INSTRUCTIONAL AND ASSESSMENT ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE DOCUMENT

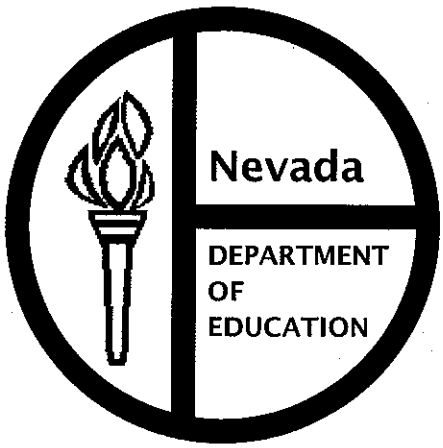

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 1

Background 3
- Legal Considerations 3
- Changing Roles of General and Special Education Teachers 5
- Academic Content Standards 6

Classroom Accommodations 8

Statewide Assessment Accommodations 16

Choosing Accommodations 21
- Determining The Consequences of Accommodation Use 22
- Questions To Guide Accommodation Selection 22

A Final Note 24
- Commonly Asked Questions Regarding Accommodations 24

Resources 26

Appendices

A. IEP Accommodation Form for the Nevada Proficiency Examination Program 27

B. Fact Sheets
- Examples of Accommodations Based on Student Characteristics 29
- Do's and Don'ts When Selecting Accommodations 34

C. Teacher Tools
- Access Needs That May Require Accommodations 35
- Accommodations From The Student's Perspective 37
- Assessment Accommodations Plan 39
- Accommodations Journal 40

INTRODUCTION

Instruction and assessment are among the cornerstones of quality education for all students. For students with disabilities, accommodations are sometimes necessary to ensure that instruction and assessment are provided in ways that meet their individual learning needs. The purpose of this Technical Assistance Document is to describe the participation of students with disabilities in assessment and accountability systems as well as to explain the role of accommodations in supporting effective instruction and assessment for those special education students who may need them. The overarching premise of this document is that students with disabilities both deserve and are required to participate in the general education curriculum (i.e., state standards) as well as the assessment and accountability processes that measure their performance against that general education curriculum.

The document begins with an overview of the legal context for including students with disabilities in district and statewide assessment and accountability systems. Both the purpose of these systems, as well as the legal requirements articulated in federal and state laws are described. The document then briefly highlights the changing roles of general and special education teachers in meeting the needs of students with disabilities, including the importance of collaboration in the planning and delivery of instruction and assessment. The relevance of state content standards is also described as is the purpose and function of using accommodations to help students reach mastery of the standards.

The document describes the use of accommodations in both classroom settings as well in the administration of statewide assessments for students with disabilities. Specific accommodations and the ways in which they can be applied are described, as are factors that should be considered in selecting appropriate accommodations for a given special education student. Also noted is the importance of considering both intended and unintended consequences that may result from the selection and use of a given instructional or assessment accommodation.

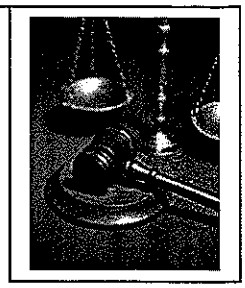
Three appendices are included in the document, including: (a) a copy of the 2006-07 school year IEP accommodations form, along with information on how to obtain the form (which often changes annually) on the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) website; (b) a fact sheet that articulates examples of accommodations based on student characteristics; and (3) tools for helping IEP committee members determine what a given student's accommodation needs may be, including a tool for students to use in helping chart their educational programs, and a sample form that IEP committees may find helpful.

This document was developed by the NDE Office of Special Education, Elementary and Secondary Education, and School Improvement Programs, in collaboration with the NDE Office of Assessment and Program Accountability and the States Collaborative on Assessing State Standards (SCASS), a program coordinated by the Council of Chief State School Officers. A host of research supports the contents of this document. Accordingly a list of references is provided in the event the reader wants more information about any or all of the content addressed. Additionally, individualized technical assistance is always available by contacting the Nevada Department of Education, Office of Special Education, Elementary and Secondary Education, and School Improvement Programs, at 775-687-9171.

BACKGROUND

There are both legal and theoretical reasons that students with disabilities should be included in state and district assessments. In this section of the document, the two federal laws that articulate requirements for special education student participation in assessment are discussed. Information is also provided about state content standards as well as the changing roles of general and special education teachers to enable students with disabilities to access the general education curriculum, or state standards, and to be appropriately assessed against those standards.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS



Federal and state laws require students with disabilities to participate in standards-based instruction and assessment initiatives. Over-arching legislation specifying these requirements are described below.

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001, P.L. 107-110 (2001)

Stronger accountability for results is one of the four basic education reform principles contained in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001. With regard to instruction and assessment for students with disabilities, this law complements the provisions in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) by providing public accountability at the school, district and state levels for all students. NCLB specifically requires that all students, including those with disabilities, participate in high-quality, yearly student academic assessments (Section 1111(3)(c)(i)). Further, with regard to the participation of students with disabilities, NCLB states that such students should receive those reasonable accommodations necessary to measure academic achievement relative to State academic content and State student academic achievement standards (Section 1111(3)(ii)).

Several critical elements in NCLB are designed to ensure that schools are held accountable for educational results, with the goal that appropriate education is provided to each and every student. Academic content standards and academic achievement standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics, with science added in 2007-2008, form the basis of state assessment system. Academic content standards can be defined as what students should learn and academic achievement standards can be defined as the level to which they should learn. State assessments are administered in grades 3-8 as well as in high school, and serve as the mechanism for checking whether or not schools have been successful in teaching students targeted academic, grade level content.

School accountability is based on measuring each school's success in educating all of its students. The accountability system is defined in terms of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), which is a way to measure a school's progress in ensuring that all students achieve desired results, and to annually assess the improvement a school makes toward this goal. Schools and states are held accountable for meeting targets on an annual basis

through public reporting (as well as individualized reporting to parents) and ultimately through sanctions if adequate results are not achieved.

Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (P.L. 108-446)

The Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) sets forth the federal requirements for the provision of special education services for eligible students with disabilities. Accountability at the individual student level is provided through Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs) developed on the basis of each special education students' unique educational needs. In alignment with NCBL, IDEA requires the participation of students with disabilities in state and district-wide assessments. IDEA Section 612(a)(17)(A) requires that students with disabilities be included in general State and district-wide assessment programs, with appropriate accommodations, where necessary. IDEA Section 614(d)(1)(A)(vi)(ll)(aa)(bb) further requires that students' individualized educational programs (IEPs) include a statement of any individual modifications in the administration of State or district-wide assessments of student achievement that are needed in order for the student to participate in the assessment, and that if the IEP Team determines that the child will not participate in a particular State or district-wide assessment of student achievement (or part of such an assessment), a statement of why that assessment is not appropriate for the student and how the student will be assessed.

As an outgrowth of these requirements, state and district policy makers, parents, and other stakeholders recognize the importance of special education student participation in standards-based instruction and assessment. Students with disabilities must receive quality instruction that will provide them with access to the general education curriculum and will allow them to master state content standards. The use of large-scale assessments to measure such academic success is a critical element of equal opportunity and access to general education curriculum for students with disabilities. Assessments for accountability are intended to measure:

- How successful schools are in including all students in standards-based education;
- How successful instructional strategies are in helping all students achieve at high levels; and
- What specific curriculum and instructional areas need improvement for specific groups of students.

As described above, federal as well as state laws require that all students with disabilities participate in assessments intended to hold schools accountable for the academic performance of students. As such, IEP committee members must actively engage in a planning process that considers the following issues:

- The provision of appropriate accommodations when necessary, to help facilitate student access to grade level content and state assessments; and

- The potential need for use of an alternate assessment to assess the achievement of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. (More information about the alternate assessment is provided below.)

