIDE as generic in state) and cannot access an assessment through the online test delivery system, contact the Performance Office at 860-713-6860 for guidance. | |

# IV. GRADE-LEVEL CONSIDERATIONS FOR PARTICIPATION IN STATEWIDE ASSESSMENTS

For purposes of Connecticut's statewide testing program, there are no ungraded school programs. Each student must be enrolled in a specific grade, or assigned to a specific grade, based on his or her age. This grade assignment must be specified in PSIS. Students in Grades 3-8 must participate in the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments for ELA and math and in the NGSS assessment when enrolled in Grades 5, 8, and 11. Additionally, students in Grade 11 participate in the Connecticut SAT School Day. Students who qualify for the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System participate in the CTAA for ELA and math in Grades 3-8 and 11, and also take the CTAS Assessment when enrolled in Grades 5, 8, and 11. If there is any question as to the grade level for a particular student, district administrators are advised to verify how the student was reported in the PSIS and in the Special Education Data Application and Collection (SEDAC). Districts and private approved special education programs are advised to work closely with districts on the identification of students' testing grades to avoid testing students in the wrong grade or not testing students in a required grade.

Students enrolled in high school present additional issues for consideration beyond age and years in school. Each local school district establishes its own policy for the determination of grade levels. Many high schools establish grade levels based on the accumulation of earned credits. However, this system and/or its timing must not result in a student not being tested. Therefore, it is critical that the PSIS system accurately reflects the student's current grade at the time of testing.

# V. GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPATION IN AN ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

## A. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

In a commentary to the proposed Federal Regulations (*Federal Register*, October 1997, p. 55055), the United States Department of Education estimated that approximately 1 to 2 percent of the total school population would require an alternate assessment, whereas the vast majority of special education students would participate in the standard grade-level version of statewide tests with accommodations as identified by their IEP.

In response to meeting the needs of this specific student population, Section 602 (3) of IDEA '97 required states to create an alternate assessment aligned with their academic content standards, promoted access to the general curriculum, and reflected professional judgment of the highest achievement standards possible. To meet this requirement, the Connecticut State Department of Education created the CMT and CAPT Skills Checklist for students with significant cognitive disabilities and for whom a standard statewide assessment was not appropriate. The CMT/CAPT Skills Checklist was used to assist in the planning of instruction, monitoring student growth and progress, and documenting achievement. Using this Checklist, teachers rated students on grade-level academic skills and submitted results for state/federal reporting purposes during the CMT/CAPT testing window. In 2007, the CMT Skills Checklist Science for students in Grades 5 and 8, and the CAPT Skills Checklist Science for students in Grade 10 was implemented.

Since that time, Connecticut's academic standards and measurement tools have changed. Beginning in 2015, Connecticut, as a member of the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) consortium, worked to develop the Connecticut Alternate Assessment as a replacement for the CMT/CAPT Skills Checklist. The CTAA is a system of valid, reliable, and fair next-generation assessments aligned to the CCS in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics for eligible students in Grades 3-8 and 11. The CTAS Assessment, aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards, replaces the CMT and CAPT Skills Checklist Science for eligible students in Grades 5, 8, and 11.

Currently, Connecticut's Alternate Assessment System for students with significant cognitive disabilities is comprised of the following:

- Connecticut Alternate Assessment (CTAA) for ELA and mathematics for eligible students in Grades 3-8 and 11; and
- Connecticut Alternate Science (CTAS) Assessment for eligible students in Grades 5, 8, and 11.

While the Connecticut State Department of Education strives to provide alternate assessments that support student independence to the greatest extent possible by making academic content accessible and the expected achievement levels appropriate, it is critical to safeguard against an overreliance on this option, and reserve these assessments for a very small percentage of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities for whom the assessments were designed.

With this said, under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), a **state-level cap** of **one percent** of the total number of tested students in the state should be assessed with an alternate assessment in a particular subject. Under this law, there is an expectation that states will monitor district use of the alternate assessments and provide the *Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Participation Guidance for Planning and Placement Teams* to determine when a student should be assessed using the alternate assessment.

## B. NATIONAL CENTER AND STATE COLLABORATIVE

The National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) applied the lessons learned from the past decade of research on alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards, to develop a multi-state comprehensive assessment system for students with significant cognitive disabilities. The long-term goal of the NCSC project was to ensure that students with significant cognitive disabilities achieve increasingly higher academic outcomes and leave high school ready for post-secondary options. A well-designed summative assessment alone is insufficient to achieve that goal. All partners shared the commitment to the research-to-practice focus of the project and the development of a comprehensive model of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and supportive professional development. These supports are intended to improve the alignment of the entire system and strengthen the validity of inferences of the system of assessments. More information and resources are available at the NCSC Wiki.

## C. CONNECTICUT ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM PARTICIPATION CRITERIA AND THE CONNECTICUT ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT ELIGIBILTY FORM

Regulations for Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) require states to make available to eligible students with the most significant cognitive disabilities an alternate assessment designed to measure their knowledge and skills (34 CFR §§ 200.1(d) and 300.160 (c)).

Alternate assessments are designed to measure the knowledge and skills of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities as required by the IDEA and Every Student Succeeds Acts (ESSA). Alternate assessments are designed to support student independence to the greatest extent possible by making academic content accessible and the expected achievement levels appropriate. The CTAA is aligned to the same Connecticut Core Standards (CCS) used to instruct and assess all of Connecticut's public school students in English language arts and mathematics. The CTAS is aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).

The criteria for participation on the CTAA for students in Grades 3-8 and 11 and the CTAS for eligible students in Grades 5, 8, and 11 reflect the **pervasive** nature of a significant cognitive disability. Students with a significant cognitive disability eligible for partition in the Alternate Assessment System are identified as individuals who:

- Have an intellectual impairment, as documented through an assessment of cognitive

functioning that places the individual significantly below age/grade level expectations;
- Demonstrate adaptive behavior (i.e., those conceptual, social and practical skills necessary to meet the common demands of everyday life) that is well below age/grade level expectations; and
- Require intensive, repeated individualized instruction and use substantially adapted materials, assistive technology, and individualized methods of accessing information to acquire, maintain, demonstrate, and transfer skills across multiple settings.

Effective for the 2019-20 school year, the Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form (which replaces the former Learner Characteristics Inventory) will be used to determine eligibility and participation in the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System. This new eligibility form documents required evidence of the student's intellectual impairment, adaptive behavior, and the confirmation that the student receives extensive, repeated, individualized instruction and academic support across all academic and non-academic areas. The Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form can be downloaded from the Connecticut Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal and completed in draft by the student's primary special education teacher (case manager). The draft is then discussed at the PPT meeting to determine eligibility. Evidence in the IEP, such as the student's present levels of performance, eligibility for special education and related services should be reviewed. The student must meet all criteria outlined above to participate in the Connecticut Alternate Assessments.

Students who do not meet the eligibility criteria for the alternate assessments will be expected to participate in the standard statewide assessments with designated supports, accommodations, and assistive technology (if applicable) as indicated on Page 8 of their IEP. Refer to the *Frequently Asked Questions and Answers about the Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form* and the *Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Participation Guidance for Planning and Placement Teams* flowchart for more information.

In the case that the PPT convened prior to September 2019 and determined that a student qualified for the alternate assessments using the LCI, the *2019-20 Connecticut Alternate Assessment System: Transition from the Learner Characteristics Inventory to the Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form* offers guidance to PPTs regarding eligibility criteria and actions (i.e., making a technical edit to the IEP, amending an IEP, or reconvening a PPT) when considering student eligibility for alternate assessments.

Given that the timely submission of eligibility forms ensures that students will have access to the alternate assessment at the time of testing, please follow the submission deadlines below:

| **Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form** | |
|---|---|
| **Submission Dates Through the Data Entry Interface (DEI)** | **Student Subgroup** |
| November 15, 2019 - January 15, 2020 | Eligible students in Grade 11;<br><br>Dually identified (special education and English learner) Grades 3-8 and 11 |

| Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form | |
|---|---|
| November 15, 2019 - February 14, 2020 | Eligible students in Grades 3-8; Extended deadline for newly eligible Grade 11 students |
| June 5, 2020 | DEI closes for the spring 2020 assessment window. |

Following these specified deadlines, data from the timely submitted eligibility form is retrieved from the Data Entry Interface (DEI) and an ALT Flag indicator in TIDE is activated providing access to the CTAA at the time of testing for the designated student and the ability for the Trained Teacher Administering the Alternate (TEA) to submit CTAS score ratings into the DEI. **If the eligibility form is submitted after the deadlines indicated, contact the Connecticut Help Desk at 1-844-202-7583 or the CSDE at 860-713-6860 immediately so that the Alt Flag indicator can be activated prior to testing.** If the Alt Flag Indicator is not activated, students will only have access to the standard assessments.

Given that PPTs occur throughout the school year, the DEI will remain open during the testing window through June 5, 2020. However, it is highly recommended that eligibility forms be entered into the DEI when it opens on November 15, 2019, and in advance of the testing window if possible.

## D. REQUIRED TRAINING FOR TEACHERS ADMINISTERING THE CONNECTICUT ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT AND ALTERNATE SCIENCE

The Connecticut State Department of Education Performance Office uses an online training process to ensure Teachers Administering the Alternate Assessment (TEAs) have up-to-date information related to testing policies and system enhancements to administer the alternate assessments with fidelity. This training is completed annually and is designed to be self-led and self-paced. The TEA must complete and pass the associated quiz with a score of at least 80% accuracy prior to administering any alternate assessments. For more information, refer to the *Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Training Required for Teachers Administering the Alternate* *Overview for TEAs* and *Overview for District Administrators*.

# VI. GUIDELINES FOR MAKING DECISIONS ABOUT DESIGNATED SUPPORTS FOR THE SMARTER BALANCED ASSESSMENTS AND THE NGSS

The Smarter Balanced Assessments and the NGSS Assessments are provided to students via an online testing environment using the Test Delivery System provided by American Institutes for Research (AIR). Students are able to access embedded and non-embedded universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations depending on their learning needs and eligibility.

## A. DESCRIPTION OF SMARTER BALANCED AND NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS ASSESSMENTS: UNIVERSAL TOOLS, DESIGNATED SUPPORTS, AND ACCOMMODATION CATEGORIES

Smarter Balanced Governing States approved the *Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium: Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines* for the assessment system. These guidelines were developed in collaboration with member states and nationally recognized experts on English language learners and students with disabilities. The research-based policy outlines three categories of resources to ensure that the assessments meet the needs of all students on the Smarter Balanced English language arts and mathematics, and include: universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations. The guidelines are intended for school-level personnel and decision-making teams, particularly IEP teams, as they prepare for and implement the Smarter Balanced Assessments. The guidelines provide information for classroom teachers, English development educators, special education teachers, and related services personnel to use in selecting and administering universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations for those students who need them. The guidelines are also intended for assessment staff and administrators who oversee the decisions that are made in instruction and assessment.

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium: Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines is the foundation for the *Connecticut Assessment Guidelines.* There are, however, some differences in implementation for some of the designated supports and accommodations as they are applied in Connecticut, based on historical policy and the addition of the NGSS Assessment. The following sections embed information from the Smarter Balanced Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines, but are Connecticut-specific as they provide guidelines that apply to students in Connecticut who participate in statewide assessments.

Universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations are grouped into two broader categories based on how they are provided to the student. They are:

- **Embedded**: Available through the online computer platform; and
- **Non-Embedded:** Provided to the student by the school.

Accommodations differ from universal tools and designated supports. Accommodations are changes in procedures or materials that increase equitable access during assessment. Unlike universal tools or designated supports, accommodations are available **only** for students for whom there is documentation of the need in an IEP or Section 504 Plan. Assessment accommodations generate valid assessment results for students who need them; they allow these students to show what they know and can do. Refer to the *2019-20 Accessibility Chart* for a listing of Universal Tools, Designated Supports and Accommodations available to students participating in Smarter Balanced and NGSS.

## B. UNIVERSAL TOOLS

**What Are Universal Tools?**

Universal tools are accessibility features of the assessment that are either provided as digitally-delivered components of the test administration system, or separate from it. Universal tools are available to all students based on student preference and selection, and are either provided as digitally delivered components of the test delivery system, or provided separately from the digital platform as a non-embedded tool. The following universal tools are not modifications, and their use yields valid scores that meet the requirements for participation and assessment identified in the ESSA when used in a manner consistent with the guidelines.

**Embedded Universal Tools**

The Smarter Balanced and NGSS digitally-delivered assessments include a wide array of embedded universal tools. These are available to all students as part of the technology platform. Listed below are the embedded universal tools available to all students for computer administered Smarter Balanced and NGSS Assessments. This list includes a description of each tool. Although these tools are generally available to all students, educators may determine that one or more might be distracting for a particular student, and thus might indicate that the tool should be turned off for the administration of the assessment to the individual student.

### 1) EMBEDDED UNIVERSAL TOOLS

**a. Breaks**

The number of items per session can be flexibly defined based on the student's need. Breaks of more than 20 minutes will prevent the student from returning to items already attempted unless an appeal for a test-reopen is requested by the District Administrator. There is no limit on the number of breaks that a student might be given. The use of this universal tool may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment.

**b. Desmos Calculator (For calculator-allowed math items only, Grades 6-8; NGSS Grades 5, 8, and 11) (See Non-embedded accommodations for students who cannot use the embedded calculator)**

The Smarter Balanced Assessments for mathematics in Grades 6-8 offers an embedded on-screen Desmos digital calculator that can be accessed for calculator-allowed items when students click on the calculator icon. This tool is available only with the specific items for which the Smarter Balanced Item Specifications indicated that it would be appropriate.

The Desmos functions vary by grade:

- a basic calculator (grade 6 math).
- a scientific calculator (grades 7 and 8 math)
- a scientific/graphing calculator (grade 11 math)

For more information on using the Desmos Calculators, visit the Smarter Balanced Sample Items Website.

Additionally, the Desmos Calculator is available for all students taking the NGSS Assessment in Grades 5, 8, and 11. Students who are unable to access the online calculator on the NGSS may use a hand-held calculator (per the calculator descriptions stated above) as a non-embedded universal tool.

**c. Digital Notepad**
This tool is used for making notes about an item. The digital notepad is item specific and is available through the end of the test segment. Notes are **not** saved when the student moves on to the next segment or after a break of more than 20 minutes.

**d. English Glossary (Default) (Not available for Science)**
Grade-and context-appropriate definitions of specific construct-irrelevant terms are shown in English on the screen via a pop-up window. The student can access the embedded glossary by clicking on any of the pre-selected terms. The use of this universal tool may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment.

**e. Expanded Passages/Stimuli**
Each passage or stimulus can be expanded so that it takes up a larger portion of the screen.

**f. Highlighter**
This is a digital tool for marking desired text, item questions, item answers, or parts of these with a color. Highlighted text remains available throughout each test segment.

**g. Keyboard Navigation**
Navigation throughout text can be accomplished by using a keyboard. Students are provided with a document called *Keyboard Commands for Students* that explains the various keystrokes.

**h. Line Reader**
The student uses an onscreen universal tool to assist in reading by raising and lowering the tool allowing the student to focus on a single line of text on the screen.

**i. Mark for Review**
Allows students to flag items for future review during the assessment. Markings are not saved when the student moves on to the next segment or after a break of more than 20 minutes.

**j. Math Tools**
These digital tools (i.e., embedded ruler, embedded protractor) are used for measurements related to math items. They are available only with the specific items for which the Smarter Balanced Item Specifications indicate that one or more of these tools would be appropriate.

**k. Strikethrough**
Allows users to cross out answer options. If an answer option is an image, a strikethrough line will not appear, but the image will be grayed out.

**l. Writing Tools (Interim ELA Performance Task Only)**
Selected writing tools (i.e., bold, italic, bullets, undo/redo) are available for all student-generated responses.

**m. Zoom**
A universal tool for making text or other graphics in a window or frame appear larger on the screen. The default font size for all tests is 14 pt. The student can make text and graphics larger by clicking the **Zoom-In** button. The student can click the **Zoom-Out** button to return to the default or smaller print size. As a universal tool, the student's use of the **Zoom-In** and **Zoom-Out** buttons will only change the size of the text and the graphics on the current screen. When the student clicks any navigational button (**Back**, **Next**) or utilizes the question drop-down list to navigate to another item, the print size will return to the default value.

To increase the default print size of the entire test (from Level 2 to Level 3 print size), the print size must be set as an Embedded Designated Support for the student in TIDE, or set by the Test Administrator (TA) prior to the start of the test. The use of this Embedded Designated Support may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment. Please note that the Streamline Mode Embedded Designated Support, Streamline Mode, must be set to "ON" for a student to access the following print-size levels – this allows the test content to be displayed vertically.

- Level 5
- Level 6
- Level 7
- Level 8

## 2) NON-EMBEDDED UNIVERSAL TOOLS

Some universal tools may need to be provided outside of the computer test administration system. These tools, described below, are provided locally by the school and can be made available to any student.