Schools must include all students with disabilities in state assessments that are administered to hold schools accountable for the academic achievement of each student. In some cases, students will only need one or two of the accommodations included in these guidelines to access grade level state assessments. Other students will not require any accommodations to access grade level assessments. However, for students with significant cognitive disabilities, an alternate assessment may be more appropriate. Nevada's alternate assessment is the *Nevada Alternate Scales of Academic Achievement (NASAA).* A small number of students with disabilities meet the strict criteria required, in order to be assessed with the NASAA, and federal law includes a 1% cap of the number of students whose results can be reported on this type of assessment. The NASAA assesses student academic performance through direct observation of specific tasks. Each task is an indication of a specific academic skill, which has been linked to grade-level content. These observations are recorded as digital-video clips that are scored by the classroom teacher and stored in an electronic record using a special software program called Measured Progress ProFile. Later in the school year, a second classroom teacher may view this evidence and validate that the score provided by the classroom teacher is accurate. The IEP committee's determination that a student will participate in NASAA is guided by five overarching questions, which can be found in the *Guidelines for Student Participation in Nevada Alternate Scales of Academic Achievement (NASAA),* in Tab 9 of the document *Procedures for the Nevada Proficiency Examination Program,* available on the NDE website at: http://www.doe.nv.gov/statetesting/npep.html

CHANGING ROLES OF GENERAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

In the past few years, important developments have taken place, which indicate that the roles for both general and special education teachers are changing. In 2002, the President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education spelled out a recommendation that "teachers in general education learn about special education". This recommendation is consistent with a 2002 legislative priority supported by the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) to place a greater emphasis on the infusion of quality teaching for both special education and general education students. This legislative priority explicitly acknowledges, "success of all children is dependent on the quality of both special education and general education...and that special education is not a place apart, but an integral part of education."

General educators must be knowledgeable about instructing students with a diverse range of learning needs, and special educators must be knowledgeable about strategies that will provide access to academic content standards for students with disabilities. Both sets of teachers need to encourage a continuous flow of communication and collaborative

planning activities to meet the instructional and assessment accommodation needs of students with disabilities. In this context, collaboration refers to general and special education teachers working as a team for the benefit of students with disabilities. Such collaboration should be designed to:

1. Promote the understanding of general and special education teachers' roles and responsibilities;
2. Provide opportunities to gain new skills (e.g., special educator's knowledge of content, and general educator's knowledge of specialized instructional techniques); and
3. Serve as a support building process that fosters the collaborative school culture.

ACADEMIC CONTENT STANDARDS

Academic content standards are educational targets for students to work toward at each grade level. Teachers ensure that students work toward content standards by using a range of curricular and instructional strategies, which are selected based on the varied strengths and needs of students. The academic content standards developed by the state are a result of extensive planning, discussion, and interaction with administrators, teachers, parents, and other school partners. Equal access to *grade level content* is the goal of providing instructional and assessment accommodations for students with disabilities. To accomplish this task, the following points must be considered:

- Both general and special education teachers must be familiar with State and District content standards;
- Teachers must know how to access information about the standards and any updates that may be made on an occasional basis;
- Collaboration between general and special educators is essential in the delivery of instruction and assessment; and
- IEP committees must plan students' programming in consideration of students' learning and mastery of standards.

All students with disabilities can work toward mastery of grade level academic content standards, and most special education students can reach mastery of the standards when the following three conditions are met:

1. Instruction is provided by teachers who are knowledgeable in the content areas addressed by state standards and who know how to differentiate instruction;

2. IEPs are developed to ensure the appropriate provision of specialized instruction (e.g., specific reading skills, strategies for "learning how to learn"); and
3. Appropriate accommodations are provided, when needed, to help students access grade level instruction and demonstrate achievement through assessment. When the student has had time to become familiar and comfortable with the accommodations in the classroom, and the same instructional accommodations are appropriately used during assessment, he/she can better demonstrate the skill or knowledge acquired.

When students have had standards-based instruction, with appropriate supports provided through special education services and strategies, they must be given an opportunity to show what they have learned, via state assessments. Instructional accommodations should be provided in a manner of diminishing support, called scaffolding, so that students with disabilities may experience and access general education curriculum and assessment with the correct level of support. That is to say, that students with disabilities should receive the accommodations they need, but not be accommodated more than necessary, or inadvertently be made falsely dependent on accommodations that are not truly necessary for the student. During instruction, skills should be presented in a scaffolded manner, thus preparing the student to take state and local assessments with allowable assessment accommodations whenever possible. (More information about which accommodations are allowable and the consequences of choosing accommodations are described later in this document.) When given appropriately, results or student outcomes on the state assessments can demonstrate the level at which students with disabilities have met and mastered the general education curriculum (i.e., standards).

CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATIONS

Accommodations can be provided in multiple settings, such as the student's classroom or a special testing environment. This section describes the four kinds of accommodations that may be appropriate for some students with disabilities in their typical classroom settings, as well as explains who may benefit from each of these types of accommodations and ways in which each of the accommodations may be provided.

Classroom accommodations are changes in the way a student accesses instruction, *without changing expectations* or the actual grade level standard. The goal is to find opportunities for the student to access instruction without changing the content. Before describing the types and uses of classroom accommodations, it is important to distinguish the difference between accommodations and "modifications". Modifications are *changes in expectations*, or the content or level of presentation that may affect what the student is expected to learn. Modifications may alter the scope or content of what is being presented in the classroom, and often include changing, lowering, or reducing learning expectations. Modifications can result in greater gaps between students and their classmates. Using modifications may result in implications that could adversely affect a student throughout his/her educational career. (More information about the consequences of choosing accommodations and modifications is provided later in this document.) Examples of modifications may include:

- Requiring a student to learn less material (e.g., fewer objectives, shorter units or lessons, few pages or problems);
- Reducing assignments and classroom tests so that a student only needs to complete the easiest problems or items;
- Revising assignments or classroom tests to make them easier (e.g., crossing out half of the response choices on a multiple choice test so that a student only has to pick from 2 options instead of 4); or
- Giving a student hints or clues to correct responses on assignments and classroom tests.

As a reminder, this section is designed to help stakeholders understand the use of accommodations — meaning changes in the way instruction and assessment are provided, without diminishing expectations or grade level standards — in the classroom setting. Classroom accommodations should be determined by the student's IEP committee, and should be documented in the Supplementary Aids and Services section on page 7 of Nevada's mandated IEP form.

Classroom Accommodations are commonly categorized in four ways: (1) *Setting,* (2) *Timing/Scheduling,* (3) *Presentation,* and (4) *Response.* The following is a sample of the accommodations that fall under these categories, but should not be considered an exhaustive list.

1. Classroom Setting Accommodations

Classroom setting accommodations change the location in which a classroom test or assignment is given or the conditions of the classroom setting.

Students Who May Benefit from Classroom Setting Accommodations

Changes in instructional locations can benefit students who are easily distracted in large group settings and/or who concentrate best in a small group or individual setting. Changes in location may also benefit other students who could be distracted by some accommodations a special education student might receive (e.g., reader, scribe, frequent breaks). Additionally, students with physical disabilities might need a more accessible location, specific room conditions, or special equipment.

Possible Ways To Provide Classroom Setting Accommodations in the Classroom

Reduce Distractions to the Student. A setting accommodation to reduce distractions allows a student to do individual work or to take tests in a different location, usually in a place with few or no other students. Changes may be made to a student's location within a room. For example, a student who is easily distracted may not want to sit near windows, doors, or pencil sharpeners. Sitting near the teacher's desk or in the front of a classroom may be helpful for some students. Physically enclosed classrooms (classrooms with four walls) may be more appropriate than open classrooms, and study carrels might also be helpful for students who are easily distracted. Students with low vision may prefer to sit in the part of a room that has the best light. Some students concentrate best while wearing noise buffers such as headphones, earphones, or earplugs.

Reduce Distractions to Other Students. Some students use accommodations that may distract other students, such as having a reader or scribe. In addition, some students perform better when they can read and think out loud or make noises that distract other students. Using these accommodations in individual settings for the students who need such an accommodation reduces distractions to other students.

Change in Location to Increase Physical Access or to Use Special Equipment. Occasionally a setting might be changed to increase physical access for a student. Some students may need equipment that requires specific locations for learning and assessment. For example, a student who uses a computer for word processing might need to complete assignments and/or take tests in a computer lab. A student who uses large print materials may need to sit at a table rather than at a desk with a small surface area. Another student might benefit from a standing work station. It is important to keep aisles clear and to not leave doors or cupboards half-open to increase access for students with visual or physical disabilities, or to provide space for a guide dog (be sure to explain to other students that the dog is working and should be ignored).