**a. Breaks**
Breaks may be given at predetermined intervals or after completion of sections of the assessment for student. Sometimes individual students are allowed to take breaks when needed to reduce cognitive fatigue as they experience heavy assessment demands. The use of this universal tool may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment.

**b. Calculator (Science Grades 5, 8, & 11)**
When the embedded Desmos Calculator is not suitable for a student participating in the NGSS, the provision of a battery-operated hand-held calculator may be appropriate. If a calculator is provided, proctors must ensure that the device is functional, has working batteries, and that the student is familiar and comfortable with how to use it. Students

may not use calculators available on their phones, iPads, or other electronic devices. Students may not share calculators. Depending on the student's grade, the following calculator types are permissible:

- Grade 5- basic calculator
- Grade 8 and 11- scientific or graphing calculators

Appendix A includes a list of approved calculators for the Connecticut SAT School Day that should be used as guidance for the Grade 11 NGSS Assessment.

Security Requirements:

- Calculators with keyboards and/or communication functionality are NOT allowed unless requested through a special documented accommodation per a student's IEP or 504 Plan.
- Calculators cannot be shared between students during testing. Each student will need to use either their own calculator or the online calculator available through the student interface.
- Calculators used during testing should be those used during instruction so they are familiar to the students.
- Talking calculators may be used by students who require them per their IEP or 504 Plan; however, the TA must prevent distractions for other students using procedures such as using the calculator with ear phones or testing the student in a separate test environment.
- Test examiners must actively proctor to ensure that students are not accessing stored information on the calculator.

**c. Scratch Paper/White board with Marker**

Scratch paper to make notes, write computations, or record responses may be made available. Plain paper, lined paper, or graph paper may be used for ELA, math, or science. Graph paper is required beginning in sixth grade for Math and may be used on all sections of the math assessments. A whiteboard with a marker may be used as scratch paper. As long as the construct being measured is not impacted, assistive technology devices, including low-tech assistive technology (Math Window), are permitted to make notes. The assistive technology device needs to be consistent with the child's IEP or 504 Plan. Internet access must be disabled on assistive technology devices.

i. Computer Adapted Test (CAT): All scratch paper must be collected and securely destroyed at the end of each CAT assessment session to maintain test security. All notes on whiteboards or assistive technology devices must be erased at the end of each CAT session.

ii. Math Performance Tasks (PT): If a student needs to complete the math performance task over multiple sessions, scratch paper, whiteboards, and/or assistive technology devices may be collected at the end of each session, securely stored, and made available to the student at the next performance task testing session. Once the student completes the performance task, the scratch paper must be collected and securely destroyed, whiteboards should be erased, and notes on assistive technology devices erased to

maintain test security.

## C. DESIGNATED SUPPORTS

### What Are Designated Supports?

Designated supports are those accessibility features available for use by **any student** for whom the need has been indicated by an educator (or team of educators with parent/guardian and student). If these supports are selected for use on statewide assessments, they should also be consistently embedded and accessed in the student's instructional setting. It is recommended that a consistent process in each district be used to determine these supports for individual students. All educators making these decisions should be trained by their School or District Administrator in this determination process and should be made aware of the range and types of designated supports available. Two general types of designated supports are identified: digitally-embedded and non-embedded.

Designated supports need to be identified prior to assessment administration. Embedded and non-embedded supports must be entered into TIDE. Any non-embedded designated supports must be acquired prior to testing with the assumption the student is using it during instruction.

### Who Makes Decisions About Designated Supports?

Informed adults familiar with the student's strengths and areas of concern make decisions about designated supports. Ideally, the decisions are made by all educators familiar with the student's characteristics and supports that have benefited the student during instruction and for other assessments. Parent and student input into the decision process, particularly for older students, is also recommended.

#### 1) EMBEDDED DESIGNATED SUPPORTS

**a. Color Contrast**

Enables students to adjust screen background or font color, based on student needs or preferences. This may include reversing the colors for the entire interface or choosing the color of font and background: Black on White; Yellow on Blue; Medium Gray on Light Gray; Reverse Contrast and Black on Rose.

**b. Illustrative Glossary (Math)**

Illustration glossaries are a type of language support. The illustration glossaries are provided for selected construct-irrelevant terms on the math assessment. Illustrations for these terms appear on the computer screen when students select them. Students with the illustration glossary setting enabled can adjust the size of the illustration and move it around the screen.

Additionally, illustration glossaries may benefit students who are advancing toward English language proficiency (including non-ELs, ELs, and ELs with disabilities), or students who are deaf or hard of hearing but who are not proficient in American Sign Language (ASL).

The use of this support may result in the student needing additional overall time to

complete the assessment.

**c. Masking**

Masking involves blocking off content that is not of immediate need or that may be distracting to the student. Students are able to focus their attention on a specific part of a test item by masking. Masking allows students to hide and reveal individual answer options, as well as and the context menu.

**d. Mouse Pointer (Size & Color)**

This embedded support allows the mouse pointer to be set to a larger size and/or for the color of the mouse pointer to be changed. If a student uses this feature for instructional purposes, the District Administrator (DA) should contact the CSDE to activate this embedded designated support. This designated support requires the need for active proctoring and assistance to the student when responding to items with graphics.

**e. Print Size Online**

Print size online allows the font size viewed by the student in the Test Delivery System to be preset for the entire test. This designated support is generally most beneficial for students with visual disabilities. Selections are entered in the TIDE system prior to testing.

| **Smarter Balanced & NGSS** | | | **Connecticut Alternate Assessment** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Levels | Magnification | Font Size | Levels | Magnification | Font Size |
| L0-default | 1X | 14 | L0-default | 1X | 18 |
| L1 | 1.5X | 21 | L1 | 1.5X | 27 |
| L2 | 1.75X | 24.5 | L2 | 1.75X | 31.5 |
| L3 | 2.5X | 35 | L3 | 2.5X | 45 |
| L4 | 3X | 42 | L4 | 3X | 54 |
| L5 | 5X | 70 | L5 | 5X | 90 |
| L6 | 10X | 140 | L6 | 10X | 180 |
| L7 | 15X | 210 | L7 | 15X | 270 |
| L8 | 20X | 280 | L8 | 20X | 360 |

**f. Streamline**

This feature allows any test to be presented without a split screen. Items are presented sequentially below the stimuli.

**g. Text-to-Speech (Math and Science, Stimuli & Items), (ELA Items, NOT Reading Passages)**

Allows text to be read aloud to the student via embedded text-to-speech (TTS) technology. The student is able to control the speed, as well as raise or lower the volume of the voice via a volume control. Text-to-speech is available as an embedded designated support for science, math, and ELA items (**not for ELA reading passages, which is available to eligible students with an active IEP or 504 Plan as an**

**embedded accommodation).**

Text-to-speech is available only in English for Smarter Balanced math and ELA items, while text-to-speech on the NGSS is available in both English and Spanish. For this feature to work in Spanish, both the Spanish Presentation (Toggle) for NGSS and the speech -to-speech for NGSS must be activated in TIDE.

**h. Turn off any Universal Accessibility Tool**

Allows for the disabling of any universal tool that might be distracting or that students do not need to use, or are unable to use. Students who are easily distracted (whether or not designated as having attention difficulties or disabilities) may be overwhelmed by some of the universal tools.

## 2) NON-EMBEDDED DESIGNATED SUPPORTS

**a. Amplification**

The student adjusts the volume control beyond the computer's built-in settings using headphones or other non-embedded devices.

**b. Color Contrast**

This support requires the Special Documented Accommodation Print on Demand feature and allows the test content of online items to be printed with different colors. Students with attention difficulties may need this support for viewing the test when digitally-provided color contrasts do not meet their needs. Some students with visual impairments or other print disabilities (including learning disabilities) also may need this support. Choice of colors should be consistent with the color the student accesses during instruction.

**c. Color Overlay**

Color transparencies are placed over a paper-provided assessment. Students with attention difficulties may need this support to view test content. This support also may be needed by some students with visual impairments or other print disabilities (including learning disabilities). The color overlay requires the Special Documented Accommodation, Print on Demand or a Large Print Test Booklet. Choice of color should be informed by evidence of those colors that meet the student's needs during instruction.

**d. Magnification**

The size of specific areas of the screen (e.g., text, formulas, tables, graphics, and navigation buttons) may be adjusted by the student with an assistive technology device. Magnification allows increasing the size to a level not provided for by the Zoom universal tool. Students used to viewing enlarged text, graphics, or navigation buttons may need magnification to comfortably view content. This support may also meet the needs of students with visual impairments and other print disabilities. The use of this designated support may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment.

**e. Noise Buffer**

Ear mufflers, white noise, whisper phone, and/or other equipment may be used to block external sounds. A student (not groups of students) wears equipment to reduce environmental noises. Students may use these supports if they are regularly used during instruction. Students who use noise buffers will need headphones unless tested individually in a separate setting.

**f. Read Aloud (Math and Science, Stimuli & Items), (ELA Items, NOT Reading Passages)**

Text is read aloud to the student by a trained and qualified human reader who follows the test administration manual, security procedures, and the *Read Aloud Guidelines*. All or portions of the content may be read aloud, depending on content area. Students who are struggling readers may need assistance accessing the assessment by having all or portions of the assessment, excluding the reading passages, read aloud. This support also may be needed by students with reading-related disabilities, or by students who are blind and do not yet have adequate braille skills. If not used regularly during instruction, this support is likely to be confusing and may impede the performance on assessments. 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. The use of this support may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment and the student will need to be tested in a separate setting. A Read Aloud of the ELA Reading Passages may be available to students with an IEP or 504 Plan through a Special Documented Accommodation Request. See Appendix C for more information.

**g. Separate Setting**

Students who are easily distracted, or who may distract others in environments such as in group testing, may need an alternate location to be able to take the assessment. The separate setting may be in a different room that allows them to work individually or among a smaller group, or in the same room, but in a specific location (for example, away from windows, doors, or pencil sharpeners, in a study carrel, with a whisper phone, near the teacher's desk, or in the front of a classroom). 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. A specific adult, employed by the school and trained in a manner consistent with the Test Administration Manual (TAM), including security procedures, may act as test proctor (test administrator) for the student. Some designated supports or accommodations require students to be assessed individually. These students would also require a separate setting. Examples include students accessing the Read Aloud designated support or accommodation, talking calculator, or speech-to-text.

**h. Simplified Test Directions (Not Available for Science)**

The test administrator simplifies or paraphrases the test directions found in the test administration manual according to the *Simplified Test Directions* guidelines.

# D. ADDITIONAL DESIGNATED SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS IDENTIFIED AS ENGLISH LEARNERS

Programs of English language instruction help students who are English learners acquire the necessary spoken and written English skills.

Both bilingual and ESL programs provide language supports to make instruction in English understandable. A bilingual education program uses the student's native language, as well as English for instruction in content areas, pursuant to Section 10-17e of the C.G.S. while other types of EL programs focus on developing English language proficiency across the content areas.

Many of the language supports used in instruction for English learners are incorporated in the designated supports provided on the Smarter Balanced and NGSS Assessments. English Learner Designated Supports for testing must be entered in TIDE. The designated supports described below are most beneficial to students identified as English learners (EL). Informed adults, including English learner educators, who are familiar with the student's strengths and areas of concern make decisions about the provision of these designated supports. Like all designated support decisions, the decisions are ideally made by all educators familiar with the student's characteristics, including English language proficiency and supports that have benefited the student during instruction and for other assessments. Parent and student input into the decision process particularly for older students, is also recommended. The Embedded and Non-Embedded Designated Supports for English Learners brochure provides a list of available options for Smarter Balanced and NGSS.

## 1) EMBEDDED DESIGNATED SUPPORTS FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

**a. Spanish Presentation (Math, Stacked)**

Stacked translations are a language support available for select Spanish literate students. In a stacked translation, the full translation of each math test item appears above the original item in English. For students whose primary language is not English and who use dual language supports in the classroom, the use of the stacked (dual language) translation may be appropriate. This support should only be used for students who are proficient readers in Spanish and who are not proficient in English. Students must participate in the statewide assessments regardless of their language proficiency. This support will increase reading load and cognitive load. The use of this support may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment.

**b. Spanish Presentation (Science, Toggle)**

This Spanish presentation will allow the literate Spanish-speaking student to toggle between a full Spanish translation of the item and the English version of the item. By default, all test directions, navigation buttons, and test content will be presented to the student in the Spanish language. This designated support must be entered in the *Embedded Accommodation* section of the student's test settings in TIDE within the *Presentation (Designated Supports and Accommodations)* tab for Science. Select Spanish toggle.

**c. Text-to-Speech (Science, English (Default) and Spanish)**

This support allows text to be read to the student via embedded text-to-speech (TTS) technology. The student is able to control the speed, as well as raise or lower the volume

of the voice via a volume control. Text-to-speech in Spanish for NGSS functions when both Spanish Presentation (Toggle) for NGSS and text-to-speech for Stimuli & Items are selected from the NGSS drop-down menu in TIDE.

**d. Translations-Math (Glossary)**

The translated glossaries are provided in some languages for selected construct-irrelevant terms for math. Translations for these terms appear on the computer screen when students click on them. Students may also select the audio icon next to the glossary term and listen to the audio recording of the glossary. This Designated Support is intended as a language support for students who have limited English language skills whether or not they are identified in PSIS as ELs or ELs with disabilities. These students may use the translation glossary for specific math items. The use of this support may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment. Languages currently supported for Translation Glossary (includes audio): *Arabic; Burmese, Cantonese; Filipino (Tagalog & Ilokano); Hmong; Korean; Mandarin; Punjabi; Russian; Somali; Spanish; Ukrainian; and Vietnamese.*

Illustrative Glossary is also available as a language support for selected construct-irrelevant terms for math. Illustrations for these terms appear on the computer screen when students select them. Students with the illustration glossary setting enabled can adjust the size of the illustration and move it around the screen.

More information is included in Translation (Glossary)–Embedded Designated Support brochure.

## 2) NON-EMBEDDED DESIGNATED SUPPORTS FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

**a. Bilingual Dictionary (Science ONLY)**

A bilingual/dual language word-to-word dictionary may be an appropriate language support for students whose primary language is not English and who use dual language supports in the classroom. Students participate in the assessment regardless of their English language proficiency. The use of this support may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment. Sample Word-to-Word Bilingual Dictionary provides potential resources for word-to-word dictionaries allowed on Connecticut's statewide assessments.

**b. Native Language Reader Directions Only (Science ONLY)**

All test directions may be read and clarified in English, or the student's native language, for EL students who have been identified as needing this support. A non-certified or certified staff person may administer this designated support.

**c. Read Aloud in Spanish (Math, Science)**

When a student cannot access the embedded text-to-speech, a qualified test reader can provide an oral presentation of the assessment text to an eligible student. Given that the student depends on the test reader to read the test questions accurately, pronounce words correctly, and speak in a clear voice throughout the test, the test reader must be trained and must follow the Guidelines for Spanish Read Aloud, Test Reader. The guiding principle in reading aloud is to ensure that the student has access to test content. On Smarter Balanced Assessments, test readers in Spanish are allowable across all

grades as a designated support for mathematics and the NGSS. As a consideration, if this support is not used regularly during instruction, it is likely to be confusing and may impede the performance on assessments. A student should have the option of asking a reader to slow down or repeat text. The use of this support may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment and the student will need to be tested in a separate setting.

**d. Translation Glossary (Math) (ONLY Large Print Paper/Pencil Assessment)**
Translated glossaries are a language support. Translated glossaries are provided for selected construct-irrelevant math terms. Glossary terms are listed by item and include the English term and its translated equivalent. Students who have limited English language skills can use the translation glossary for specific items. The use of this support may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment.

Languages currently supported for Non-Embedded Translations-Math (Glossary) include: *Arabic; Burmese, Cantonese; Filipino (Tagalog & Ilokano); Hmong; Korean; Mandarin; Punjabi; Russian; Somali; Spanish; Ukrainian; and Vietnamese.*

**e. Translated Test Directions (ELA and Math; Not Available for Science)**
A PDF of directions translated in each of the languages currently supported for English language arts and math is available. A bilingual adult reads to the student or, if the student is literate in the selected language, they may read the directions independently. Students who have limited English language skills (whether or not identified as EL or EL with disabilities) can use the translated test directions. The use of this support may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment, as well as a separate setting.

Languages currently supported for the Non-Embedded Translation Test Directions include: *Arabic; Burmese; Cantonese; Dakota; Filipino (Tagalog & Ilokano); French; Haitian-Creole; Hmong; Japanese; Korean; Lakota; Mandarin; Punjabi; Russian; Somali; Spanish; Ukrainian; Vietnamese; and Yup'ik.*

# VII. GUIDELINES FOR MAKING DECISIONS ABOUT ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STATEWIDE TESTING

In this document, the term "test accommodation" refers to procedures in presentation, response, and other areas during test administration that provide equitable access during the assessment for students with disabilities. These accommodations should not affect how scores are interpreted. Changes in test content generally are considered to be "test modifications." Test modifications are changes in test administration or content such that the resulting test scores cannot be interpreted in the same way as scores from the original test administered in the standard manner.

- **Presentation Supports and Accommodations** - Allow students to access information in ways that do not require them to visually read standard print. These alternate modes of access are auditory, multisensory, tactile, and visual.
- **Response Supports and 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.
- **Other Supports and Accommodations** - Allow students the use of non-embedded materials or devices.

## A. GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT ACCOMMODATIONS

Both constitutional and statutory laws have shaped policy regarding the testing of students with disabilities. The 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is viewed as being particularly relevant to assessment issues. Specifically, the 14th Amendment guarantees equal protection under the law which, in the educational domain, translates into a guarantee of equal educational opportunity. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 are civil rights statutes that prohibit discrimination and guarantee access and equity. Together, these acts entitle students with disabilities to participate in, and receive the benefits to be derived from, statewide testing efforts.

Accommodations provided to a student during statewide testing must be accommodations provided during classroom instruction and other assessments given throughout the school year. It is critical to note that although some accommodations may be appropriate for instructional use, they may not be appropriate for use on a standardized assessment. There may be consequences (e.g., invalidating a student's test score) for the use of some accommodations during state assessments. It is very important for educators to become familiar with state policies regarding accommodations during statewide assessments.

Typically, accommodation use does not begin and end in school. Students who use accommodations will generally need them at home, in the community, in postsecondary education, and at work. Accommodations for instruction and assessment should be integrally intertwined.

Accommodations for test administration are provided to allow students with disabilities the opportunity to demonstrate their aptitude and achievement in testing situations rather than reflect their impairments. Although test accommodations provide students with an equal opportunity to demonstrate their skills and knowledge, they do not guarantee equal outcomes. Again, an appropriate or reasonable accommodation should not interfere with the use of interpretation of a student's scores. Accommodations for testing in Smarter Balanced and NGSS must be entered in TIDE, while accommodations for the Connecticut SAT School Day are requested by the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) Coordinator (the designated person in a school for coordinating all activities around accommodations) through the College Board's Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) online system.

## B. WHO MAY RECEIVE ACCOMMODATIONS?

1) **Students Who Receive Special Education Services**
   Accommodations are available for the Smarter Balanced, NGSS, Connecticut SAT School Day, and Connecticut Alternate Assessments. The student's IEP must specify which accommodations will be used during testing, and should generally reflect similar accommodations needed for instruction. The decisions regarding accommodations are made by the PPT members and should not reflect individual-teacher decisions made immediately before or during test administration. These accommodations should be recommended by a student's teachers in consultation with the PPT members, and the rationale for the decisions should be documented in the student's IEP. These accommodations are also documented in TIDE (for the Smarter Balanced and NGSS), or College Board's SSD system (for the Connecticut SAT School Day). Accommodations indicated in a student's IEP are provided to students eligible for the CTAA and CTAS within the test, and do not need to be indicated in TIDE.

   Allowable accommodations for special education students participating in the Smarter Balanced and NGSS are outlined in this section (Section VII), while accommodations related to the Connecticut SAT School Day are outlined in Section VIII.

2) **Students Identified as Disabled Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**
   Accommodations are available for the Smarter Balanced, NGSS, and Connecticut SAT School Day Assessments. The student's 504 Plan must specify which accommodations will be used during testing and should generally reflect similar accommodations needed for instruction. The decisions regarding accommodations are made by the 504 planning team and should not reflect individual-teacher decisions made immediately before or during test administration. These accommodations should be recommended by a student's teachers in consultation the 504 planning team, and the rationale for the decision should be documented in the student's 504 Plan. These accommodations must be documented in TIDE (for the Smarter Balanced and NGSS), or College Board's SSD system (for the Connecticut SAT School Day) prior to testing.

Allowable accommodations for students with 504 Plans participating in the Smarter Balanced and NGSS are outline in this section (Section VII), while accommodations related to the Connecticut SAT School Day are outlined in Section VIII.

3) **Students Identified as English Learners with Disabilities**

Accommodations are available for the Smarter Balanced, NGSS, and the Connecticut SAT School Day for a student who is an English learner **and also identified as a student with a disability**. These students would require an active IEP or 504 Plan, documenting their needs for instruction and assessment as an English learner, and as well as a student with disabilities. Accommodations should generally reflect similar accommodations needed for instruction and be documented in the IEP or 504 Plan.

4) **Students with Temporary Disabling Conditions - Broken Fingers, Arms, Shoulders, or Concussions, etc.**

A student who is injured (broken arms, shoulder, fingers, concussions, etc.) in the days just before or during test administration has a temporary disability and *may* be eligible for accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This determination of temporary disability is made by a 504 planning team at a meeting in which the injury is documented, the student is determined eligible for Section 504 status, and a plan is developed outlining the accommodations necessary, if any, for the student to participate in instructional activities and the statewide assessment. Once identified as eligible for Section 504 status, students with broken fingers, arms, shoulders, or concussions, etc., are allowed to use a variety of accommodations. In many cases, delaying testing until later in the test window allows the swelling to go down sufficiently so that the students can still type responses in spite of a cast, splint, etc. In other instances, as the students become adjusted or acclimated to a cast, splint, etc., they find creative ways to perform routine tasks, including providing a typed response on the test. In exceptional circumstances, there may be a student whose temporary disabilities are such that the allowable supports and accommodations listed in this document may not be sufficient to meet the student's current needs for the summative assessment. In these cases, the District Administrator should contact the Performance Office at 860-713-6860.

## C. ALLOWABLE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION AND 504 STUDENTS

All students taking the Smarter Balanced and NGSS summative assessments are allowed the use of various accessibility tools, both embedded and non-embedded, when appropriate for the content area test they are taking. All students are also allowed access to designated supports if a determination has been made through a student's needs profile. In this section, accommodations are discussed that are allowed only for students with disabilities with an IEP or Section 504 Plan.

Eligible students participating in the Connecticut Alternate Assessment (CTAA) for English language arts and math, as well as the Connecticut Alternate Science (CTAS) should use accommodations described in their IEP provided by the trained TEA in accordance with the appropriate testing manual, the Directions for Test Administration documents, and the required annual training.

1) **Embedded Accommodations for Students with Disabilities or a 504 Plan**

a. **American Sign Language Video (ELA-Listening, Math) (Grades 3-8) (Not available for Science)**

Test content in Smarter Balanced Assessments is translated into an American Sign Language (ASL) video. The ASL human signer and the signed test content are viewed on the same screen. Students may view portions of the ASL video as often as needed. Some students who are deaf or hard of hearing, and who typically use ASL, may need this accommodation when accessing text-based content in the assessment. The use of this accommodation may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment. For many students who are deaf or hard of hearing, viewing signs is the only way to access information presented orally. It is important to note, however, that some students who are hard of hearing will be able to listen to information presented orally if provided with appropriate amplification and a setting in which extraneous sounds do not interfere with clear presentation of the audio presentation in a listening test.

b. **Braille (e.g., Refreshable Braille, Braille Embosser) (Grades 3-8)**

Access to braille, in conjunction with other technologies, is available through the online Test Delivery System when Permissive mode is set to YES in the student's Test Settings in TIDE. Technology, such as refreshable braille devices or the use of a braille embosser, is available on the Smarter Balanced and NGSS Assessments for students who use them. View this video for more information on using braille as an embedded accommodation.

Refreshable braille is an electronic device that displays text in braille by means of movable "pins" that form braille letters and words. The display may contain anywhere between 12 and 80 braille cells that will be read tactually, then the next line of braille will appear.

Braille Embosser provides the graphic material (e.g., maps, charts, graphs, diagrams, and illustrations) in a raised format (paper or thermoform).

The following Braille presentations are available as an embedded accommodation:

| Math | ELA | Science |
|---|---|---|
| ○ EBAE ***Contracted*** + Nemeth Math | ○ EBAE ***Contracted*** | ○ UEB ***Contracted*** + Nemeth |
| ○ EBAE ***Uncontracted*** + Nemeth Math | ○ EBAE ***Uncontracted*** | |
| ○ UEB ***Contracted*** + Nemeth Math | ○ UEB ***Contracted*** (No Math Content) | |
| ○ UEB ***Uncontracted*** + Nemeth Math | ○ UEB ***Uncontracted*** (No Math Content) | |
| ○ UEB ***Contracted*** + UEB Math | | |
| ○ UEB ***Uncontracted*** + UEB Math | | |
| As a reminder, Permissive mode must be indicated within the TIDE system to access this accommodation. | | |

More information is available in these documents: *Technical Specifications Manual for Online Testing* and *Braille Requirements and Testing Manual*.

**c. Braille Transcript (ELA Listening Passages) (Grades 3-8)**
A braille transcript of the closed captioning is available for the listening passages of the ELA assessment in the following braille codes:

- English Braille, American Edition (EBAE) uncontracted; and
- EBAE contracted (Note that this presentation of Braille will be phased-out and no longer available on the Smarter Balanced Assessments beginning in the 2020-21 school year).

**d. Closed Captioning for ELA Listening (Grades 3-8)**
This accommodation provides printed English text on the computer screen while audio materials are presented. Students who are deaf or hard of hearing and who typically access information presented in an auditory format by reading words that appear in synchrony with the audio, may benefit from this accommodation.

**e. Text-to-Speech for ELA Reading Passages (Grades 3-8)**
This accommodation allows the reading passages to be read aloud to the student via embedded text-to-speech technology. This accommodation is only for students in Grades 3-8 with a documented print disability, or for blind students who do not yet have adequate braille skills. Information on selecting this accommodation for appropriate students is found in Guidelines for Choosing Text-to-Speech or Read Aloud for Smarter Balanced. Text-to-speech for ELA reading passages is not available for English learners (unless the EL student has an IEP or 504 Plan documenting this needed accommodation). The text-to-speech for ELA reading passages accommodation is intended for a small group of students. The 2019-20 Decision Guidelines for Text-to-Speech of the Smarter Balanced ELA Reading Passages must be submitted electronically to the CSDE prior to testing for each student being provided this accommodation. When text-to-speech is used, appropriate headphones must be available to the student, unless the student is tested individually in a separate setting.

**2) Non-Embedded Accommodations for Students with Disabilities or a 504 Plan**

**a. 100s Number Table (Math Grades 4-8)**
A paper-based table listing numbers from 1-100 is available from Smarter Balanced for reference. Students with visual processing, or spatial perception needs, may find this beneficial, as documented in their IEP or 504 Plan. The 100s Number Table can be accessed here or on this student resource page of the Connecticut Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal.

**b. Abacus (Math)**
This tool may be used in place of scratch paper for students who typically use an abacus during instruction as documented in the student's IEP or Section 504 Plan. This accommodation is only available for the Smarter Balanced Mathematics Assessment.

**c. Alternate Response Options (Smarter Balanced and NGSS)**
Alternate response options include, but are not limited to, adapted keyboards, large keyboards, StickyKeys, MouseKeys, FilterKeys, adapted mouse, touch screen, head wand, and switches. Students with some physical disabilities (including both fine motor and gross motor skills) may need to use the alternate response options accommodation

to access the Smarter Balanced Assessments and NGSS. Some alternate response options are external devices that must be plugged in and be compatible with the assessment delivery platform. Therefore, it is very important to use the devices with the Smarter Balanced Practice Site to ensure compatibility and provide more familiarity for testing for the student. Permissive mode must be indicated within the TIDE system to access this accommodation. These accommodations would be documented in the student's IEP or Section 504 Plan.

**d. Braille Booklet (ELA, Math, and Science)**

This accommodation is a fixed-form test booklet that provides all content in braille. It is typically used by students who have visual disabilities. Contracted or non-contracted forms may be selected. See TIDE Test Settings for options. Note that EBAE contracted and uncontracted will not be available on the Smarter Balanced Assessments or NGSS after the 2020-21 school year.

Braille is available in the following presentations:

| Math | ELA | Science |
|---|---|---|
| ○ EBAE ***Contracted*** + Nemeth Math | ○ EBAE ***Contracted*** | ○ UEB ***Contracted*** + Nemeth |
| ○ EBAE ***Uncontracted*** + Nemeth Math | ○ EBAE ***Uncontracted*** | |
| ○ UEB ***Contracted*** + Nemeth Math | ○ UEB ***Contracted*** (No Math Content) | |
| ○ UEB ***Uncontracted*** + Nemeth Math | ○ UEB ***Uncontracted*** (No Math Content) | |
| ○ UEB ***Contracted*** + UEB Math | | |
| ○ UEB ***Uncontracted*** + UEB Math | | |

**e. Large Print Booklet**

This accommodation is a fixed-form test booklet that provides enlarged content. It is typically used by students who have visual disabilities. Students using this accommodation will not have access to the adaptive version of the assessment and may require additional time for the assessment. These students are typically supported with Large Print or visual supports documented in their IEP or Section 504 Plan.

**f. Multiplication Table (Math Grades 4-8)**

A paper-based single digit (1-9) Multiplication Table is available for students in Grades 4-8 for the Smarter Balanced Mathematics Assessment. This tool may be used for reference by students with an IEP or 504 Plan documenting the need for this accommodation. These students typically demonstrate a persistent calculation disability (i.e., dyscalculia).

**g. Specialized Calculator (Math Grade 6-8 for Calculator-Allowed Items Only; Science Grades 5, 8, & 11)**

A specialized calculator (Braille/Talking Calculator) is typically used during instruction for students who are blind. A specialized calculator may also be used for those students who access calculators with assistive technology devices.

Care must be taken to ONLY provide it for the Smarter Balanced Mathematics calculator-allowed items in Grades 6-8. Additionally, the test administrator must prevent distractions for other students using procedures such as using the calculator with ear phones or testing the student in a separate test environment.

The specialized calculator is available as needed for NGSS items in Grades 5, 8, and

11.

**h. Speech-to-Text (e.g., Naturally Speaking Dragon)**

Most test items on the math and ELA, and all existing science items on the NGSS are multiple-choice. However, in the case that a student is presented with an open-ended item that requires a brief, typed response (usually no more than a few sentences), a small subset of the accommodated testing population may need to access voice-recognition software. Individual consideration is highly recommended.

The speech-to-text or voice-recognition software accommodation allows students to use their voices as input devices to the computer, to dictate responses, or give commands (e.g., opening application programs, pulling down menus, and saving work). Students use their own assistive technology devices, which generally include a microphone and headphones. Typically, students who have motor or processing disabilities (such as dyslexia) use this accommodation and find it beneficial. Students need to be familiar with the software, and have had many opportunities to use it during instruction. Speech-to-text software requires that students know writing conventions, and that they have the review and editing skills thus; experience with this accommodation prior to testing is essential. When students use their own assistive technology devices, all assessment content must be deleted from these devices after testing for security purposes.

When voice recognition software, such as Naturally Speaking Dragon, is downloaded to a computer and used as a standalone that is compatible with the secure online Test Deliver System, it can be accessed as an embedded accommodation. To allow functionality with the Test Delivery System, Permissive mode must be activated in TIDE. Few items on the Smarter Balanced math and ELA Assessment require the need for typing, therefore, this accommodation may not be needed for some students.

While some applications for the speech-to-text (STT) accommodation are compatible with the AIR Secure Browser and Test Delivery System, many are not depending upon the testing platform, manufacturer, the STT application, version updates, and security considerations. Therefore, the CSDE strongly encourages districts to test the student's STT application with the secure practice test each year prior to testing.

If the STT cannot be accessed on the same device as the secure interface, a work around using two devices can be used. One device provides access to the Secure Student Interface; whereas, the second device provides access to the STT application. The student will respond to test items on the first device and respond to open-ended items on the device with STT. Students are expected to transcribe their open-ended responses back into the Student Secure Interface, however, this may be cumbersome for students to complete independently. If this is the case, students may be offered a scribe in which the test administrator transcribes the student's dictated response from the device with the dictated software to the device with the Student Secure Interface. However, if a scribe is needed, the District Administrators should contact Janet Stuck or Deirdre Ducharme to initiate to request the provision of a scribe using this work around for STT.

## D. ACCOMMODATIONS REQUIRING A SPECIAL DOCUMENTED ACCOMMODATIONS PETITION

In exceptional circumstances, there may be a student whose disabilities are such that the allowable accommodations listed in the *Assessment Guidelines* would be insufficient to provide access to the Smarter Balanced Assessments, the NGSS, or the Connecticut SAT School Day. In these cases, upon request, the District Administrator (DA) will be provided information regarding a *Petition for Approval of Special Documented Accommodations.* The following accommodations are examples of those requiring a petition for a special documented accommodation.