2. Timing/Scheduling Accommodations

Timing/scheduling accommodations increase the allowable length of time to complete a classroom test or assignment or change the way the time is organized. The length of time

may be extended for class work or the classroom test but the test items cannot be removed to make the test shorter, as this would be a modification, not an accommodation.

Students Who May Benefit from Timing/Scheduling Setting Accommodations

Timing accommodations are most helpful for students who need more time than generally allowed to complete assignments, classroom tests, and activities. Extra time may be needed to process written text (e.g., for a student with a learning disability who processes information slowly), to write (e.g., for a student with limited dexterity), or to use other accommodations or equipment (e.g., audio tape, scribe, assistive technology).

Possible Ways To Provide Timing/Scheduling Accommodations in the Classroom

Extended Time. Extended time is best used when students request a fairly specific amount of extra time to complete assignments, projects, and classroom tests. For timed tests, a standard extension may be 1.5 times the standard test length. For example, a student would use 90 minutes to take a test that normally has a 60-minute time limit. Double time may also be allowed. Decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis, keeping in mind the type of accommodations being provided, the disability involved, and the type of assignments, tests, and activities being accommodated. Usually "unlimited" time is not appropriate or feasible. Sometimes students who request extended time end up not needing it because of the reduction in anxiety just knowing that plenty of time is available. Additionally, students who have too much time may lose interest and motivation to do their best work.

Multiple or Frequent Breaks. Breaks may be given at predetermined intervals or after completion of assignments, classroom tests, or activities. Sometimes a student is allowed to take breaks when individually needed. Sometimes classroom tests are divided into shorter sections so that students can take a break between sections of a test. If the length of a break is predetermined, a timer might be used to signal the end of the break.

Change Schedule or Order of Activities. It may be most beneficial for some students to schedule classroom tests and activities that require focused attention at a time of day when the student is most likely to demonstrate peak performance. Sometimes students are allowed to complete activities and take classroom tests over multiple days – completing a portion each day. This is usually done to reduce fatigue.

Divide Long-Term Assignments. Long-term assignments or projects may be more achievable for some students when divided into more manageable tasks. This can reduce anxiety and fatigue and help students organize their work. When possible, provide two sets of textbooks – one for school and one for home. This is especially important for books that students are generally not allowed to take home.

3. Presentation Accommodations

Presentation accommodations allow students to access information in ways that do not require them to visually read standard print. These alternate modes of access include visual, tactile, auditory, and a combination of visual and auditory access.

Students Who May Benefit from Presentation Accommodations

Students who benefit the most from presentation accommodations are those with print disabilities, defined as difficulty or inability to visually read standard print because of a physical, sensory, or cognitive disability.

Possible Ways To Provide Presentation Accommodations in the Classroom

Large Print. Large print editions of tests and instructional materials are required for some students with visual impairments. It is recommended that regular print materials be manipulated to reformat test items and enlarge or change the font as needed. All text and graphic materials, including labels and captions on pictures, diagrams, maps, charts, exponential numbers, notes, and footnotes, should be presented in at least 18-point type for students who need large print. Students need to work on finding an optimal print size, and figuring out the smallest print that can still be read. It is important for the print to be clear, with high contrast between the color of the print and the color of the background. When using large print classroom material, consider the weight, size, and awkwardness of books. Large print books, are now available that look very similar to the same books in standard print. Be sure to order large print materials in plenty of time to be available for instruction and tests at the same time as peers.

Magnification Devices. Some students with visual impairments read regular print materials and enlarge the print by using magnification devices. These include eyeglass-mounted magnifiers, free standing or handheld magnifiers, enlarged computer monitors, or computers with screen enlargement programs. Some students also use Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) to enlarge print and display printed material with various image enhancements on a screen.

Sign Language. Sign language interpreters may be required for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Sometimes an interpreter is only needed or allowed to sign instructions and to assist in communication. Some students may need all print materials interpreted while learning to read print. Interpreters need to be able to translate in the same method of sign language typically used by the student (e.g., American Sign Language, Cued Speech). Interpreters must not paraphrase, clarify, elaborate, or provide assistance with the meaning of words, intent of the test questions, or responses to test items. Graphic materials may be described, but should also be available in print or tactile formats. A standard video presentation of a test in sign language may be used to increase quality, consistency, pacing and accuracy. During an assessment, the interpreter may only sign the directions to the student and not the content of the test.

Visual Cues. Students who are deaf or hard of hearing may need visual cues in the classroom. Teachers should keep their faces visible to the class when speaking, pass out printed material before class, repeat questions asked by other students, and summarize classroom discussion.

Notes, Outlines, and Instructions. Written notes of another student may be copied, or a teacher might provide a print copy of instructions and assignments. Students might also

be given a detailed outline of the material to be covered during the class period and an outline of material to be covered (syllabus) at the beginning of each grading period.

Braille. Braille is a method of reading a raised-dot code with the fingertips. Not all students who are blind read Braille fluently or choose Braille as their primary mode of reading. Even if they use it as their primary mode of reading, Braille users should also build skill in using audiotape, compact disc, and speech synthesis. If a student needs Braille for assessment and instructional materials, be sure they are ordered in plenty of time to be available for instruction and tests at the same time as peers. Also, check to see if practice tests are available in Braille. Although still uncommon, "refreshable Braille displays" are electronic devices that are used to read and write text. The device is connected to a computer and produces Braille output on the Braille display. These devices usually require hours of training to use and should only be used by experienced Braille readers. The Nemeth Braille Code is a system of Braille that makes it possible to convey technical expressions in a written medium to students who are blind or visually impaired. The Nemeth Code contains numerous technical symbols that occur in math and science.

Tactile Graphics. Tactile graphic images provide graphic information through fingers instead of eyes. Graphic material (e.g., maps, charts, graphs, diagrams, illustrations) is presented in a raised format. Tactile sensibility (recognizing graphic images through touch) is far less discriminating than normal vision, making many diagrams too complicated to understand without significant additional information. Additional information can be created through word descriptors.

Human Reader. A qualified person may be provided to read directions orally (in English) to students who are unable to decode visually. This would be a method of preparing the student to participate in state assessments with allowable accommodations. Readers should use even inflection so that the student does not receive any cues by the way the information is read. It is important for readers to read test *directions and questions* word-for-word exactly as written. Readers may not clarify, elaborate, or provide assistance to students. Readers need to be familiar with the terminology and symbols specific to the content but may not read or explain math or science symbols to the student. Readers should be provided to students on an individual basis when possible – not to a group of students.

Audio Tape or Compact Disc. Written test and instructional materials are prerecorded on an audiocassette or compact disc that a student can access by listening. Classroom directions, assignments, and lectures could also be recorded. When taping lectures, students should sit near the front of the classroom, use a small microphone, and tape only parts of the class that can clearly be replayed (e.g., turn off tape recorder during small group discussions). Advantages include ease of operation and low cost. The greatest difficulty with an audio-cassette is rewinding if a student wants to repeat material. This is not as difficult with a CD that can be programmed. Audio versions of tests and other written material need to be supplemented with a print or Braille version of the text so that a student can have access to complicated graphic material. When making a two-sided cassette tape, students may need to be reminded to play the other side. Spot check audio formats before use to make sure everything is working properly.

Books on Tape. This is a service provided by Recordings for the Blind where students can apply to receive text on audiotape. Educators or students can call a toll free number to borrow textbooks for a specified period of time. A special tape player may also be needed.

Recorded Books. Recorded Books are produced on tape or CD and can be borrowed from libraries or purchased from bookstores. Many online bookstores also carry recorded books, making access even easier. Some of the tapes contain the full book and some are abridged (e.g., Reader's Digest version). These tapes play on standard cassette or CD players. Tapes or CDs for children often include a book for following along. Students who can see print may want to get a print copy of a taped book to follow along.

Audio-Amplification Devices. Some students may require amplification equipment in addition to hearing aids to increase clarity. A teacher may use an amplification system when working with students in classroom situations that contain a great deal of ambient noise.

Video Tape and Descriptive Video. Many books have been made into movies, giving students a visual and auditory way to access literature. Videotapes are now often closed-captioned. Captions are visible when activated by a decoder. Built in decoders are required on all 13-inch or larger television sets. Descriptive video is a descriptive narration of key visual elements, making television programs, feature films, home videos and other visual media accessible to people who are visually impaired. Key visual elements include actions, gestures, facial expressions and scene changes. Inserted within the natural pauses in dialogue, audio descriptions of important visual details help to engage viewers with the story.