**a. Calculator (Non-Embedded) (Math Grades 6-8 for Calculator-Allowed Items Only)**

When the embedded Desmos Calculator or specialized calculator is inaccessible for a student participating on the Mathematics Assessment, the provision of a hand-held calculator may be appropriate. This accommodation is only available for those math items that allow the use of a calculator. Depending on the student's grade, the following calculator types are permissible:

- Grade 6- basic calculator
- Grades 7 and 8- scientific calculator

**b. Customized Accommodations (Includes Non-Compatible Speech-to-Text Applications)**

In exceptional circumstances, there may be a student whose disabilities are such that the allowable accommodations listed in the *Assessment Guidelines* would be insufficient to provide access to the Smarter Balanced Assessments, the NGSS, or the Connecticut SAT School Day. Customized accommodations may be needed for students who use STT software that is incompatible with the secure Test Delivery Interface.

The petition process includes a description of the accommodation(s) requested, the submission of the IEP or Section 504 Plan, as well as additional documented evidence of the student's disability and experience with the accommodation during instruction.

**c. Human Signer for ELA, Math, and/or Science Items**

This sign language accommodation for the Smarter Balanced and NGSS Assessments allows a qualified test administrator to sign the test directions and/or test content to a student who is deaf or hard of hearing. Students are tested individually and, if necessary, a sign language interpreter may assist in test administration by providing directions and clarifying information as allowed in the *Smarter Balanced* and the *NGSS Test Examiner's Manuals*.

**d. Human Signer for ELA Reading Passages (Grades 3-8)**

The Human Signer for ELA Reading Passages is a sign language accommodation for the Smarter Balanced ELA Reading Passages allowing a qualified test administrator to

sign the reading passages to a student who is deaf or hard of hearing with a print disability. Students are tested individually and, if necessary, a sign language interpreter may assist in test administration by providing directions and clarifying information as allowed in the *Smarter Balanced Test Examiner's Manual.*

**e. Manipulatives (Math Grades 4-8)**

Math manipulatives are available on the Smarter Balanced Math Assessments to allow eligible students to use concrete mathematical tools strategically to support their decision making. Math manipulatives may be requested via the petition process for students using this accommodation in daily instruction as indicated in their Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan. Students eligible for this special documented accommodation are typically identified as students with visual disabilities or math-related disabilities, such as dyscalculia, and are typically students with Learning Disabilities, Autism, Visual Impairments, or Intellectual Disabilities.

The petition application must include a description of the math manipulative(s) used in instruction and assessment, the submission of the IEP or Section 504 Plan, as well as additional documented evidence of the math-related disability, such as a recent Educational/Psychological evaluation or Mathematics Assessments.

Upon approval, specific guidance will be provided about administering the math assessment using this specific special documented accommodation. Guidance includes, but is not limited to, the requirement that the student:

- is tested separately from other students not using manipulatives during assessment;
- uses manipulatives that are consistent with those used during instruction and that the manipulatives are made available in an organized manner; and
- independently selects and uses the manipulative(s) without teacher prompting or direction.

The use of this special documented accommodation may require the student to be provided additional time for participation in the Smarter Balanced Assessment.

**f. Print on Demand**

The print-on-demand accommodation like the other accommodations included in this section may only be provided through the *Special Documented Accommodations Petition Procedure.* Some students with disabilities may need paper copies of either passages/stimuli and/or items. A very small percentage of tested students need this accommodation. The use of this accommodation may result in the student needing additional time to complete the assessment. Permissive mode must be indicated within the TIDE system to access this accommodation as access to a printer in close proximity is required. If you think you have a student who may need this accommodation, please contact Deirdre Ducharme or Janet Stuck at 860-713-6860.

**g. Read Aloud (ELA Reading Passages Grades 3-8)**

The read aloud accommodation for ELA reading passages for students in Grades 3-8 may only be provided through the submission of a *Special Documented Accommodations Petition.*

Text is read aloud in English to the student in a 1:1 test setting by a trained and qualified

human reader who follows the *Guidelines for Read Aloud, Test Reader* and who has submitted a signed *Read Aloud Protocol for Smarter Balanced Assessments Security/Confidentiality Agreement Form*. All or portions of the content may be read aloud. Note: The platform for submitting this protocol opens on December 9, 2019.

Following approval from the CSDE, the teacher must electronically submit the *Decision Guidelines for Read Aloud of the Smarter Balanced Reading Passages* prior to testing the student with this accommodation.

**h. Scribe**

The accommodation for the provision of a scribe requires the Special Documented Accommodations Petition procedure for students taking the Smarter Balanced or NGSS Assessments. Teachers must be trained and complete the *Scribe Protocol* provided by the CSDE when the special accommodation petition permission has been approved. This accommodation allows students to dictate their responses to a qualified person who records verbatim what they dictate. These students may have significant processing or motor difficulties requiring a scribe for lengthy responses in instruction and assessment. This accommodation may result in the student needing additional time to complete the assessment.

**i. Speech-to-Text (Work Around Requiring a Scribe)**

As described in Section C, 2h, there may be cases where the non-embedded speech-to-text software is incompatible with the Secure Student Interface and cannot be accessed on the same device. A work-around solution permits the test examiner to provide two devices: one device provides access to the Secure Student Interface; whereas, the second device provides access to the speech-to-text application. The student will respond to test items on the first device and orally dictate responses to open-ended items on the second device with speech-to-text. Students are expected to transcribe their open-ended responses back into the Student Secure Interface, however, this may be cumbersome for students to complete independently. If this is the case, students may be offered a scribe in which the test administrator transcribes the student's dictated response from the device with the dictated software to the device with the Student Secure Interface. Given that a test examiner is needed to assist as a scribe, special documentation is required and upon approval, the test examiner will need to follow specified procedures including the submission of a Scribe Protocol.

## E. ENTERING TEST RELATED SUPPORTS AND ACCOMMODATIONS

All designated supports and accommodations recommended for students in Grades 3-8 and 11, identified as special education, Section 504, EL, or EL with disabilities **must** be entered in TIDE test settings **prior to testing.**

**Students in Grade 11 participating in the Connecticut SAT School Day Assessment who are identified as a student with a disability and/or an English learner utilizing an accommodation are entered into the** College Board's Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) online system.

For questions about the entry of test settings in TIDE, the College Board SSD online system, or the Data Entry Interface, contact the Student Assessment Office at 860-713-6860.

## F. SELECTING APPROPRIATE TEST DESIGNATED SUPPORTS OR ACCOMMODATIONS

Deriving useful and meaningful interpretations from student responses is a major goal of any testing program. No designated support or accommodation should interfere with the accurate interpretation of a score. Professional judgment and experience play important roles in any decision concerning which support or accommodation is needed, the extent to which it is needed, and for which student it should be employed. Listed below are some general guidelines for the PPT, 504 team, or English learner team to consider in determining designated supports or accommodations for testing each student.

- Does the designated support or accommodation fit the student's areas of strength and weakness, rather than the category of disability or language proficiency? (For example, not all students with learning disabilities have reading problems and, therefore, not all require that the math test be read to them.)
- Does the student's IEP or Section 504 Plan call for the same or a similar accommodation during instruction?
- Does the student use this designated support or accommodation regularly during classroom activities?
- Is the student sufficiently skilled to use this designated support or accommodation with ease, or will it serve as an impediment? This question is especially pertinent when considering the digital environment and the use of technology or assistive technology devices. (For example, if a student is allowed to use text-to-speech, but has not experienced a digital voice during classwork, this accommodation may hamper his or her performance.)
- Is the designated support or accommodation necessary for this child? (For example, a student with a visual impairment who reads well may not need math problems read to him or her, but may require streamline view to better navigate enlarged text.)

## G. EVIDENCE OF THE NEED FOR SUPPORTS AND ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STATEWIDE ASSESSMENTS

During the Special Documented Accommodation Petition Process, Assessment Eligibility Processes or other Focus Monitoring activities, representatives from the Connecticut State Department of Education have the ability to view information related to instruction and assessment that includes evidence related to instruction and assessment, and student supports. Examples of evidence include present levels of performance, goals and objectives, the provision of supports,

communication or access supports and accommodations, such as signing, use of assistive technology, read aloud, or a scribe. This evidence is typically described within the IEP on Page 8, within the Section 504 Plan, and within the documentation of annual reviews for English learners, as well as other state and district documentation.

Similarly students with significant cognitive disabilities participating in the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System typically receive extensive supports and accommodations during instruction. Teachers also design their instruction to be more accessible through various strategies and scaffolding. When test items were designed for both alternate assessments they were developed to incorporate the typical scaffolding teachers provide regularly in their classrooms. Therefore, the expectation for students participating in the alternate assessment system is for any accommodation to be clearly defined within the IEP on Page 8 and also applied to the testing environment.

## H. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR ASSESSMENTS

1) **Students Who are Present, but Do Not Take the Test**

   Some students are present in school during the testing window, but for any number of reasons do not take the test. These students may or may not have disabilities, or have limited English proficiency.

   Students with serious emotional and behavioral concerns often are among the most difficult to test. Even with suitable support and accommodations and individual administration, students sometimes refuse to be tested, or become agitated or disruptive to the point that testing for these students is not appropriate. **If a student reaches this point, particularly if the environment becomes unsafe for the student or others, testing must be stopped.**

   Test Examiner's Manuals outline strategies for preparing and reassuring students prior to test administration in an effort to reduce anxiety and promote full participation. There are instances in which the student "refuses" to even attempt the test, and simply puts his or her head on the desk without disrupting other students.

2) **Reluctant Students**

   In other situations, a student reluctantly begins the test and then becomes impatient or frustrated, but does not disturb other students. The test examiner should encourage the student to continue the test. The student may resume testing at a later time or different day. The student may decide to attempt the test later in the same session. The student will receive a score based on the number of items completed.

3) **Students Who Become Agitated or Disruptive**

   In those circumstances where the student becomes emotionally agitated and/or disruptive, he or she should be promptly removed from the class if being tested in a group. If the student is being tested individually, the student should be provided with a break. An attempt should be made to reassure the student and continue testing. If, however, it is apparent that the student cannot continue, the test administrator may collect the student's test materials, or pause the test and remove the student from the test setting for the time remaining in the particular test period. If the student does not finish testing, but has

attempted to respond to some items, the student will receive a score based on the number of items completed. If the student did not attempt any items, please refer the section titled "Students Who Are Present, But Do Not Take the Test."

**In all the examples provided, every reasonable effort should be made to encourage the student to complete the test on which he or she is working.**

**4) Accommodation Provision Error**

A student's PPT is responsible for determining the support(s) and/or accommodation(s) a student receiving special education services should have during statewide testing. Similarly a Section 504 team documents the necessary supports an accommodations a student requires for instruction and assessment in the Section 504 Plan. Prior to testing, it is essential that all proctors are aware of all supports and accommodations including assistive technology the student should receive for each of the subtests. Likewise, it is critical that the teacher administering the test ensure that the supports and accommodations are available and properly working at the time of testing. Teachers administering the Smarter Balanced Assessments and NGSS will use the Test Administrator Interface to verify the provision of these accommodations prior to approving the student's assessment. The teacher should contact the District Administrator immediately if there are any questions about the accommodations or supports. Similarly, if a student with an IEP or section 504 Plan was not given their mandated support(s) and/or accommodation(s), **or** received a support and/or accommodation in error, the DA must be contacted immediately as this is a serious breach. The DA must then contact the Performance Office immediately through the appeal process to ensure all students are tested accurately. The DA should also contact the District Director of Special Education and the parent/guardian when testing is compromised due to a misadministration of accommodations and/or assessment(s).

If a student refuses the support(s)/accommodation(s) during testing, a district is encouraged to document this refusal, communicate as needed with the parent, and keep this information in the student's file. This may be important for determining appropriate supports and accommodations for this student in the future.

# I. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS RELATED TO PROVIDING DESIGNATED SUPPORTS AND ACCOMMODATIONS DURING ASSESSMENT

**1) Planning for Test Day**

Once decisions have been made about providing designated supports and 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 PPT (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 PPT 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, including paraprofessionals, to plan the logistics and provisions of assessment accommodations on test day. Prior to the day of a test, be certain that test coordinators and test examiners know

what accommodations each student will be using and how to administer them properly. For example, test coordinators and test examiners need to know which students may need extra time to complete the test, so that separate test settings may be arranged for those students. Staff administering accommodations, such as reading to a student, must adhere to the specific guidelines in this document so that student scores are valid.

### 2) Administering Assessments with Accommodations

State and local laws and policies specify practices to assure test security and the standardized and ethical administration of assessments. Test coordinators, test examiners, and all staff members involved in test administration must adhere to these policies. The Code of Professional Responsibilities in Educational Measurement (NCME, 1995)[1] states that test examiners 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 personnel 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 students 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 immediately to the Performance Office at 860-713-6860 and investigated according to state testing policies.

### 3) Ethical Testing Practices

Ethical testing practices must be maintained during the administration of a test. Unethical testing practices relate to inappropriate interactions between test examiners and students taking the test, and include changing the content by paraphrasing or offering additional information, coaching students during testing, editing student responses, or giving clues in any way.

### 4) Standardization

Standardization is the adherence to uniform administration procedures and conditions during an assessment, which is an essential feature of educational assessments, and is necessary to produce comparable information about student learning. Strict adherence to

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

guidelines detailing instructions and procedures for the administration of accommodations is necessary to ensure that test results reflect actual student learning.

### 5) Test Security

Test security refers to maintaining the confidentiality of test questions and answers, and is critical in ensuring the integrity and validity of a 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). To ensure test security and confidentiality, test administrators need to: 1) keep testing materials in a secure place to prevent unauthorized access; 2) keep all test content confidential and refrain from sharing information or revealing test content with anyone; and 3) return all materials as instructed.

### 6) Connecticut's Test Security Policy

The NGSS and Smarter Balanced Assessments, the Connecticut SAT School Day and the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System administration manuals contain specific instructions that proctors must follow to ensure security and validity. Therefore, it is essential that each test examiner review the test administration manual for assessments prior to administering any part of the Connecticut statewide assessments. Violation of test security is a serious matter with far-reaching consequences. Breaches of test security include, but are not limited to, photographing/copying of test materials, failing to return test materials, coaching students, giving students answers, and/or changing students' answers. Such acts may lead to the invalidation of an entire school district's student test scores, disruption of the test system statewide, and legal action against the individuals committing the breach. A breach of test security may be dealt with as a violation of the Code of Professional Responsibility for Teachers, as well as a violation of other pertinent state and federal law and regulation. The Connecticut State Department of Education will investigate all such matters and pursue appropriate follow-up action. Any person found to have breached the security of the test system may be subject to sanctions including, but not limited to, disciplinary action by a local board of education, the revocation of Connecticut teaching certification by the Connecticut State Board of Education [see Section 10-145b(m) of the Connecticut General Statutes], and civil liability pursuant to federal copyright law.

# VIII. DESCRIPTION OF THE CONNECTICUT SAT SCHOOL DAY ACCOMMODATIONS AND SUPPORTS

## A. GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE CONNECTICUT SAT SCHOOL DAY

The Connecticut SAT School Day, provided through College Board in partnership with the CSDE, is the required state assessment for mathematics and ELA for all public school students in Grade 11 except those special education students with significant cognitive disabilities who meet eligibility criteria to participate in the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System.

## B. ELIGIBILITY FOR CONNECTICUT SAT SCHOOL DAY ACCOMMODATIONS

Students eligible to receive accommodations on the Connecticut SAT School Day are those students who have an active Individualized Education Program (IEP). The IEP, among other things, defines what services are provided to students with disabilities, including how they may best access statewide assessments. The other group of students who may receive accommodations are those with a Section 504 Plan, which also documents what needs these students may require. Students identified as English learners, who may or may not have an IEP or Section 504 Plan, may also qualify for specific supports during testing.

As described in section VII E, the following considerations may help determine how accommodations may best support students taking the Connecticut SAT School Day:

- Does the accommodation fit the student's areas of strength and weakness, rather than the category of disability or language proficiency? (For example, not all students with learning disabilities have reading problems and, therefore, not all require that the math test be read to them.)
- Does the student's IEP or Section 504 Plan call for the same or a similar accommodation during instruction?
- Does the student use this accommodation regularly during classroom activities and class/district assessments?
- Is the student sufficiently skilled to use this accommodation with ease, or will it serve as an impediment?
- Consider the student's needs in terms of cognitive or physical load in completing a standardized timed test. Is this student receiving time extension regularly for instruction or on districtwide assessments? Is the time extension beneficial to the student?

## C. APPLYING FOR CONNECTICUT SAT SCHOOL DAY ACCOMMODATIONS

All request applications for accommodations and EL supports (except the ***Translated Test Directions, Native Language Reader*** and ***Bilingual Word-to-Word Glossary***) are requested through the College Board's Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) online system by the **SSD Coordinator** (the key person in a school coordinating all activities related to accommodations). The SSD Coordinator must be registered and assigned the user role of SSD Coordinator at the school level through the College Board's SSD system to enter accommodations in the SSD online system. New SSD Coordinators may register online to become a SSD Coordinator.

The Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) Coordinators may access the SSD online dashboard, which provides a list of students who have been previously registered with College Board for accommodations. This includes:

- those students who have been approved in the past who will be allowed to continue using their accommodations (Note: eligibility is based on appropriate documentation in an ***active*** IEP or Section 504 Plan);
- those students who have been recently approved;
- those students who have accommodation requests still pending; and in some cases,
- those students who have requests that have not been approved.

In most cases, the SSD Coordinator will receive approval for accommodations prior to the primary test date. All accommodations for students must indicate approval in the SSD online system before the student participates in the Connecticut SAT School Day with accommodations. The student's school documentation, such as their IEP or Section 504 Plan, provides the parental approval to apply for accommodations; therefore, no additional forms are required to be sent to the College Board. However, if a student's status remains pending as the test day approaches, please contact the CSDE. If an accommodation request is rejected, please contact the CSDE.

In rare situations, the SSD system will request additional documentation. However, NO documentation is required for the Connecticut SAT School Day, as long as the accommodation request is substantiated by the student's active IEP or 504 Plan. In this case, upload the Connecticut SAT SSD Form into the SSD Online Dashboard to override the system. This will move the request into the *"Document Review"* status. Additionally, SSD Coordinators may be asked to verify through e-mail or phone call with CSDE staff to determine the validity of an accommodation request based on a students documented needs.

All accommodations for students with an IEP or 504 Plan must be submitted through the SSD Online System between **November 22, 2019, and February 4, 2020**. Contact the CSDE or the SAT School Day Customer Support at 855-373-6387 for accommodation requests made after this date. Keep in mind that it is critical to submit accommodation requests within the SSD timeframe as the approval process takes time. Additionally, accommodated test materials are populated based on approved requests from the SSD. Therefore, to ensure that the appropriate test materials are 2 on the student's primary test date, submissions must be completed by February 4, 2020. There is

no guarantee that late accommodation requests can be approved prior to test day and in such situations, students may be required to test with their approved accommodation on the makeup dates of April 28 and 29, 2020. Contact Deirdre Ducharme, Performance Office, at 860-713-6859 for additional guidance.

## D. TYPES OF ACCOMMODATIONS

Below is a chart of the most common accommodations available for students with an IEP or Section 504 Plan.

| **Students with an IEP or Section 504 Plan** | **Used for state accountability system and college admission: *Submit request on the SSD Online Platform*** | |
|---|---|---|
| | • Abacus<br>• American Sign Language (ASL)- test directions only<br>• Braille<br>• Color Overlay<br>• Computer<br>• Extra/Extended Breaks<br>• Large Print Booklet<br>• Magnification Device<br>• Modify Setting<br>• Multiplication table | • Noise Buffering<br>• Reader<br>• Scribe<br>• Signed Exact English-test directions and test content<br>• Speech-to-Text (CB Assistive Technology)<br>• 4 Function Calculator<br>• Text-to-Speech for all test content (CB MP3 audio streaming application)<br>• Time Extension 50% or 100%<br>• Examples of common accommodations, the list is not exhaustive |

**Time Extensions**

There are some important considerations that should be made in conjunction with the student when determining the need for ***Time Extension*** on the Connecticut SAT School Day.

- There are two options for extended time: 50 percent or 100 percent. The 100 percent extended time requires that you test over two days. How may this requirement impact the student?
- Students with extended time must be tested separately from those tested with standard time. They **must** remain in the room for the entire designated extended time even if they have completed the test. What impact might this have on your student and their behavior, especially those who may become anxious or frustrated because of their disability or needs? Also consider, students who leave early from their extended time will not have their test scored.
- Students approved for time extension will automatically receive extra breaks so there is no need to ask for breaks as a separate accommodation.
- Consider the student's needs in terms of cognitive or physical load in completing a standardized timed test. Is this student receiving time extension regularly for instruction or on districtwide assessments? Is the time extension beneficial to the student?

- A determination regarding time extension is subject specific. For example does the student require time extension for Evidence-Based Reading/Writing, Math, or both tests? What student evidence supports this option?

If a student requires the accommodation of a human signer or an accommodation that is not offered through the SSD online platform, please contact Deirdre Ducharme, Performance Office, at 860-713-6859 to discuss the individual student needs to access the assessment. Such requests should be made by **February 4, 2020**, to allow for the appropriate provision of materials and planning for test administration well in advance of the district's primary test day.

## E. SUPPORTS FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

**Who is eligible for EL supports?**

EL Supports may be used by students who, at the time of testing:

a) meet the definition of "English learner" per federal policy as defined in ESSA; and
b) use the same supports on schoolwork and other assessments, including state assessments.

While students should be provided with supports that they are offered in classes, extended time may not be appropriate for all students. Consult with the school/district EL coordinator or teacher prior to applying for the additional support.

**What EL supports are available and how will they be administered?**

Grade 11 EL students participating in the Connecticut SAT School Day are permitted the following supports:

- **Translated Directions:** Translated directions are available in 13 languages. Schools will access these directions from the CSDE Web site prior to the administration of the Connecticut SAT School Day, print the needed language(s), and distribute to students on test day. There is **NO** requirement that the SSD Coordinator request this on the SSD Accommodation Web site. (For more information, visit the Connecticut SAT School Day Web page and reference resources under the Special Populations section.)

- **Native Language Reader:** A native language reader can be provided if a student needs the translation of test directions for a language other than those listed for the reading of **test directions**, and a school has a ***Native Language Reader*** available who speaks that language. The native reader must be a staff member of that school or district. There is **NO** requirement that the SSD Coordinator request this on the SSD Accommodation Web site.

- **Word-to-Word Glossaries:** Approved glossaries in over 100 languages can be provided to students by their school on test day. Students using this support should be using a word-to-word glossary (without definitions) on a regular basis for instruction. There is NO requirement that the SSD Coordinator request this on the SSD Accommodation Web site though schools are responsible for collecting them when testing is complete. A link to the College Board approved word-to-word glossaries is available.

- **50 Percent Extended Time:** Students are eligible for 50 percent extended time for the **entire test**. The student's school will request this support via the EL Support request in the College Board's SSD Online portal. No document is required to request this support, however the SSD Coordinator MUST request this on the SSD Online portal between **January 14, 2020 and February 4, 2020**. A link for instructions for requesting 50 percent extended time is available on the CSDE Web site. Note that students receiving 50 percent extended time without approval through the SSD online will result in a non-college reportable score.

| **English Learners (ELs)** | **Used for state accountability system and college admission.** | |
|---|---|---|
| | No need to submit request on the SSD Online portal:<br>• Written Test Directions in: Albanian, Arabic, Bengali, Chinese/Mandarin, Gujarti, Haitian Creole, Hindi, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Urdu, Vietnamese<br>• Native Language Reader–test directions only<br>• Bilingual Word-to-Word Glossary (available in more than 100 languages) | Submit request on the SSD Online portal:<br>• Time Extension–50% extended time |

# APPENDIX A

## NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS (NGSS) ASSESSMENT NON-EMBEDDED CALCULATORS

Below is a list of approved calculators for the Connecticut SAT School Day that should be used as guidance if a calculator is needed as a non-embedded universal tool for the Grade 11 NGSS Assessment. All scientific calculators are acceptable as long as they do not have any of the features listed under Unacceptable Calculators, all four-function calculators are allowed (but not recommended), and most graphing calculators are acceptable. Check the list of acceptable graphic calculators below for models that are permitted.

### ACCEPTABLE CALCULATORS

| Acceptable Calculators | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Casio** | **Texas Instrument** | **Other** |
| • FX-6000 series<br>• FX-6200 series<br>• FX-6300 series<br>• FX-6500 series<br>• FX-7000 series<br>• FX-7300 series<br>• FX-7400 series<br>• FX-7500 series<br>• FX-7700 series<br>• FX-7800 series<br>• FX-8000 series<br>• FX-8500 series<br>• FX-8700 series<br>• FX-8800 series<br>• Graph25 series<br>• FX-9700 series<br>• FX-9750 series<br>• FX-9860 series<br>• CFX-9800 series<br>• CFX-9850 series<br>• CFX-9950 series | • TI-73<br>• TI-80<br>• TI-81<br>• TI-82<br>• TI-83<br>• TI-83 Plus<br>• TI-83 Plus Silver<br>• TI-84 Plus<br>• TI-84 Plus CE<br>• TI-84 Plus Silver<br>• TI-84 Plus C Silver<br>• TI-84 Plus T<br>• TI-84 Plus CE-T<br>• TI-85<br>• TI-86<br>• TI-89<br>• TI-89 Titanium<br>• TI-Nspire<br>• TI-Nspire CX<br>• TI-Nspire CX II<br>• TI-Nspire CX II-T | **Hewlett-Packard**<br>• HP-9G<br>• HP-28 series<br>• HP-38G<br>• HP-39 series<br>• HP-40 series<br>• HP-48 series<br>• HP-49 series<br>• HP-50 series<br>• HP Prime<br>**Radio Shack**<br>• EC-4033<br>• EC-4034<br>• EC-4037 |

| Acceptable Calculators | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Casio** | **Texas Instrument** | **Other** |
| • CFX-9970 series<br>• FX 1.0 series<br>• Algebra FX 2.0 series<br>• FX-CG-10<br>• FX-CG-20 series<br>• FX-CG-50<br>• Graph35 series<br>• Graph75 series<br>• Graph95 series<br>• Graph100 series<br>• FX-CG500** | • TI-Nspire CM-C<br>• TI-Nspire CAS<br>• TI-Nspire CX CAS<br>• TI-Nspire CX II CAS<br>• TI-Nspire CX II-T CAS<br>• TI-Nspire CM-C CAS<br>• TI-Nspire CX-C CAS<br>• TI-Nspire CX II-C CAS | **Sharp**<br>• EL-5200<br>• EL-9200 series<br>• EL-9300 series<br>• EL-9600 series**<br>• EL-9900 series<br>**Other**<br>• Datexx DS-883<br>• Micronta<br>• NumWorks<br>• Smart2 |

** The use of a stylus is not permitted.

## UNACCEPTABLE CALCULATORS

Students are not allowed to use any of the following items as a calculator:

- Laptops or other computers, tablets, cell phones, or smartphones
- Smartwatches or wearable technology of any kind
- Models that can access the Internet, have wireless, Bluetooth, cellular, audio/video recording and playing, camera, or any other smart phone type feature
- Models that have a computer-style (QWERTY) keypad, pen-input, or stylus
- Models that use electrical outlets, make noise, or have a paper tape
- Calculator function on a mobile phone
- In addition, the use of hardware peripherals such as a stylus with an approved calculator is not permitted. Some models with touch-screen capability are not permitted (e.g., Casio ClassPad).

# APPENDIX B

## MEDICAL EXEMPTION

### Students with Temporary Medical Conditions Attending School

Every year during statewide testing, there are cases of students with various medical conditions that effect their ability to participate in testing. In some cases, the student may have a note from a medical professional stating that the student should be excused from participating in testing. State law stipulates that all public school students in the specified grades who receive educational services must participate in statewide assessments.

In some cases, a student may have been injured and the student's medical condition may temporarily impact his or her ability to complete the test (e.g., broken hand or arm, concussion). Under the law, there is no exemption from administering the statewide test to these students. Therefore, to test the injured student, the first option would be to delay testing until later in the test administration window to give the student enough time to recover.

A student who is injured in the days just before or during test administration has a temporary disability, and may be eligible for accommodations under Section 504. This determination of temporary disability is made by a 504 Planning Team at a meeting in which the injury is documented. If the student is determined eligible for Section 504 status, a plan is developed outlining the accommodations necessary for the student to participate in instructional activities and statewide assessments. If standard accommodations are not sufficient for statewide assessments, contact the Performance Office to see what other accommodation options are available.

### Medical Exemption Definition and Procedures

**Definition:**
In Connecticut, the exemption determination for a medical emergency rests primarily on the following criteria: **The student is unable to attend school and is medically/emotionally unavailable for homebound/hospitalized instruction.** Students who are hospitalized or homebound due to illness should be tested unless there are medical constraints. These students can have the test administered at home or in the hospital provided the test is administered by a certified school staff member who is fully trained in the proper test administration and security procedures for the Smarter Balanced Assessments, NGSS, Connecticut SAT, CTAA, and CTAS.

In rare cases, there may be a student who experiences a medical emergency just prior to (or during) the testing window. There is a process whereby, the student may receive an exemption from testing due to the emergency nature of the medical condition, if the criteria for exemption are met.

A medical exemption can be given to a student depending on the availability of the student during the statewide testing window. An application for medical exemption is required each year a student meets the criteria for exemption.

## Medical Exemption Procedure

### Step 1 – Initial Contact:

The District Administrator (DA in TIDE) must contact Deirdre Ducharme (deirdre.ducharme@ct.gov (860-713-6859) or Janet Stuck janet.stuck@ct.gov (860-713-6837)).

Provide the following information:

- State Assigned Student Identification (SASID) number;
- Student Name (***last***, ***first***);
- Grade;
- Name of School, District, Approved Private Special Education Facility, or RESC;
- Subtest(s); and
- Reason for exemption.

You will be notified if the student meets the initial qualification for medical exemption and if Step 2 is required.

### Step 2 – Emergency Medical Exemption Form and Cover Letter:

Based on the result of Step 1, the DA will be provided the *Emergency Medical Exemption Form* for the applicable statewide assessment. This form will be partially completed with the appropriate test dates/information provided in Step 1.

The remainder of *Emergency Medical Exemption Form* **must** be completed and signed by the student's attending physician. The form must be returned to the CSDE with a cover letter on district letterhead that contains the student's demographic information, subtest(s), and reason for exemption as identified in Step 1 above.

### Step 3 – Returning Documentation to the CSDE:

To have the student qualify for a Medical Exemption, the DA must return the completed and signed Emergency ***Medical Exemption Form*** and cover letter by U.S. mail within one week of the close of the applicable testing window to:

Deirdre Ducharme or Janet Stuck, Education Consultant
Connecticut State Department of Education
Performance Office, Bureau of Student Assessment
450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 509, North
Hartford, CT 06103

- Emergency Medical Exemption forms for the Connecticut SAT School Day are due by **May 7, 2020**.
- Emergency Medical Exemption forms for Smarter Balanced, NGSS, and the Connecticut Alternate Assessments (CTAA/CTAS) are due no later than **June 12, 2020**.

**If signed documentation is not received by the CSDE within one week following the closing of the testing window, the *student will be reported as a non-participating student* for any tests left incomplete.**

# APPENDIX C

## SPECIAL DOCUMENTED ACCOMMODATIONS

### Special Documented Accommodations Procedure

**Definition**: Accommodations in test administration are provided to allow students with disabilities the opportunity to demonstrate their aptitude and achievement in testing situations, rather than produce a score that mainly reflects their impairments. Although test accommodations provide students with an equal opportunity to demonstrate their skills and knowledge, they do not guarantee equal outcomes. Again, an appropriate or reasonable accommodation should not interfere with the interpretation of a student's scores. This current edition of the *Assessment Guidelines* contains a substantial list of test accommodations that may be used by students with disabilities.

In exceptional circumstances, there may be a student whose disabilities are such that the allowable accommodations listed in the *Assessment Guidelines* would be insufficient to provide access to the Smarter Balanced Assessments, the NGSS, or the Connecticut SAT School Day. In these cases, upon request, the District Administrator (DA) will be provided information regarding a *Petition for Approval of Special Documented Accommodations*.

Special documented accommodations for Smarter Balanced and NGSS include:

- Calculator (Math Grades 6-8) for Calculator-Allowed Items
- Customized Accommodations
- Human Signer for Math, ELA, and/or Science Items or ELA Reading Passages (Grades 3-8)
- Manipulatives (Math, Grades 4-8)
- Print on Demand
- Scribe

Special documented accommodations for the Connecticut SAT School Day include:

- American Sign Language
- Use of a Human Signer (other than Signed Exact English)
- Human Signer Passages Accommodation (other than Signed Exact English)

### Step 1 – Initial Contact:

To initiate a request for special documented accommodations, the District Administration (DA in TIDE) should contact Deirdre Ducharme (deirdre.ducharme@ct.gov; 860-713-6859) or Janet Stuck (janet.stuck@ct.gov; 860-713-6837). The DAs will be asked to provide the student SASID, grade, and a description of/reason for special of accommodation.

| Special Documented Accommodation Deadline | Assessment |
|---|---|
| December 9, 2019-January 24, 2020 | Smarter Balanced, NGSS |
| November 22, 2019- February 4, 2020 | Connecticut SAT School Day |

Special Documented Accommodation petitions sent after these dates may require additional time for processing. Until approved by the CSDE, administering these tests with special documented accommodations are prohibited.

## Step 2 – Complete the Petition for Approval of Special Documented Accommodations Form and Gather Supporting Evidence:

- Based on the result of Step 1, the DA will be provided the *Petition for Approval of Special Documented Accommodations Form*.
- The DA will communicate with the student's primary teacher and Director of Special Education to ensure that all sections are completed accurately, signed, and are accompanied with sufficient documentation, including but not limited to the student's current IEP or Section 504 Plan.
- Criteria used to determine approval of a Petition for Special Documented Accommodations include:
    - Evidence of appropriate specificity of special accommodations requested related to the individual needs of the student throughout the IEP document or Section 504 Plan. (Identifies activities where required/duration/personnel support, etc.);
    - Evidence that requested special accommodations are currently used during classroom instruction;
    - Evidence of student's disability impacting test accessibility;
    - Evidence of student's experience level with the special accommodations requested; and
    - Evidence of goals to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities over time.