Screen Reader. A screen reader is a computer application that converts text to synthesized speech or to Braille (read with an auxiliary Braille display). Computer literacy is essential for screen reader use. Screen reading software allows students to listen to text as it is displayed on a computer screen. Students can choose to listen to any text multiple times. Some products work by having a student lay a page on a scanner. When a student activates the machine it reads the text aloud using an optical character recognition (OCR) system. Math formulas are normally displayed on screen as graphics that cannot be read by a screen reader.

Talking Materials. Many classroom materials are now available with auditory components. These include "talking" clocks, calculators, thermometers, voltmeters, and timers.

4. Response Accommodations

Response accommodations allow students to complete assignments, classroom tests, and activities in different ways, or to solve or organize problems using some type of assistive device or organizer.

Students Who May Benefit from Response Accommodations

Response accommodations can benefit students with physical, sensory or learning disabilities (including difficulties with memory, sequencing, directionality, alignment, and/or organization).

Possible Ways To Provide Response Accommodations in the Classroom

Scribe. A scribe is someone who writes down what a student dictates through speech, sign language, or pointing; or by using an assistive communication device. A lot of skill is required for using a scribe - skill that requires extensive practice on the part of the scribe. A scribe may not edit or alter student work in any way, and must record word-for-word exactly what the student has dictated. Scribes should request clarification from the student about the use of punctuation, capitalization, and the spelling of key words, and must allow the student to review and edit what the scribe has written. A person who serves as a scribe needs to be carefully prepared to assure that he or she knows the vocabulary involved and understands the boundaries of the assistance to be provided. A scribe should not be used during writing assessments.

Word Processor. For this accommodation, a student types on a word processor. This option may increase a student's independence and reduce the need for a trained scribe. Research has found that those students who complete better work on computer than by handwriting are students who are very familiar with computers and have good keyboarding skills. Assistive technology that can be used for typing include sticky keys, touch screen, trackball, mouth or headstick or other pointing device, and customized keyboards.

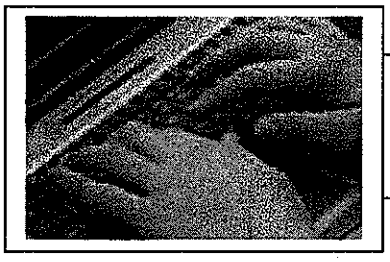
Brailler. A brailler is a Braille keyboard used for typing text that can then be printed in standard print or Braille (embosser). The brailler is similar to a typewriter or computer keyboard. Paper is inserted into the brailler, and multiple keys are pressed at once, creating an entire cell with each press. Through an alternative computer port, new braillers can simultaneously act as a speech synthesizer and read the text displayed on the screen when paired with a screen reading program.

Note-Takers. Students may have another student take notes, or use an electronic note-taking device. Portable note-taking devices are small, lightweight devices equipped with a brailler or typewriter-style keyboard for input and synthetic voice. Some note-takers also contain a brailler display (between 18 and 40 characters) for output. Note-takers are excellent tools for recording notes in school or at home. They often have additional features such as a calculator and a calendar function. Newer models have a built in modem, which allows the user to access email as well as surf the Web. When connected to a PC, files can be exchanged, or information can be sent from the note-taker to a Braille embosser or to an ink printer. When linked to a computer using a screen reader, note-takers equipped with a Braille display can act as a Braille output device.

Tape Recorder. For this accommodation, a student uses a tape recorder to record class work or test responses rather than writing on paper. Students may also present work orally in an instructional setting. A tape recorder may not be used during a writing assessment.

Calculation Devices. If a student's disability affects math calculation but not reasoning, he or she may use a calculator or other assistive device (e.g., number chart, arithmetic table, manipulatives, or abacus). It is important to determine whether the use of a calculation device is a matter of convenience or a necessary accommodation. For example, if students are learning subtraction with regrouping, using a calculator would not give a student an opportunity to show regrouping. On the other hand, if students are working on problem solving skills that include subtraction (e.g., bargain shopping for items with a better value) the use of a calculation device may be a valid accommodation. Calculators may be adapted with large keys or voice output (talking calculators). In some cases, an abacus may be useful for students when mathematics problems are to be calculated without a calculator. The abacus often functions like paper and pencil for a student with visual impairments.

Spelling and Grammar Devices. The use of a dictionary may be allowed on assignments that require an extended response or essay. Spelling and grammar can also be checked with pocket spellcheckers, in which students enter an approximate spelling and then see or hear the correct spelling or correct use of a word. Students who use a word processor may be allowed to use a spell check or other electronic spelling device, however, Nevada requires spell-check and grammar-checking devices to be turned off for statewide writing test.



STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT ACCOMMODATIONS

As stated before, accommodations can be provided in multiple settings. Possible accommodations for use in classroom settings were described in the preceding section. In this section, the document provides an overview of accommodations that may be appropriate for students with disabilities in assessment settings, particularly on the statewide assessment.

Assessment accommodations are changes in the way a student accesses the test, without changing the expectations or the actual grade level standards being measured. Just like classroom accommodations, the goal is to find opportunities for the student to participate in the assessment without changing the content that is being tested. Additionally, the same principal described in the section above holds true with regard to the difference between assessment accommodations and assessment modifications. Assessment modifications are changes in the administration and/or content of the assessment that affect the validity of the assessment and the reliability of the results, and which alter the scope or content of what is being assessed. Using modifications may result in implications that could adversely affect a student throughout his/her educational career. (More information about the consequences of accommodation and modification selection is described later in this document). Examples of assessment modifications might include conditions in which:

- The proctor or test administrator reads the reading test or the vocabulary test to the student;
- The student uses an electronic spell check or grammar check devise on a writing assessment;
- Student uses a calculator on the math computation section of assessments; or
- Any portion of the assessment is read to the student in a language other than English.

This section describes assessment accommodations — changes in the way a student accesses the test, without changing the expectations or the actual grade level standards being measured. It is important to note that there are specific accommodations that are "allowable" as part of Nevada's Proficiency Examination Program (NPEP). Allowable accommodations are those that do not affect the validity of the test, or in other words, that do not alter the content that the test is intended to measure. Each year, the Nevada Department of Education produces a list of the accommodations that are allowable for each of the assessments that are part of the NPEP (e.g., writing test, criterion-referenced test). The currently approved accommodations (2006-07 school year) can be found on the *IEP Accommodation Form for the Nevada Proficiency Examination Program* at the end of this document or online at http://www.doe.nv.gov/edteam/ndeoffices/sped-diversity-improve/docs.html. Readers are encouraged to access the form annually each

August or September, as changes may be made to the list of allowable accommodations each year. Be aware that not all of the accommodations described below are necessarily allowable for each assessment in the NPEP, and additionally, the list of allowable accommodations is not the same for each of the assessments in the NPEP.

In Nevada, when an IEP committee determines that assessment accommodations are necessary for an individual student, the following criteria must be met for that student to have access to the grade-level assessment:

1. It must be indicated on the student's test "answer document" that the student will be taking the assessment with accommodations;
2. The special education teacher must clearly inform the proctor or test administrator of the specific assessment accommodation(s) that are to be implemented for that individual student and for that specific assessment; and
3. The special education teacher must track the individual student's level of performance and progress on state and local assessments and bring these data to the student's IEP committee for consideration in program planning.
4. The accommodations chosen by the IEP committee must be noted on the IEP Accommodations Form and included as part of the student's IEP.

Assessment accommodations are commonly categorized in four ways: *(1) Setting, (2) Timing/Scheduling, (3) Presentation, and (4) Response.* The following is a sample of the accommodations that fall under these categories, but should not be considered an exhaustive list. Again, remember that not all of these accommodations may be allowable for a given assessment under the NPEP; IEP committees should refer to the IEP Accommodations Form to know which accommodations are allowed for each test.

1. Setting Accommodations

Setting accommodations are changes in the location in which the assessment is administered to the student.