## Step 3 – Returning Documentation to the CSDE:

The DA will submit a signed and completed *Petition for Approval of Special Documented Accommodations Form* **via PDF upload** using the American Institutes for Research Secure FTP site. Information on accessing this site will be provided to the DA upon initial eligibility.

## Step 4 – CSDE Review of Documentation:

- Incomplete or unsigned petitions **will not** be reviewed.
- Upon receipt of petition, the CSDE will contact the student's teacher and/or other appropriate district staff to discuss the student's characteristics and need for the special accommodation indicated on the *Petition for Approval of Special Documented Accommodations*.

## Step 5 – CSDE Review of Documentation:

- The CSDE will send a letter of response to the student's teacher with a copy to the District Administrator and Director of Special Education indicating that the *Special Documented Accommodations Petition* was approved or denied.

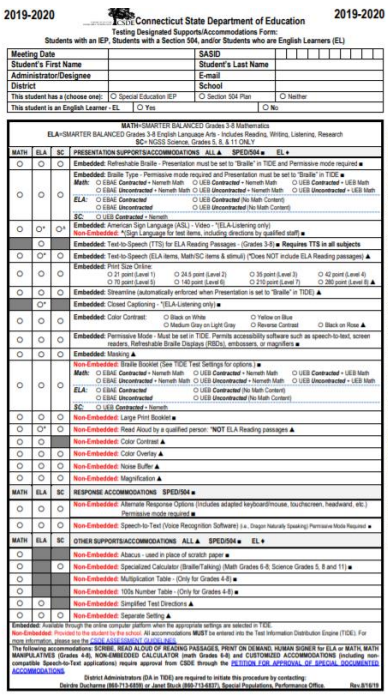
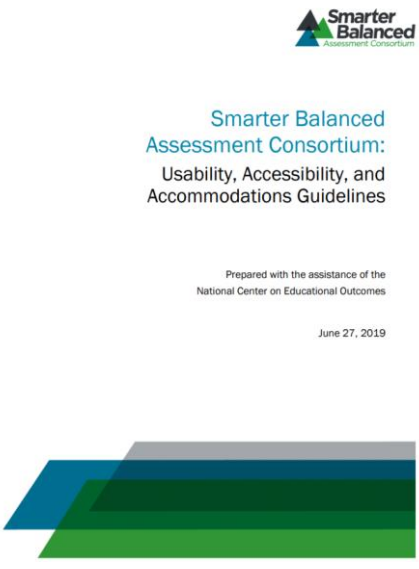
Note that the provision of some accommodations will require additional training or specific test procedures, or the submission of a protocol, and will be indicated in the written letter of approval to the teacher requesting the accommodation.

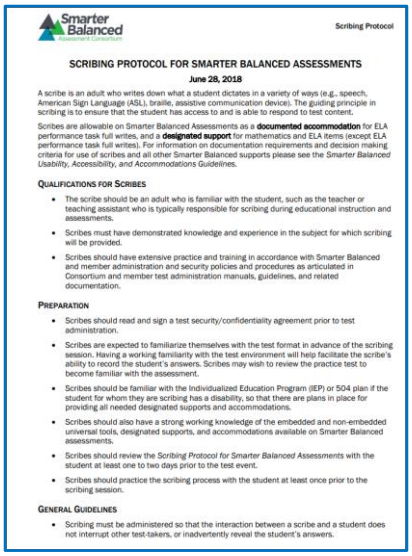
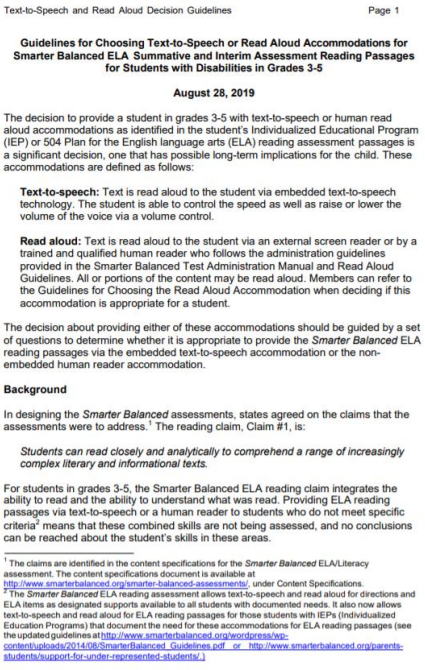
Students **may not participate** in testing with the requested special documented accommodation(s) until formally approved by the CSDE.

# APPENDIX D

## GENERAL RESOURCES

### *2019-20 Accessibility Resources for Test Administration*

| *LINKS* | *DESCRIPTION* |
|---|---|
|  | **2019-20 TEST SUPPORTS/ACCOMMODATIONS FORM**<br><br>This form is used to record designated supports/accommodations needed for students with an IEP, Section 504 Plan, or English Learners (EL). Information from this form must be submitted via the Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE) Test Settings. |
|  | **SMARTER BALANCED USABILITY, ACCESSIBILITY, AND ACCOMMODATIONS GUIDELINES**<br><br>This document describe the Smarter Balanced universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations available for the Smarter Balanced Assessments. However, there may be differences between recommendations in this document and those relevant to Connecticut's assessment program. Therefore, please refer to the ***2019-20 CSDE ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES*** for information specific to Connecticut's statewide assessments. |

| *LINKS* | *DESCRIPTION* |
|---|---|
|  | **SCRIBING PROTOCOL FOR SMARTER BALANCED ASSESSMENTS**<br><br>A scribe is an adult who writes down what a student dictates when responding to test items. Dictation can happen in a variety of ways (e.g., speech, American Sign Language (ASL), braille, assistive communication device, etc.). The guiding principle in scribing is to ensure that the student has access to and is able to respond to test content. Scribes are allowable on Smarter Balanced Assessments through a petition for Special Documented Accommodations. |
|  | **GUIDELINES FOR READ ALOUD, TEST READER**<br><br>Test readers are allowable on Smarter Balanced Assessments across all grades as a designated support for mathematics and ELA items as appropriate (not ELA reading passages).<br><br>Test readers are for ELA reading passages can be requested through a petition for Special Documented Accommodations. Note that this accommodation is appropriate for a very small number of students (estimated to be approximately 1-2% of students with disabilities participating in a general assessment).<br><br>Also note that in Connecticut, we allow this accommodation for eligible students in Grades 3-8. |

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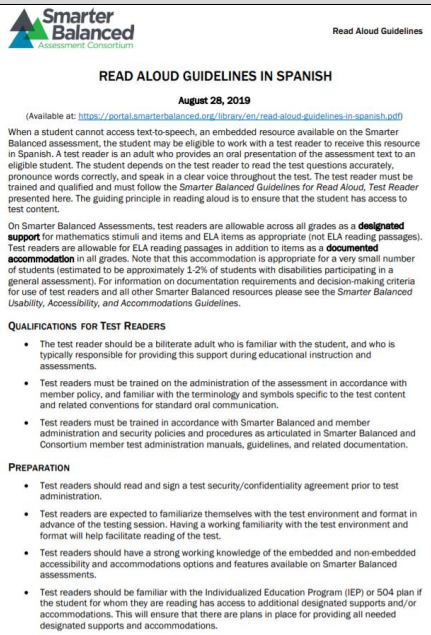
|  Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium<br>Read Aloud Guidelines<br>**READ ALOUD GUIDELINES IN SPANISH**<br>**August 28, 2019**<br>(Available at: https://portal.smarterbalanced.org/library/en/read-aloud-guidelines-in-spanish.pdf)<br>When a student cannot access text-to-speech, an embedded resource available on the Smarter Balanced assessment, the student may be eligible to work with a test reader to receive this resource in Spanish. A test reader is an adult who provides an oral presentation of the assessment text to an eligible student. The student depends on the test reader to read the test questions accurately, pronounce words correctly, and speak in a clear voice throughout the test. The test reader must be trained and qualified and must follow the *Smarter Balanced Guidelines for Read Aloud, Test Reader* presented here. The guiding principle in reading aloud is to ensure that the student has access to test content.<br>On Smarter Balanced Assessments, test readers are allowable across all grades as a **designated support** for mathematics stimuli and items and ELA items as appropriate (not ELA reading passages). Test readers are allowable for ELA reading passages in addition to items as a **documented accommodation** in all grades. Note that this accommodation is appropriate for a very small number of students (estimated to be approximately 1-2% of students with disabilities participating in a general assessment). For information on documentation requirements and decision-making criteria for use of test readers and all other Smarter Balanced resources please see the *Smarter Balanced Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines*.<br>**QUALIFICATIONS FOR TEST READERS**<br>• The test reader should be a biliterate adult who is familiar with the student, and who is typically responsible for providing this support during educational instruction and assessments.<br>• Test readers must be trained on the administration of the assessment in accordance with member policy, and familiar with the terminology and symbols specific to the test content and related conventions for standard oral communication.<br>• Test readers must be trained in accordance with Smarter Balanced and member administration and security policies and procedures as articulated in Smarter Balanced and Consortium member test administration manuals, guidelines, and related documentation.<br>**PREPARATION**<br>• Test readers should read and sign a test security/confidentiality agreement prior to test administration.<br>• Test readers are expected to familiarize themselves with the test environment and format in advance of the testing session. Having a working familiarity with the test environment and format will help facilitate reading of the test.<br>• Test readers should have a strong working knowledge of the embedded and non-embedded accessibility and accommodations options and features available on Smarter Balanced assessments.<br>• Test readers should be familiar with the Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 plan if the student for whom they are reading has access to additional designated supports and/or accommodations. This will ensure that there are plans in place for providing all needed designated supports and accommodations. | **GUIDELINES FOR READ ALOUD IN SPANISH, TEST READER**<br><br>When a student cannot access text-to-speech, an embedded resource available on the Smarter Balanced Assessments, the student may be eligible to work with a test reader. A test reader is an adult who provides an oral presentation of the assessment text to an eligible student. The student depends on the test reader to read the test questions accurately, pronounce words correctly, and speak in a clear voice throughout the test. The test reader must be trained, qualified, and must follow the Smarter Balanced Guidelines for Read Aloud, Test Reader presented here. The guiding principle in reading aloud is to ensure that the student has access to test content. On Smarter Balanced Assessments, test readers in Spanish are allowable across all grades as a **designated support for mathematics**. This non-embedded designated support is also available on the NGSS. |
| CSDE<br>Connecticut Comprehensive Assessment Program<br>**TRANSLATION (GLOSSARY) – EMBEDDED DESIGNATED SUPPORT**<br>Students who are English Language Learners may benefit from using a Translation Glossary for the Smarter Balanced mathematics tests. These students should have the appropriate language Translation (Glossary) embedded designated support selected in TIDE prior to testing. This Designated Support is intended as a language support for students who have limited English language skills whether or not they are identified in PSIS as ELs or ELs with disabilities. The use of this support may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment. See the *CSDE Assessment Guidelines* for information on how to determine if this support is appropriate for your student.<br>AVAILABLE GLOSSARIES<br>The Translation (Glossary) embedded designated support is provided in some languages for selected construct-irrelevant terms for **Smarter Balanced mathematics tests only**.<br>Depending on the student's need, the student may be assigned:<br>1. No Glossary at all<br>2. Illustration Glossary<br>3. English Glossary only (default)<br>4. One second-language Glossary only<br>5. English and Illustration Glossary<br>6. English and one second-language Glossary<br>The available options for the Translation (Glossary) embedded designated support is as follows:<br>• No Glossary<br>• Illustration Glossary<br>• English Glossary (default)<br>• Arabic Glossary<br>• Burmese Glossary<br>• Cantonese Glossary<br>• Filipino Glossary (Ilokano & Tagalog)<br>• Hmong Glossary<br>• Korean Glossary<br>• Mandarin Glossary<br>• Punjabi Glossary (Eastern & Western)<br>• Russian Glossary<br>• Somali Glossary<br>• Spanish Glossary<br>• Ukrainian Glossary<br>• Vietnamese Glossary<br>• English & Illustration Glossary<br>• English & Arabic Glossary<br>• English & Burmese Glossary<br>• English & Cantonese Glossary<br>• English & Filipino Glossary (Ilokano & Tagalog)<br>• English & Hmong Glossary<br>• English & Korean Glossary<br>• English & Mandarin Glossary<br>• English & Punjabi Glossary (Eastern & Western)<br>• English & Russian Glossary<br>• English & Somali Glossary<br>• English & Spanish Glossary<br>• English & Ukrainian Glossary<br>• English & Vietnamese Glossary | **TRANSLATION (GLOSSARY) - EMBEDDED DESIGNATED SUPPORT**<br><br>Students who are English language learners may benefit from using a Translation Glossary on the Math Assessment (Grades 3-8). These students should have the Translation Glossary option selected in TIDE. |

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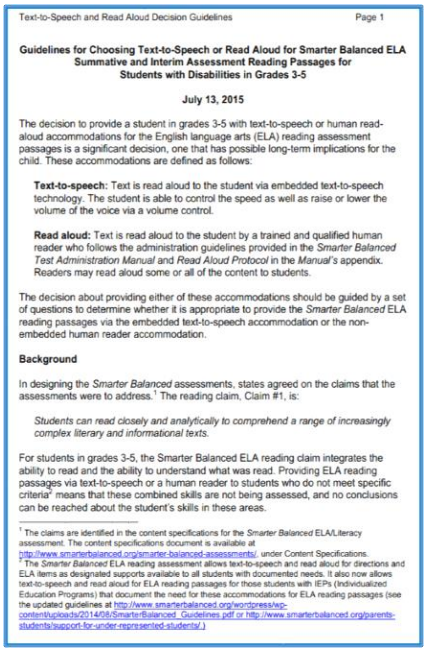
|  | **GUIDELINES FOR CHOOSING TEXT-TO-SPEECH OR READ ALOUD FOR SMARTER BALANCED ELA SUMMATIVE AND INTERIM ASSESSMENT READING PASSAGES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN GRADES 3-8**<br><br>The decision to provide a student in Grades 3-8 with text-to-speech or human read-aloud accommodations for the English language arts (ELA) reading passages is a significant decision, one that has possible long-term implications for the child. These accommodations are defined as follows:<br><br>**Text-to-Speech:**<br>Text is read aloud to the student via embedded text-to-speech technology. The student is able to control the speed, as well as raise or lower the volume of the voice via a volume control. This requires the submission of the *2019-20 Decision Guidelines for Text-to-Speech of the Smarter Balanced ELA Reading Passages*.<br><br>**Read Aloud:**<br>Text is read aloud to the student by a trained and qualified human reader who follows the *Guidelines for Read Aloud, Test Reader.* This requires the submission of the *2019-20 Decision Guidelines for Read Aloud of the Smarter Balanced Reading Passages* and the *2019-20 Read Aloud Protocol* for Smarter Balanced Security/Confidentiality Agreement. (Please note that this link will not be activated until December 9, 2019.) |

Text-to-Speech and Read Aloud Decision Guidelines Page 1

**Guidelines for Choosing Text-to-Speech or Read Aloud for Smarter Balanced ELA Summative and Interim Assessment Reading Passages for Students with Disabilities in Grades 3-5**

**July 13, 2015**

The decision to provide a student in grades 3-5 with text-to-speech or human read-aloud accommodations for the English language arts (ELA) reading assessment passages is a significant decision, one that has possible long-term implications for the child. These accommodations are defined as follows:

**Text-to-speech:** Text is read aloud to the student via embedded text-to-speech technology. The student is able to control the speed as well as raise or lower the volume of the voice via a volume control.

**Read aloud:** Text is read aloud to the student by a trained and qualified human reader who follows the administration guidelines provided in the *Smarter Balanced Test Administration Manual* and *Read Aloud Protocol* in the *Manual*'s appendix. Readers may read aloud some or all of the content to students.

The decision about providing either of these accommodations should be guided by a set of questions to determine whether it is appropriate to provide the *Smarter Balanced* ELA reading passages via the embedded text-to-speech accommodation or the non-embedded human reader accommodation.

**Background**

In designing the *Smarter Balanced* assessments, states agreed on the claims that the assessments were to address.[1] The reading claim, Claim #1, is:

*Students can read closely and analytically to comprehend a range of increasingly complex literary and informational texts.*

For students in grades 3-5, the Smarter Balanced ELA reading claim integrates the ability to read and the ability to understand what was read. Providing ELA reading passages via text-to-speech or a human reader to students who do not meet specific criteria[2] means that these combined skills are not being assessed, and no conclusions can be reached about the student's skills in these areas.