Students Who May Benefit from Setting Accommodations

Changes in assessment location may benefit students who receive accommodations (e.g., reader, scribe, frequent breaks) that might distract other students. Changes in location of test administration may assist students who have difficulty remaining focused during a large group administration. Changes in the assessment location may also assist those students who tend to disturb others, need specific room conditions, or individual verbal clarification of directions. For example, students with physical disabilities might need a more accessible location, specific room conditions, or special equipment

Possible Ways To Provide Setting Accommodations During Assessment

Individual Administration. The assessment may be individually administered to the student in another setting, separate from the group administration of the assessment. This

may take place in a quiet location administrated by a proctor who is trained in methods of administration, such that the proctor does not invalidate the administration. This may be appropriate for students who are highly distractible.

Small Group Administration (other than regular classroom). The assessment may be administered to a small group of students in an environment away from the large group administration. These students may be grouped for administration due to their need to move through the assessment at a slower pace.

Administration in an Alternate Setting. The student may have better access to the administration of the assessment in a setting other than the general classroom. This may be a setting that accommodates a student's physical disability, need for frequent movement, need for more space, or need for reduced distractions. This setting should be described on the IEP accommodation form. Again, the proctor or administrator of the assessment should be trained in assessment techniques that do not invalidate the examination.

Provide for Special Lighting. A student who has vision problems, visual tracking problems, or sensitivity to light may require the assessment to be administered in an environment with special lighting. Some students perform better when the lighting is close, and not florescent. The type of lighting required should be described on the individual student's IEP accommodation form.

Provide for Test Administration in a Study Carrel or Reasonable Substitute. This accommodation is used when students become easily off-task, are visually distracted by others in the room, or tend to make noises (e.g., reading aloud) that distract other students.

Provide Special Acoustics Such as an Amplifier for Verbal Directions. The test administrator may provide the test directions to the student with the use of an electronic amplification device.

2. Scheduling/Timing Accommodations

Scheduling/timing accommodations allow the student to take the assessment during a time of day when he/she demonstrates the least fatigue. This would allow for breaks and rest periods.

Students Who May Benefit from Scheduling/Timing Accommodations

Some students with learning disabilities who require extra time to process information, or who write slowly, may benefit. Extra time may also benefit a student with a physical disability who requires extra time due to time constraints using assistive technology.

Possible Ways To Provide Scheduling/Timing Accommodations During Assessment

Time of Day. The assessment may be administered at a time of day when the student is expected to do his/her best work.

Extra Time. The time allowed to take the assessment in a single session is extended to allow for rest periods to counter fatigue or to allow for increased time required by altered testing procedures (not to exceed twice the normal time). The student is not allowed to resume that particular section of a test after lunch, recess, or bathroom breaks.

3. Presentation Accommodations

Presentation accommodations allow students to access information in the assessment in ways that do not require them to visually read standard print. These alternate modes of access include visual, tactile, auditory, and a combination of visual and auditory accommodations.

Students Who May Benefit from Presentation Accommodations

Students who benefit the most from presentation accommodations are those with print disabilities, defined as difficulty or inability to visually read standard print because of a physical, sensory, or cognitive disability.

Possible Ways To Provide Presentation Accommodations During Assessment

Student is Allowed to Use:

- A visual magnification device;
- An electronic device whose sole function is to enlarge text;
- A mask to cover portions of the test;
- A large print or Braille version of the test;
- A device to screen out extraneous sounds; or
- A calculator (currently allowed on the High School Proficiency Examination (HSPE), or the Criterion Referenced Test (CRT) Mathematics test only).

The Test Administrator or Proctor Can:

- Use an auditory amplification device to give directions;
- Read directions aloud in English that are not normally read aloud to the student;
- Reread directions aloud in English as necessary;
- Provide word-for-word directions in English to the student in sign language;
- Read the Language test content (found only on ITBS/ITED) word-for-word, text only, to the student;
- Read the mathematics test content word-for-word, in English, to the student. (For NPEP assessments, it is not permissible to verbalize, explain, sign, or define mathematical symbol);
- Read the science test content word-for-word, text only in English, to the student. (For NPEP assessments, it is not permissible to verbalize, explain, sign, or define scientific symbols); or
- Provide written directions, word-for-word, in English, on a separate sheet for the student to use as needed.

4. Response Accommodations

Response accommodations allow a student to complete the assessment in different ways, or to solve or organize problems using some type of assistive device or organizer.

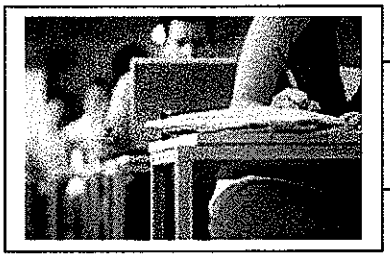
Students Who May Benefit from Response Accommodations

Response accommodations may benefit students with physical, sensory, or learning disabilities (including difficulties with memory, sequencing, directionality, alignment, and organization).

Possible Ways To Provide Response Accommodations During Assessment

Student is able to:

- Use pencils adapted in size or grip diameter;
- Type written responses using a keyboard or typewriter. (The student may not use any electronic aids such as spelling, grammar, or hyphenation checks on the writing assessment);
- Use a Braillewriter to record responses to writing prompts or constructed-response question(s);
- Record response(s) to writing prompts or constructed-response question(s), on a separate sheet of paper;
- Dictate response(s) to multiple-choice questions to a test administrator or proctor;
- Dictate response(s) for constructed-response question(s) to a test administrator or proctor (This is not available to students taking the writing assessment).



CHOOSING ACCOMMODATIONS

In this section of the document, various considerations regarding the selection of a given accommodation for a specific student are described. Information is provided regarding the factors that should be discussed by the student's IEP committee, as well as the consequences that may result from the selection of a given accommodation.

Selecting accommodations for instruction and assessment is the role of the student's IEP committee, which should consider the following questions in the decision-making process:

- What are the student's strengths and needs?
- How do the student's needs affect the achievement of grade level content standards?
- What specialized instruction (e.g., learning strategies, organizational skills, reading skills) does the student need to achieve grade level content standards?
- What accommodations will support the student's access to standards-based instruction and assessment?

Discussions of accommodation use should begin with a review and evaluation of accommodations the student has already experienced, and as such, the IEP committee should discuss each of these points:

- Accommodations routinely used by the student in the classroom and on tests;
- Test and assignment results when accommodations were used and not used;
- Student's perception of how well an accommodation "worked";
- Effective combinations of accommodations;
- Difficulties of accommodations use; and
- Perceptions of parents, teachers, and specialists about how the accommodation appears to have worked.

Based on this review, the IEP committee should then decide if the student should continue using a particular accommodation as is, if changes are needed, or if the accommodation should be discontinued.

IEP committees should consider the possible need for new accommodations (especially if the student is receiving special education for the first time). The members of the student's IEP committee should help gather a list of the student's access needs and possible accommodations to try. Of the accommodations that match the student's needs, IEP committees should then consider:

- The student's willingness to learn to use the accommodation;
- Opportunities for the student to learn how to use the accommodation in classroom settings; and

- Conditions for use on assessments.

IEP committees should also plan how and when the student will learn to use each new accommodation, and should be sure there is plenty of time to learn to use an assessment accommodation well in advance of the day of the test. Finally, they should plan for the ongoing evaluation and improvement of accommodations use. As a reminder, students should only be provided with those accommodations that are absolutely necessary and appropriate and efforts should be made not to over-accommodate a student.

Determining The Consequences of Accommodation Use

The IEP committee needs to understand and consider the implication of the choices made for individual accommodations or modifications. Some of the intended and unintended consequences of accommodations or modifications may have an impact on the student's opportunities such as grade promotion or graduation. For example, for a student with a disability in Nevada to achieve a standard diploma, that student must pass all sections of the high school proficiency examination and receive all required credits in the required courses. The use of modifications on statewide assessments and high school proficiency examinations may result in the student's inability to meet these requirements and may lead the IEP committee to determine the student will earn an adjusted diploma instead of a standard diploma. Parents and students need to be fully informed of any consequences of such policies and accommodation or modification decision made as part of the IEP in the areas of assessment.

When selecting accommodations for state assessments with a student, it is important to look at state policies and procedures to determine the consequences of the student's use of the accommodation. Whether or not an accommodation is allowable may impact the outcome of the school's results with regard to both participation and performance of a given student. For example, the use of a given accommodation may result in the student's score not be counted. More information about allowable accommodation use and implications for scoring relative to a school's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) can be found on the NDE website at: http://www.doe.nv.gov/accountability/ayp.html. Assessment accommodations that result in adverse consequences are commonly referred to as modifications, adaptations, alterations, or nonstandard or nonapproved accommodations. Additionally, consideration should be given to the alignment between accommodation use in the classroom and in assessment situations. To the extent appropriate, accommodations should not be allowed in the administration of state assessments that are not routinely practiced in classroom situations, such as classroom test taking.

Questions To Guide Accommodation Selection

Selecting accommodations for instruction and assessment is the role of a student's IEP committee. IEP committees may use the questions provided below to guide the selection of appropriate accommodations for students receiving special education services for the first time, or for students who are currently using accommodations:

- What are the student's learning strengths and areas for improvement?
- How do the student's learning needs affect the achievement of grade-level content standards?
- What specialized instruction (e.g., learning strategies, organizational skills, reading skills) does the student need to achieve grade-level content standards?
- What accommodations will increase the student's access to instruction and assessment by addressing the student's learning needs and reducing the effect of the student's disability? (These may be new accommodations or accommodations the student is currently using.)
- What accommodations are regularly used by the student during instruction and assessments?
- What are the results of assignments and assessments when accommodations are used and not used?
- What is the student's perception of how well an accommodation "worked?"
- Are there effective combinations of accommodations?
- What difficulties did the student experience when using accommodations?
- What are the perceptions of parents, teachers, and specialists about how the accommodation worked?
- Should the student continue to use an accommodation, are changes needed, or should the use of the accommodation be discontinued?

Of the accommodations that match the student's needs, the IEP committee may want to consider:

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

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

A FINAL NOTE

Accommodations are tools and procedures in the areas of presentation, response, timing/scheduling, and setting which provide equitable instructional and assessment access for students with disabilities. Accommodations are intended to mediate the effects of a student's disability – they are not intended to reduce learning expectations, or lower academic content achievement expectations. Accommodation use should be linked or matched between classroom instruction, classroom testing, and district or state tests. Most accommodation use does not begin and end in school. Students who use accommodations will generally also need them at home, in the community, and as they get older, in postsecondary education, and at work. As such, accommodations for instruction and assessment are integrally intertwined. In this last section of the document, some commonly asked questions about accommodations are asked and answered.

Commonly Asked Questions Regarding Accommodations

Q. Do we expect students with disabilities to achieve grade level achievement standards?

A. Some students with disabilities may require accommodations while learning and during the assessments but the state and federal regulations do require all students, even those with disabilities, to be taught and to learn the academic standards for each grade level.

Q. Are students with disabilities required to participate in a state's accountability system?

A. All students with disabilities must be included in state assessments.

Q. Is parental permission required for students with disabilities to participate in State and district-wide assessment programs if parental permission is not required for the participation of non-disabled students?

A. No. If parental permission is not required for participation in the State and district-wide assessment programs for non-disabled students, it is not required for students with disabilities. However, as members of the IEP committee, parents of students with disabilities are involved in IEP committee decisions about how their individual children will participate in such assessments.

Q. What is the alternate assessment in the state of Nevada?

A. The *Nevada Alternate Scales of Academic Achievement (NASAA)* is the approved alternate assessment to the Nevada Proficiency Examination Program. The strict

criteria for participation in NASAA is outlined in the *Guidelines for Student Participation in Nevada Alternate Scales of Academic Achievement (NASAA),* in Tab 9 of the document *Procedures for the Nevada Proficiency Examination Program,* available on the NDE website at: http://www.doe.nv.gov/statetesting/npep.html.

Q. What is the role of the IEP committee in determining whether the child will participate in general or alternate assessment?

A. The IEP committee has the responsibility and the authority to determine what, if any, individual accommodation or modification in the administration of the state or district-wide assessments of student achievement if needed in order for a particular student with a disability to participate in the assessment program. The IEP committee also has the role of determining if a student with a disability meets the criteria to participate in statewide assessments by taking the alternate assessment, rather than the standard assessment.

Q. What is the role of the IEP committee in determining testing accommodations?

A. It is the IEP committee that decides how a student with a disability will participate in the state assessment program. Participation must occur in one of the following ways:

1. Under standard conditions using no accommodations or using accommodations that do not affect the validity of the assessment (allowable accommodations).
2. Under non-standard conditions, using testing modifications which change or alter the content or administration of the assessment and invalidate the test results; or
3. Participation in the state's alternate assessment program, the *Nevada Alternate Scales of Academic Achievement (NASAA).*

Any accommodation selected for a student must be specified in the student's IEP and should be used during assessments provided as part of the routine instructional day in the classroom.

The *IEP Accommodation Form for the Nevada Proficiency Examination Program,* which is used to guide the IEP committee during the decision-making process of individual testing accommodations for student with disabilities, is found in the Guidelines for the Nevada Proficiency Examination Program, available on the NDE website at: http://www.doe.nv.gov/statetesting/npep.html.

RESOURCES

Ann, J. E., & Warlick, K. R. (2000, August 24). *Questions and answers about provisions in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 related to students with disabilities and state and district-wide assessments.* Retrieved November 23, 2004, from http://www.specialedconnection.com/LrpSecStory/Tool

Council of Chief State School Officers (2005). *How to select, administer, and evaluate use of accommodations for instruction and assessment of students with disabilities,* from http://www.ccsso.org/Projects/scass/projects/assessing_special_education_students/1952.cfm

Lehr, C., & Thurlow, M. (2003). *Putting it all together: Including students with disabilities in assessment and accountability systems* (Policy Directions No. 16). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes. Retrieved November 23, 2004, from http://education.umn.edu/NCEO/OnlinePubs/Policy16.htm

Nevada Department of Education. (2006) *Guidelines for the Nevada Proficiency Examination Program.* Carson City, NV, available at: http://www.doe.nv.gov/statetesting/npep.html

Nolet, V., & McLaughlin, M. (2000). *Assessing the general curriculum including students with disabilities in standards-based reform.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Thurlow, M. L., Elliott, J. L., & Ysseldyke, J. E. (1998). *Testing students with disabilities: Practical strategies for complying with district and state requirements.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

U.S. Department of Education (2002). *Standards and assessments.* Paper presented at Student Achievement and School Accountability Conference. Retrieved November 23, 2004, from http://www.ed.gov/adminis/lead/account/sai/edlie-slide025.html

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2003). *The condition of education 2003*. NCES 2003-067, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

IEP Accommodations Form
Nevada Proficiency Examination Program
Effective for the 2006-2007 School Year Only

Student Name: _____ **Date:** _____

This form is to be used by a student's IEP committee in documenting need for testing accommodations and must accompany the IEP. Accommodations are specific for each student and must be on file in the student's folder. Relevant information from this form must be provided to the appropriate test administrator(s). Test security procedures must be strictly adhered to in the administration of NPEP testing for all students. At least one of options I through III must be completed. Students identified only as Gifted and/or Talented may not use accommodations.

I. NO ACCOMMODATIONS NEEDED

_____ It is the judgment of the IEP committee that no accommodations are needed for this student. The student will test using standard conditions.

II. ACCOMMODATIONS

The accommodations for the Nevada Proficiency Examination Program, which are listed below, apply to the HSPE, the Writing Assessment, the *ITBS* and *ITED,* and the CRT, unless otherwise indicated. The use of accommodations other than those specifically outlined below requires prior approval by the Nevada Department of Education. A list of contacts is provided in *Procedures for the Nevada Proficiency Examination Program.*

Accommodations in the Test Setting (Check only those that apply to this student):

_____ Individual administration will be allowed.
_____ Small group administration (other than regular classroom) will be allowed.
_____ Administration in an alternative setting will be allowed.
Describe: _____
_____ Provide for special lighting.
Describe: _____
_____ Provide for test administration in a study carrel or reasonable substitute.
_____ Provide for special acoustics such as an amplifier for verbal instructions.
Describe: _____

Accommodations in Test Scheduling (Check only those that apply to this student):

_____ Tests administered at a time of day when the student is expected to do his/her best work.
Describe: _____
_____ The time allowed to take the test **in a single session*** is extended to allow for rest periods to counter fatigue or to allow for the increased time required by altered testing procedures **(not to exceed twice the normal time).**

***A student MUST complete a part of a test (i.e., Part 1, Part 2, etc.) before the end of the school day.**

Extra time is allowed **ONLY** on the tests or subtests listed below that are identified with an "X" *(circle grade)*:

	CRT (3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)	NRT (4, 7, 10)	HSPE (10, 11, 12, Adult)
Reading	X	X	X
Language		X	
Mathematics	X	X	X
Science	X	X	X
Writing	X		X (one-day administration **ONLY**)

Accommodations in Test Administration (Check only those that apply to this student):

_____ Provide test administration by a specific individual (i.e., special education teacher, guidance counselor, etc.).
Specify: _____

Student will use:

_____ a visual magnification device.
_____ an electronic device whose sole function is to enlarge text.
_____ a mask or colored overlay (circle one) to cover portions of the test.
_____ markers to maintain his/her place.
_____ a large-print or Braille (circle one) version of the test.
_____ a device to screen out extraneous sounds.
_____ a calculator on the *CRT* or *HSPE* in *Mathematics*.