[1] The claims are identified in the content specifications for the *Smarter Balanced* ELA/Literacy assessment. The content specifications document is available at http://www.smarterbalanced.org/smarter-balanced-assessments/, under Content Specifications.
[2] The *Smarter Balanced* ELA reading assessment allows text-to-speech and read aloud for directions and ELA items as designated supports available to all students with documented needs. It also now allows text-to-speech and read aloud for ELA reading passages for those students with IEPs (Individualized Education Programs) that document the need for these accommodations for ELA reading passages (see the updated guidelines at http://www.smarterbalanced.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/SmarterBalanced_Guidelines.pdf or http://www.smarterbalanced.org/parents-students/support-for-under-represented-students/.)

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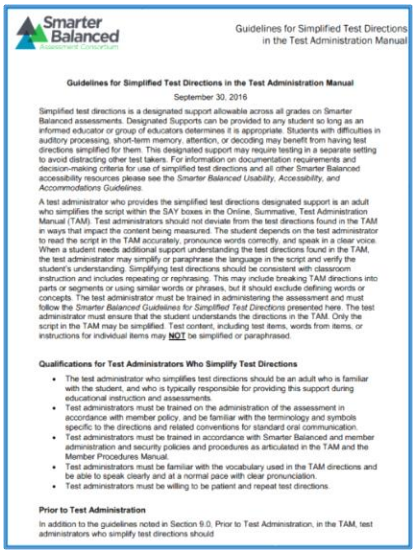
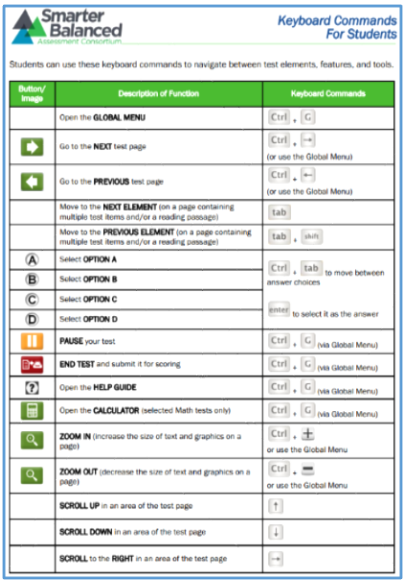
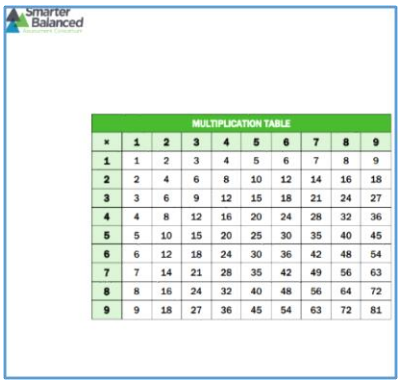
|  | **GUIDELINES FOR SIMPLIFIED TEST DIRECTIONS IN THE TEST ADMINISTRATION MANUAL**<br><br>Simplified test directions is a **designated support** allowable across all grades on Smarter Balanced Assessments. Designated supports can be provided to any student so long as an informed educator, or group of educators, determines it is appropriate. Students with difficulties in auditory processing, short-term memory, attention, or decoding may benefit from having simplified test directions. This designated support may require testing in a separate setting to avoid distracting other test takers. |
|  | **KEYBOARD COMMANDS FOR STUDENTS**<br><br>This **embedded universal tool** allows students to use these keyboard commands to navigate between test elements, features, and tools. |
|  | **MULTIPLICATION TABLE**<br><br>This **non-embedded accommodation** allows students to use a paper-based single digit (1-9) multiplication table in Grade 4 and above for the Smarter Balanced Mathematics Assessment. This documented accommodation may be used for reference by students with an IEP or 504 Plan. These students typically demonstrate a persistent calculation disability (i.e., dyscalculia). |

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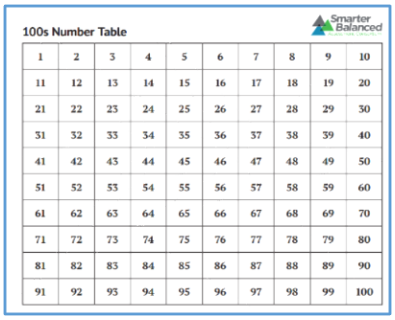
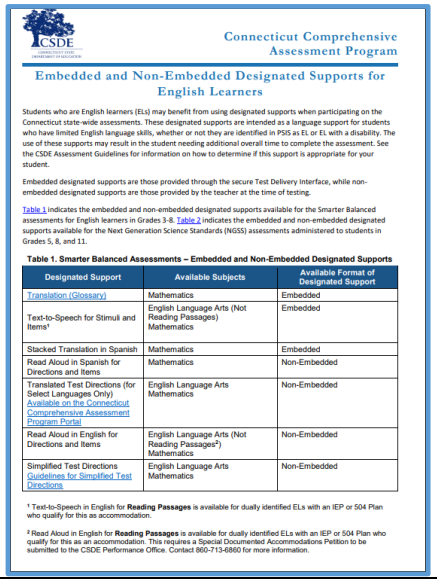
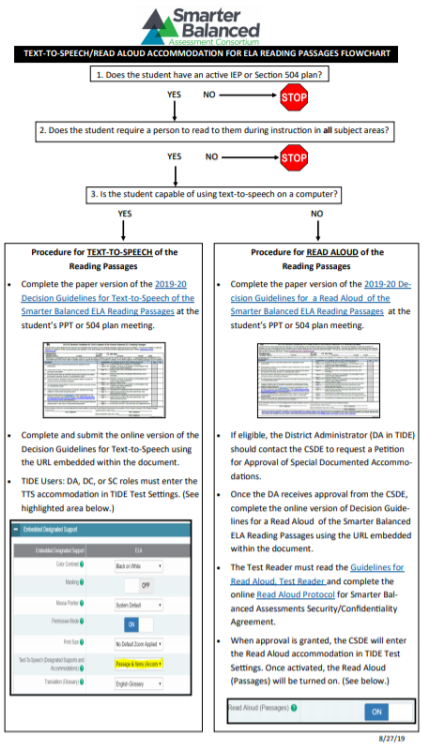
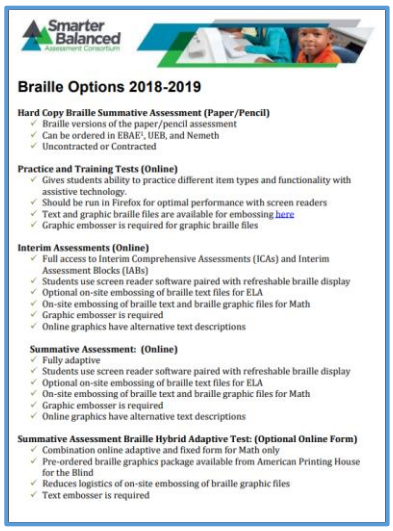
|  | **100s NUMBER TABLE (Available to Students in Grades 4-8)**<br><br>This **non-embedded accommodation** allows students to use a paper-based table listing numbers from 1-100 available from Smarter Balanced for reference. Students with visual processing or spatial perception needs may find this beneficial, as documented in their IEP or 504 Plan. This accommodation is available to students in Grades 4-8. |
| | **TRANSLATED TEST DIRECTIONS**<br><br>Translated test directions, available to students who have limited English language skills, is a language support available at the beginning of the math or ELA Assessments as the test directions are presented to students. This support should only be used for students who are proficient readers in the non-English language and not proficient in English. The use of this support may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment. |
|  | **EMBEDDED AND NON-EMBEDDED DESIGNATED SUPPORTS FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS**<br><br>Students who are English learners (ELs) may benefit from using designated supports when participating on the Connecticut statewide assessments. These designated supports are intended as a language support for students who have limited English language skills, whether or not they are identified in PSIS as EL or EL with a disability. The use of these supports may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment. |



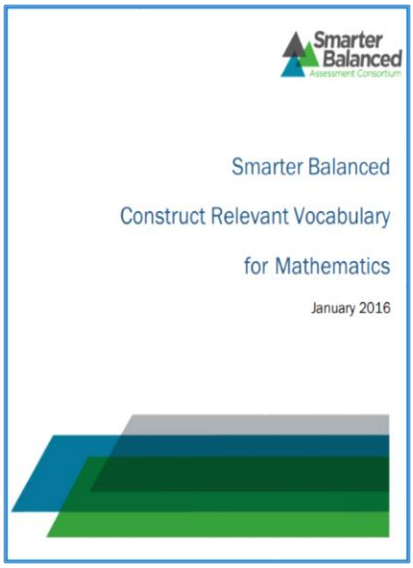

## TEXT-TO-SPEECH/READ ALOUD ACCOMMODATIONS FOR ELA READING PASSAGES FLOWCHART

This resource should be used to determine student eligibility for the text-to-speech or read aloud accommodation for the Smarter Balanced ELA Reading Passages. It includes the appropriate procedures based on the needed accommodation.




## BRAILLE OPTIONS 2018-2019

Various braille options are available for students and must be indicated in TIDE Test Settings.

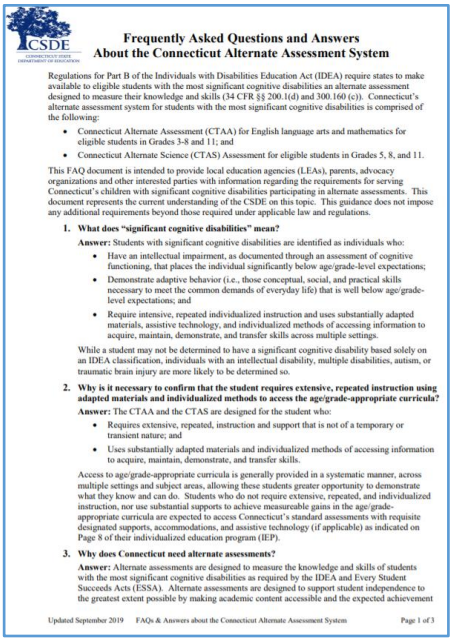



## SMARTER BALANCED CONSTRUCT RELEVANT VOCABULARY FOR MATHEMATICS

"Construct relevant vocabulary" refers to any mathematics term that students should know because it is essential to the construct of the content area. As such, these terms should be part of instruction.

## SMARTER BALANCED CONSTRUCT RELEVANT VOCABULARY FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND LITERACY

"Construct relevant vocabulary" refers to any English language arts term that students should know because it is essential to the construct of English language arts. As such, these terms should be part of instruction.



**Frequently Asked Questions and Answers About the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System**

Regulations for Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) require states to make available to eligible students with the most significant cognitive disabilities an alternate assessment designed to measure their knowledge and skills (34 CFR §§ 200.1(d) and 300.160 (c)). Connecticut's alternate assessment system for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities is comprised of the following:

- Connecticut Alternate Assessment (CTAA) for English language arts and mathematics for eligible students in Grades 3-8 and 11; and
- Connecticut Alternate Science (CTAS) Assessment for eligible students in Grades 5, 8, and 11.

This FAQ document is intended to provide local education agencies (LEAs), parents, advocacy organizations and other interested parties with information regarding the requirements for serving Connecticut's children with significant cognitive disabilities participating in alternate assessments. This document represents the current understanding of the CSDE on this topic. This guidance does not impose any additional requirements beyond those required under applicable law and regulations.

1. **What does "significant cognitive disabilities" mean?**

   **Answer:** Students with significant cognitive disabilities are identified as individuals who:
   - Have an intellectual impairment, as documented through an assessment of cognitive functioning, that places the individual significantly below age/grade-level expectations;
   - Demonstrate adaptive behavior (i.e., those conceptual, social, and practical skills necessary to meet the common demands of everyday life) that is well below age/grade-level expectations; and
   - Require intensive, repeated individualized instruction and uses substantially adapted materials, assistive technology, and individualized methods of accessing information to acquire, maintain, demonstrate, and transfer skills across multiple settings.

   While a student may not be determined to have a significant cognitive disability based solely on an IDEA classification, individuals with an intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, autism, or traumatic brain injury are more likely to be determined so.

2. **Why is it necessary to confirm that the student requires extensive, repeated instruction using adapted materials and individualized methods to access the age/grade-appropriate curricula?**

   **Answer:** The CTAA and the CTAS are designed for the student who:
   - Requires extensive, repeated, instruction and support that is not of a temporary or transient nature; and
   - Uses substantially adapted materials and individualized methods of accessing information to acquire, maintain, demonstrate, and transfer skills.

   Access to age/grade-appropriate curricula is generally provided in a systematic manner, across multiple settings and subject areas, allowing these students greater opportunity to demonstrate what they know and can do. Students who do not require extensive, repeated, and individualized instruction, nor use substantial supports to achieve measureable gains in the age/grade-appropriate curricula are expected to access Connecticut's standard assessments with requisite designated supports, accommodations, and assistive technology (if applicable) as indicated on Page 8 of their individualized education program (IEP).

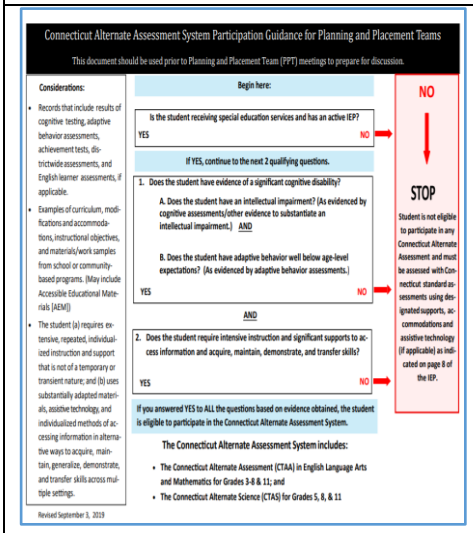
3. **Why does Connecticut need alternate assessments?**

   **Answer:** Alternate assessments are designed to measure the knowledge and skills of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities as required by the IDEA and Every Student Succeeds Acts (ESSA). Alternate assessments are designed to support student independence to the greatest extent possible by making academic content accessible and the expected achievement

Updated September 2019 FAQs & Answers about the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Page 1 of 3

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE CONNECTICUT ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

This FAQ document is intended to provide local education agencies (LEAs), parents, advocacy organizations, and other interested parties with information regarding the requirements for serving Connecticut's children with significant cognitive disabilities participating in alternate assessments. This document represents the current understanding of the CSDE on this topic. This guidance does not impose any additional requirements beyond those required under applicable law and regulations.



**Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Participation Guidance for Planning and Placement Teams**

This document should be used prior to Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meetings to prepare for discussion.

**Considerations:**

- Records that include results of cognitive testing, adaptive behavior assessments, achievement tests, districtwide assessments, and English learner assessments, if applicable.
- Examples of curriculum, modifications and accommodations, instructional objectives, and materials/work samples from school or community-based programs. (May include Accessible Educational Materials [AEM])
- The student (a) requires extensive, repeated, individualized instruction and support that is not of a temporary or transient nature; and (b) uses substantially adapted materials, assistive technology, and individualized methods of accessing information in alternative ways to acquire, maintain, generalize, demonstrate, and transfer skills across multiple settings.

**Begin here:**

Is the student receiving special education services and has an active IEP?
YES NO → NO ↓ STOP

Student is not eligible to participate in any Connecticut Alternate Assessment and must be assessed with Connecticut standard assessments using designated supports, accommodations and assistive technology (if applicable) as indicated on page 8 of the IEP.

If YES, continue to the next 2 qualifying questions.

1. Does the student have evidence of a significant cognitive disability?

   A. Does the student have an intellectual impairment? (As evidenced by cognitive assessments/other evidence to substantiate an intellectual impairment.) AND

   B. Does the student have adaptive behavior well below age-level expectations? (As evidenced by adaptive behavior assessments.)

   YES NO →

AND

2. Does the student require intensive instruction and significant supports to access information and acquire, maintain, demonstrate, and transfer skills?

   YES NO →

If you answered YES to ALL the questions based on evidence obtained, the student is eligible to participate in the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System.