Test administrator or proctor will:

_____ use an auditory amplification device to give directions.

_____ read aloud the directions not normally read aloud at the beginning of the test, word for word, in English.

_____ reread aloud the directions at the beginning of the test, word for word, in English, as necessary.

_____ provide directions at the beginning of the test, word for word, in English, to the student in sign language.

_____ provide directions at the beginning of the test word for word, in English, on a separate sheet for the student to use as needed.

_____ read the mathematics test(s) word for word, text only, in English, to the student. **(It is NOT permissible to verbalize, explain, sign, or define mathematical symbols.)**

_____ read the science test(s) word for word, text only, in English, to the student. **(It is NOT permissible to verbalize, explain, sign, or define scientific symbols.)**

_____ read the writing **prompt** word for word, in English, to the student. **(No help can be given on responding to the prompt, nor may the prompt or any part of it be translated into another language.)**

_____ read the *ITBS/ITED* Language test(s) (i.e., Spelling, Capitalization, Punctuation, and/or Usage and Expression tests) word for word, in English, to the student.

IT IS NOT PERMISSIBLE TO READ A READING TEST OR VOCABULARY TEST TO THE STUDENT.

Accommodations in Student Responses (Check only those that apply to this student):

Student will:

_____ use pencils adapted in size or grip diameter.

_____ type written responses using a keyboard or typewriter. **(The use of electronic aids such as spelling, grammar, or hyphenation checks is NOT permitted on the writing assessment.)**

_____ use a Braillewriter to record responses to writing prompts or constructed-response question(s).

_____ record responses to multiple-choice questions in the test booklet or on a separate sheet of paper.

_____ record response(s) to writing prompts or constructed-response question(s) on a separate sheet of paper.

_____ dictate responses for multiple-choice questions to a test administrator or proctor.

_____ dictate responses for constructed-response questions to a test administrator or proctor. **(This option is NOT available to students taking a writing assessment.)**

Other Accommodation(s):

Accommodations not listed on this form must be approved in writing by the Department of Education, Office of Assessment, Program Accountability, and Curriculum. Please attach a copy of the approval letter to this form.

Description of accommodation: _____

III. ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT(S)

It is the judgment of the IEP committee that this student will not participate in the CRT, *ITBS/ITED*, or Writing Assessments during the period of the current IEP. The following alternate assessment(s) has/have been selected as a replacement: _____

The NASAA is based upon alternate achievement standards; therefore, student achievement will be based on these alternate standards. Please refer to the *Administration and Reporting Guidelines for NASAA* for additional information.

TESTING MODIFICATIONS

IEP committees who make this decision must be aware of the long-range impact this decision may have on the student. All students who test using other than accommodations (see lists above) will be placed in the **lowest achievement category for that** test and will **not** be counted for participation. The following are not accommodations but are **modifications** and **do** affect the validity of the test scores. The following list is not exhaustive but has been provided for exemplary purposes:

- Test administrator or proctor reading the *CRT* or *HSPE in Reading*, or the *ITBS/ITED* Reading Comprehension or Vocabulary test(s) to the student. (This includes any process for orally transmitting the test content to the student through the use of any device that converts print or other code to speech.)
- Student using an electronic spell check or grammar check device on a writing assessment.
- Student dictating to a scribe the response to the *HSPE in Writing* or the *Fifth* or *Eighth Grade Examination in Writing*.
- Student using a calculator on the *ITBS/ITED* Math Computation test or on Part 2 of the *ITBS/ITED* Math Concepts and Estimation test.

FACT SHEET

EXAMPLES OF ACCOMMODATIONS BASED ON STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

STUDENT CHARACTERISTIC: BLIND, LOW VISION, PARTIAL SIGHT		
Category	**Accommodations to Consider for Instruction**	**Accommodations to Consider for Assessments**
Presentation	• Large print • Magnification devices • Braille • Nemeth Braille code • Tactile graphics • Human reader • Audiotape or compact disk (CD) • Screen reader • Large print or Braille notes, outlines, and instructions • Descriptive video • Talking materials	• Large print • Magnification devices • Braille • Nemeth Braille code • Tactile graphics • Human reader • Audiotape or CD • Screen reader
Response	• Express response to a scribe through speech • Type on or speak to word processor • Type on Brailler • Speak into tape recorder • Use calculation devices (e.g., talking calculator with enlarged keys, abacus) • Use personal note taker	• Express response to a scribe through speech • Type on or speak to word processor • Type on Brailler • Speak into tape recorder • Use calculation devices (e.g., talking calculator with enlarged keys, abacus)
Setting	• Change location so student does not distract others • Change location to increase physical access • Change location to access special equipment	• Change location so student does not distract others • Change location to increase physical access • Change location to access special equipment
Timing and Scheduling	• Extended Time	• Extended Time

From: Council of Chief State School Officers (2005). *How to select, administer, and evaluate use of accommodations for instruction and assessment of students with disabilities.*
From http://www.ccsso.org/Projects/scass/projects/assessing_special_education_students/1952.cfm

STUDENT CHARACTERISTIC: DEAF; HARD OF HEARING		
Category	**Accommodations to Consider for Instruction**	**Accommodations to Consider for Assessments**
Presentation	• Sign language • Audio amplification devices • Screen reader • Visual cues • Written notes, outlines, and instructions • Videotape and descriptive video • Provide advanced organizers and outlines of lectures for student to follow • Use gestures (e.g., point to materials) • Repeat questions and responses from classmates • Allow student to copy notes from classmate • Use captioned versions of instructional films and include script when possible • Give interpreter instructional materials in advance • Learn manual signs and teach them to hearing classmates • Allow student to use telecommunication device	• Sign language • Audio amplification devices • Screen reader
Response	• Express response to scribe or interpreter • Type on or speak to word processor • Use spelling and grammar assistive devices • Use visual organizers • Use graphic organizers	• Express response to scribe or interpreter • Type on or speak to word processor • Use spelling and grammar assistive devices • Use visual organizers • Use graphic organizers
Setting	• Change location to reduce distractions • Change location so student does not distract others • Change location to increase physical access (e.g., minimize background noise, face student when speaking, speak to student and not to interpreter, and increase wait time for interpreter to finish)	• Change location to reduce distractions • Change location so student does not distract others • Change location to increase physical access (e.g., minimize background noise, face student when speaking, speak to student and not to interpreter, and increase wait time for interpreter to finish)

STUDENT CHARACTERISTIC: WEAK MANUAL DEXTERITY; DIFFICULTY WITH PENCIL; DIFFICULTY TYPING ON STANDARD KEYBOARD		
Category	**Accommodations to Consider for Instruction**	**Accommodations to Consider for Assessments**
Response	• Express response to a scribe through speech, pointing or by using an assistive communication device • Type on or speak to word processor • Speak into tape recorder • Use thick pencil or pencil grip • Use written notes, outlines, and instructions	• Express response to a scribe through speech, pointing or by using an assistive communication device • Type on or speak to word processor • Speak into tape recorder • Use thick pencil or pencil grip
STUDENT CHARACTERISTIC: COMMUNICATION DISORDER		
Category	**Accommodations to Consider for Instruction**	**Accommodations to Consider for Assessments**
Presentation	• Screen reader	• Screen reader
STUDENT CHARACTERISTIC: READING DISABILITY; DIFFICULTY DECODING		
Category	**Accommodations to Consider for Instruction**	**Accommodations to Consider for Assessments**
Presentation	• Human reader • Audiotape or CD • Screen reader • Videotape	• Human reader • Audiotape or CD • Screen reader
Setting	• Change location so student does not distract others • Use written notes, outlines, and instructions	• Change location so student does not distract others
STUDENT CHARACTERISTIC: WRITING DISABILITY; DIFFICULTY WITH SPELLING		
Category	**Accommodations to Consider for Instruction**	**Accommodations to Consider for Assessments**
Response	• Express response to a scribe through speech • Type on or speak to word processor • Speak into tape recorder • Use spelling and grammar assistive devices (e.g., electronic spelling device, spell check on computer) • Use written notes, outlines, and instructions	• Express response to a scribe through speech • Type on or speak to word processor • Speak into tape recorder • Use spelling and grammar assistive devices (e.g., electronic spelling device, spell check on computer)