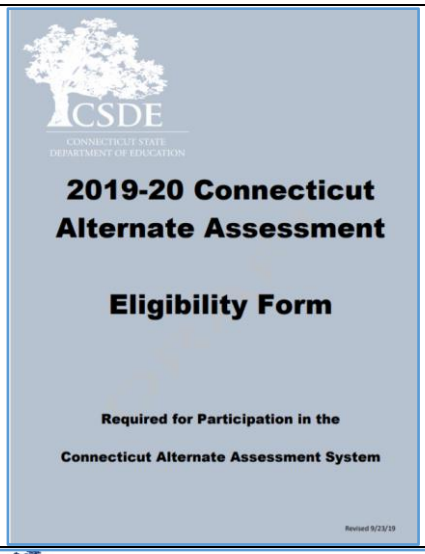
**The Connecticut Alternate Assessment System includes:**

- The Connecticut Alternate Assessment (CTAA) in English Language Arts and Mathematics for Grades 3-8 & 11; and
- The Connecticut Alternate Science (CTAS) for Grades 5, 8, & 11

Revised September 3, 2019

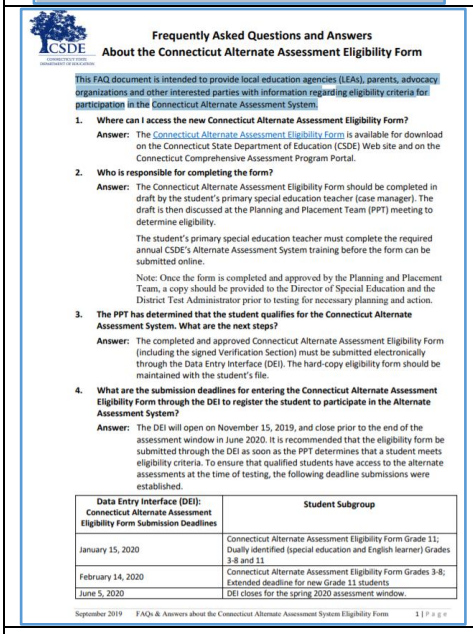
## CONNECTICUT ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM PARTICIPATION GUIDANCE FOR PLANNING AND PLACEMENT TEAMS

The Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Participation Guidance for Planning and Placement Teams flowchart provides the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) with guidance on eligibility for student participation in the Connecticut Alternate Assessments for Math and ELA (for students in Grades 3-8 and 11) and the Connecticut Alternate Science Assessment (for students in Grades 5, 8, and 11). This flowchart should be used in conjunction with the student's Individual Education Program (IEP) and the Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form.




## CONNECTICUT ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM ELIGIBILITY FORM

The Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form replaced the Learner Characteristics Inventory during the 2019-20 school year and will be used by Connecticut Teachers Administering the Alternate Assessment and Planning and Placement Teams to determine eligibility for student participation in Connecticut's Alternate Assessment System. Forms must be submitted through the Data Entry Interface in order to register a student for participation.



Frequently Asked Questions and Answers
About the Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form

This FAQ document is intended to provide local education agencies (LEAs), parents, advocacy organizations and other interested parties with information regarding eligibility criteria for participation in the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System.

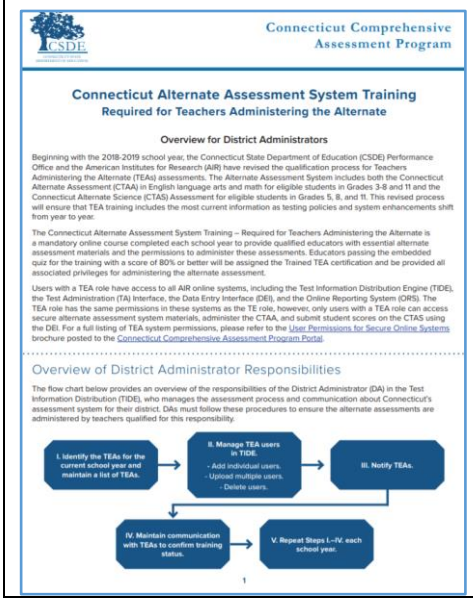
1. **Where can I access the new Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form?**
   **Answer:** The Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form is available for download on the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) Web site and on the Connecticut Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal.
2. **Who is responsible for completing the form?**
   **Answer:** The Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form should be completed in draft by the student's primary special education teacher (case manager). The draft is then discussed at the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meeting to determine eligibility.
   The student's primary special education teacher must complete the required annual CSDE's Alternate Assessment System training before the form can be submitted online.
   Note: Once the form is completed and approved by the Planning and Placement Team, a copy should be provided to the Director of Special Education and the District Test Administrator prior to testing for necessary planning and action.
3. **The PPT has determined that the student qualifies for the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System. What are the next steps?**
   **Answer:** The completed and approved Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form (including the signed Verification Section) must be submitted electronically through the Data Entry Interface (DEI). The hard-copy eligibility form should be maintained with the student's file.
4. **What are the submission deadlines for entering the Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form through the DEI to register the student to participate in the Alternate Assessment System?**
   **Answer:** The DEI will open on November 15, 2019, and close prior to the end of the assessment window in June 2020. It is recommended that the eligibility form be submitted through the DEI as soon as the PPT determines that a student meets eligibility criteria. To ensure that qualified students have access to the alternate assessments at the time of testing, the following deadline submissions were established.

| Data Entry Interface (DEI): Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form Submission Deadlines | Student Subgroup |
|---|---|
| January 15, 2020 | Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form Grade 11; Dually identified (special education and English learner) Grades 3-8 and 11 |
| February 14, 2020 | Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form Grades 3-8; Extended deadline for new Grade 11 students |
| June 5, 2020 | DEI closes for the spring 2020 assessment window. |

September 2019 FAQs & Answers about the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Eligibility Form 1 | Page

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE CONNECTICUT ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT ELIGIBILITY FORM

This FAQ document is intended to provide local education agencies (LEAs), parents, advocacy organizations and other interested parties with information regarding eligibility criteria for participation in the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System.



Connecticut Comprehensive Assessment Program

Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Training
Required for Teachers Administering the Alternate

Overview for District Administrators

Beginning with the 2018-2019 school year, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) Performance Office and the American Institutes for Research (AIR) have revised the qualification process for Teachers Administering the Alternate (TEAs) assessments. The Alternate Assessment System includes both the Connecticut Alternate Assessment (CTAA) in English language arts and math for eligible students in Grades 3-8 and 11 and the Connecticut Alternate Science (CTAS) Assessment for eligible students in Grades 5, 8, and 11. This revised process will ensure that TEA training includes the most current information as testing policies and system enhancements shift from year to year.

The Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Training – Required for Teachers Administering the Alternate is a mandatory online course completed each school year to provide qualified educators with essential alternate assessment materials and the permissions to administer these assessments. Educators passing the embedded quiz for the training with a score of 80% or better will be assigned the Trained TEA certification and be provided all associated privileges for administering the alternate assessment.

Users with a TEA role have access to all AIR online systems, including the Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE), the Test Administration (TA) Interface, the Data Entry Interface (DEI), and the Online Reporting System (ORS). The TEA role has the same permissions in these systems as the TE role, however, only users with a TEA role can access secure alternate assessment system materials, administer the CTAA, and submit student scores on the CTAS using the DEI. For a full listing of TEA system permissions, please refer to the User Permissions for Secure Online Systems brochure posted to the Connecticut Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal.

Overview of District Administrator Responsibilities

The flow chart below provides an overview of the responsibilities of the District Administrator (DA) in the Test Information Distribution (TIDE), who manages the assessment process and communication about Connecticut's assessment system for their district. DAs must follow these procedures to ensure the alternate assessments are administered by teachers qualified for this responsibility.

I. Identify the TEAs for the current school year and maintain a list of TEAs.
II. Manage TEA users in TIDE.
- Add individual users.
- Upload multiple users.
- Delete users.
III. Notify TEAs.
IV. Maintain communication with TEAs to confirm training status.
V. Repeat Steps I.–IV. each school year.

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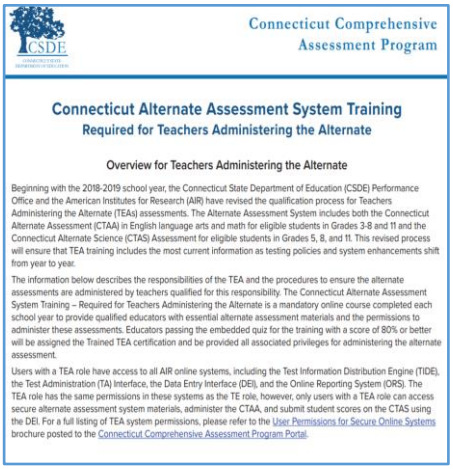
## CONNECTICUT ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM TRAINING – OVERVIEW FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS

The information included in this overview describes the responsibilities of the District Administrator (DA) in the Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE) who manages the assessment process and communication about Connecticut's assessment system for their district. DAs must follow these procedures to ensure the alternate assessments are administered by teachers qualified for this responsibility.



Connecticut Comprehensive Assessment Program

Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Training
Required for Teachers Administering the Alternate

Overview for Teachers Administering the Alternate

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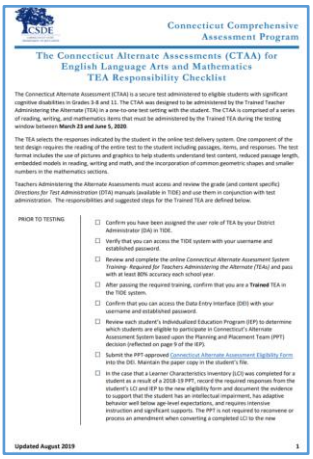
The information below describes the responsibilities of the TEA and the procedures to ensure the alternate assessments are administered by teachers qualified for this responsibility. The Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Training – Required for Teachers Administering the Alternate is a mandatory online course completed each school year to provide qualified educators with essential alternate assessment materials and the permissions to administer these assessments. Educators passing the embedded quiz for the training with a score of 80% or better will be assigned the Trained TEA certification and be provided all associated privileges for administering the alternate assessment.

Users with a TEA role have access to all AIR online systems, including the Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE), the Test Administration (TA) Interface, the Data Entry Interface (DEI), and the Online Reporting System (ORS). The TEA role has the same permissions in these systems as the TE role, however, only users with a TEA role can access secure alternate assessment system materials, administer the CTAA, and submit student scores on the CTAS using the DEI. For a full listing of TEA system permissions, please refer to the User Permissions for Secure Online Systems brochure posted to the Connecticut Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal.

## CONNECTICUT ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM TRAINING – OVERVIEW FOR TEACHERS ADMINISTERING THE ALTERNATE

The information included in this overview describes the responsibilities of the Teacher Administering the Alternate (TEA) and the procedures to ensure the alternate assessments are administered by teachers qualified for this responsibility.



Connecticut Comprehensive Assessment Program

The Connecticut Alternate Assessments (CTAA) for English Language Arts and Mathematics
TEA Responsibility Checklist

The Connecticut Alternate Assessment (CTAA) is a secure test administered to eligible students with significant cognitive disabilities in Grades 3-8 and 11. The CTAA was designed to be administered by the Trained Teacher Administering the Alternate (TEA) in a one-to-one test setting with the student. The CTAA is comprised of a series of reading, writing, and mathematics items that must be administered by the Trained TEA during the testing window between **March 23 and June 5, 2020**.

The TEA selects the responses indicated by the student in the online test delivery system. One component of the test design requires the reading of the entire test to the student including passages, items, and responses. The test format includes the use of pictures and graphics to help students understand test content, reduced passage length, embedded models in reading, writing and math, and the incorporation of common geometric shapes and smaller numbers in the mathematics sections.

Teachers Administering the Alternate Assessments must access and review the grade (and content specific) *Directions for Test Administration* (DTA) manuals (available in TIDE) and use them in conjunction with test administration. The responsibilities and suggested steps for the Trained TEA are defined below.

PRIOR TO TESTING

- ☐ Confirm you have been assigned the user role of TEA by your District Administrator (DA) in TIDE.
- ☐ Verify that you can access the TIDE system with your username and established password.
- ☐ Review and complete the online *Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Training- Required for Teachers Administering the Alternate (TEAs)* and pass with at least 80% accuracy each school year.
- ☐ After passing the required training, confirm that you are a **Trained** TEA in the TIDE system.
- ☐ Confirm that you can access the Data Entry Interface (DEI) with your username and established password.
- ☐ Review each student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) to determine which students are eligible to participate in Connecticut's Alternate Assessment System based upon the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) decision (reflected on page 9 of the IEP).
- ☐ Submit the PPT-approved Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form into the DEI. Maintain the paper copy in the student's file.
- ☐ In the case that a Learner Characteristics Inventory (LCI) was completed for a student as a result of a 2018-19 PPT, record the required responses from the student's LCI and IEP to the new eligibility form and document the evidence to support that the student has an intellectual impairment, has adaptive behavior well below age-level expectations, and requires intensive instruction and significant supports. The PPT is not required to reconvene or process an amendment when converting a completed LCI to the new

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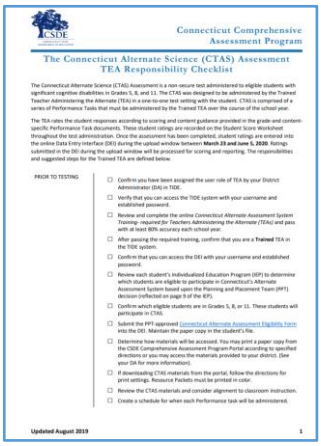
## CONNECTICUT ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT (CTAA) FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND MATHEMATICS

## TEA RESPONSIBILITY CHECKLIST

The Connecticut Alternate Assessment (CTAA) is a secure test administered to eligible students with significant cognitive disabilities in Grades 3-8 and 11. The CTAA was designed to be administered by the Trained Teacher Administering the Alternate (TEA) in a one-to-one test setting with the student. The responsibilities and suggested steps for the Trained TEA are defined in this document.



Connecticut Comprehensive Assessment Program

The Connecticut Alternate Science (CTAS) Assessment
TEA Responsibility Checklist

The Connecticut Alternate Science (CTAS) Assessment is a non-secure test administered to eligible students with significant cognitive disabilities in Grades 5, 8, and 11. The CTAS was designed to be administered by the Trained Teacher Administering the Alternate (TEA) in a one-to-one test setting with the student. CTAS is comprised of a series of Performance Tasks that must be administered by the Trained TEA over the course of the school year.

The TEA rates the student responses according to scoring and content guidance provided in the grade and content-specific Performance Task documents. These student ratings are recorded on the Student Score Worksheet throughout the test administration. Once the assessment has been completed, student ratings are entered into the online Data Entry Interface (DEI) during the upload window between **March 23 and June 5, 2020**. Ratings submitted in the DEI during the upload window will be processed for scoring and reporting. The responsibilities and suggested steps for the Trained TEA are defined below.

PRIOR TO TESTING

- ☐ Confirm you have been assigned the user role of TEA by your District Administrator (DA) in TIDE.
- ☐ Verify that you can access the TIDE system with your username and established password.
- ☐ Review and complete the online *Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Training- required for Teachers Administering the Alternate (TEAs)* and pass with at least 80% accuracy each school year.
- ☐ After passing the required training, confirm that you are a **Trained** TEA in the TIDE system.
- ☐ Confirm that you can access the DEI with your username and established password.
- ☐ Review each student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) to determine which students are eligible to participate in Connecticut's Alternate Assessment System based upon the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) decision (reflected on page 9 of the IEP).
- ☐ Confirm which eligible students are in Grades 5, 8, or 11. These students will participate in CTAS.
- ☐ Submit the PPT-approved Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form into the DEI. Maintain the paper copy in the student's file.
- ☐ Determine how materials will be accessed. You may print a paper copy from the CSDE Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal according to specified directions or you may access the materials provided to your district. (See your DA for more information).
- ☐ If downloading CTAS materials from the portal, follow the directions for print settings. Resource Packets must be printed in color.
- ☐ Review the CTAS materials and consider alignment to classroom instruction.
- ☐ Create a schedule for when each Performance task will be administered.

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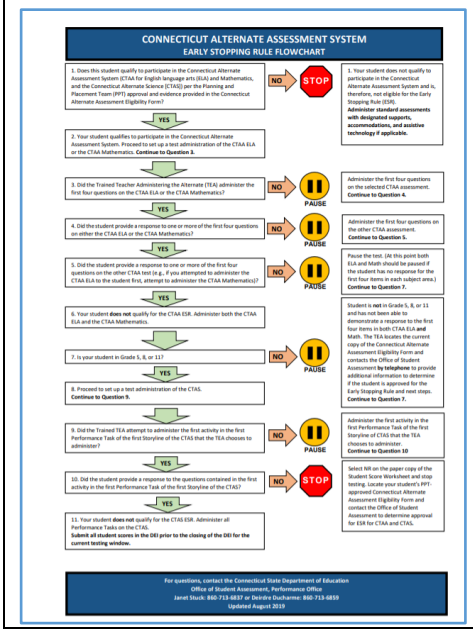
## CONNECTICUT ALTERNATE SCIENCE ASSESSMENT TEA RESPONSIBILITY CHECKLIST

The Connecticut Alternate Science Assessment (CTAS) is a non-secure test that is administered to eligible students with significant cognitive disabilities in Grades 5, 8, and 11. The CTAS was designed to be administered by the Trained Teacher Administering the Alternate (TEA) in a one-to-one test setting with the student. The responsibilities and suggested steps for the Trained TEA are defined in this document.




# CONNECTICUT ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM EARLY STOPPING RULE FLOWCHART

This document outlines all steps that a Trained Teacher Administering the Alternate (TEA) must take to determine whether or not a student qualifies for the Early Stopping Rule (ESR) for the Connecticut Alternate Assessment (CTAA) and the Connecticut Alternate Science Assessment (CTAS).

# CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**Performance Office**
Ajit Gopalakrishnan
Chief Performance Officer

Abe Krisst
Bureau Chief, Student Assessment
Performance Office

Deirdre Ducharme and Janet Stuck
Education Consultants
Special Populations