STUDENT CHARACTERISTIC: MATHEMATICS DISABILITY		
Category	**Accommodations to Consider for Instruction**	**Accommodations to Consider for Assessments**
Response	Use: • Calculation devices • Visual organizers • Graphic organizers • Math tables and formula sheets	Use: • Calculation devices • Visual organizers • Graphic organizers
STUDENT CHARACTERISTIC: PHYSICAL DISABILITY		
Category	**Accommodations to Consider for Instruction**	**Accommodations to Consider for Assessments**
Response	• Express response to a scribe through speech, pointing, or by using an assistive communication device • Type on or speak to word processor • Speak into tape recorder • Write in test booklet instead of on answer sheet • Use augmentative devices for single or multiple messages (e.g., BIG Mack, Jelly Bean switch, or Dynovox) • Use written notes, outlines, and instructions	• Express response to a scribe through speech, pointing, or by using an assistive communication device • Type on or speak to word processor • Speak into tape recorder • Write in test booklet instead of on answer sheet • Use augmentative devices for single or multiple messages (e.g., BIG Mack, Jelly Bean switch, or Dynovox)
Setting	• Change location to increase physical access • Change location to access special equipment	• Change location to increase physical access • Change location to access special equipment
Timing and Scheduling	• Extended time • Multiple or frequent breaks	• Extended time • Multiple or frequent breaks

STUDENT CHARACTERISTIC: EASILY DISTRACTED; SHORT ATTENTION SPAN		
Category	**Accommodations to Consider for Instruction**	**Accommodations to Consider for Assessments**
Presentation	• Use books on tape or recorded books to help focus on text • Give short and simple directions with examples	
Response	• Write in test booklet instead of on answer sheet • Monitor placement of student responses on answer sheet • Use materials or devices used to solve or organize responses • Use visual organizers • Use graphic organizers • Highlight key words in directions • Have student repeat and explain directions to check for understanding • Use template • Use graph paper to keep numbers in proper columns	• Write in test booklet instead of on answer sheet • Monitor placement of student responses on answer sheet • Use materials or devices used to solve or organize responses • Use visual organizers • Use graphic organizers • Highlight key words in directions • Have student repeat and explain directions to check for understanding • Use template • Use graph paper to keep numbers in proper columns
Setting	• Sit in front of room • Change location to reduce distractions	• Sit in front of room • Change location to reduce distractions
Timing and Scheduling	• Use short segment test booklets (when available) • Allow for multiple or frequent breaks • Schedule tests in the morning • Cue student to begin working and stay on task • Change testing schedule or order of subtests • Limit reading periods • Schedule activities requiring more seat time in the morning and more hands-on and physical activities in the afternoon • Divide long-term assignments	• Use short segment test booklets (when available) • Allow for multiple or frequent breaks • Schedule tests in the morning • Cue student to begin working and stay on task • Change testing schedule or order of subtests

FACT SHEET

DO'S AND DON'TS WHEN SELECTING ACCOMMODATIONS

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

TEACHER TOOL

ACCESS NEEDS THAT MAY REQUIRE ACCOMMODATIONS

Directions: Use these questions to identify various types of presentation, response, setting, and timing and scheduling accommodations for students with disabilities. The list is not exhaustive—its purpose is to prompt members of IEP teams and 504 planning committees to consider a wide range of accommodation needs. Use the list in planning by indicating Y (YES), N (NO), or DK/NA (Don't Know or Not Applicable).

		Y	N	DK/ NA
PRESENTATION ACCOMMODATIONS				
1.	Does the student have a visual impairment that requires large-type or Braille materials?	☐	☐	☐
2.	Is the student able to read and understand directions?	☐	☐	☐
3.	Can the student follow oral directions from an adult or audiotape?	☐	☐	☐
4.	Does the student need directions repeated frequently?	☐	☐	☐
5.	Are assistive technology devices indicated on the student's IEP?	☐	☐	☐
6.	Has the student been identified as having a reading disability?	☐	☐	☐
7.	Does the student have low or poor reading skills that may require the reading of tests or sections of tests that do not measure reading comprehension in order to demonstrate knowledge of subject areas?	☐	☐	☐
8.	Does the student have a hearing impairment that requires an interpreter to sign directions?	☐	☐	☐
9.	Does the student have a hearing impairment and need a listening device?	☐	☐	☐
RESPONSE ACCOMMODATIONS				
10.	Does the student have difficulty tracking from one page to another and maintaining that student's place?	☐	☐	☐
11.	Does the student have a disability that affects the ability to record that student's responses in the standard manner?	☐	☐	☐
12.	Can the student use a pencil or writing instrument?	☐	☐	☐
13.	Does the student use a word processor to complete homework assignments or tests?	☐	☐	☐
14.	Does the student use a tape recorder to complete assignments or tests?	☐	☐	☐
15.	Does the student need the services of a scribe?	☐	☐	☐
16.	Does the student have a disability that affects that student's ability to spell?	☐	☐	☐
17.	Does the student have a visual or motor disability that affects that student's ability to perform math computations?	☐	☐	☐

From: Council of Chief State School Officers (2005). *How to select, administer, and evaluate use of accommodations for instruction and assessment of students with disabilities.*
From http://www.ccsso.org/Projects/scass/projects/assessing_special_education_students/1952.cfm

SETTING ACCOMMODATIONS	Y	N	DK/ NA
18 Do others easily distract the student or does that student have difficulty remaining on task?	☐	☐	☐
19 Does the student require any specialized equipment or other accommodations that may be distracting to others?	☐	☐	☐
20. Does the student have visual or auditory impairments that require special lighting or acoustics?	☐	☐	☐
21. Can the student focus on the student's own work in a setting with large groups of other students?	☐	☐	☐
22. Does the student exhibit behaviors that may disrupt the attention of other students?	☐	☐	☐
23. Do any physical accommodations need to be made for the student in the classroom?	☐	☐	☐
TIMING AND SCHEDULING ACCOMMODATIONS			
24. Can the student work continuously for the length of time allocated for standard test administration?	☐	☐	☐
25. Does the student use other accommodations or adaptive equipment that require more time to complete test items (e.g., Braille, scribe, use of head pointer to type)?	☐	☐	☐
26. Does the student tire easily due to health impairments?	☐	☐	☐
27. Does the student have a visual impairment that causes eyestrain and requires frequent breaks?	☐	☐	☐
28. Does the student have a learning disability that affects the rate at which that student processes written information?	☐	☐	☐
29. Does the student have a motor disability that affects the rate at which that student writes responses?	☐	☐	☐
30. Does the student take any type of medication to facilitate optimal performance?	☐	☐	☐
31. Does the student's attention span or distractibility require shorter working periods and frequent breaks?	☐	☐	☐

TEACHER TOOL

ACCOMMODATIONS FROM THE STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

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

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

_____

2. Explain what you do well in this class.

_____

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

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

_____

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

_____

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

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

Class List

Classes	Accommodations

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

TEACHER TOOL

ASSESSMENT ACCOMMODATIONS PLAN

Student Information	Case Information
Name: _____	Special Education Teacher: _____
Date of Assessment: _____	School Year: _____
Name of Assessment: _____	Building/School: _____
	General Education Teacher: _____

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

Accommodations	Date Arranged:
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____

Comments:

_____

Person responsible for arranging accommodations and due date:

Person Responsible	Due Date:
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____

Comments:

_____

Room assignment for assessment: _____

Planners for this process (signatures): _____

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

TEACHER TOOL

ACCOMMODATIONS JOURNAL

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

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

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

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

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____