



# Maryland Assessment, Accessibility, & Accommodations Manual

Selecting, Administering and Evaluating the Use of  
Accommodations for Instruction and Assessment

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# Section 1: Introduction

## MARYLAND ASSESSMENT, ACCESSIBILITY, AND ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY MANUAL: AN OVERVIEW

This publication has been developed to ensure that:

- Participation of all students in assessments is consistent in all Maryland programs, schools, and local education agencies (LEAs)
- Accessibility features and accommodations are provided to all eligible students; and
- Accessibility features and accommodations used in assessments are also used in daily instruction.

The Maryland Assessment, Accessibility, and Accommodations Policy Manual (The MAAAM or The Manual) presents a five-step process for use in the selection, administration, and evaluation of the effectiveness of the use of instructional and assessment accommodations for students with disabilities and English learners. The information in this manual is applicable to:

1. All students who benefit from Universal Design for Learning and accessibility features.
2. Students who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP)
3. Students with a Section 504 Plan
4. Students who are English learners (ELs)
5. Students who are multi-lingual learners with disabilities. These students receive accommodations to address both their disability and language needs, as outlined in their EL plan and IEP/504 plan.

This manual also summarizes the statewide assessment programs required by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and supersedes all previous editions of this document. The information and requirements described in this manual apply to students in all public schools and to students placed in non-public special education schools by the local education agency. It is noted that documents/tools/appendices within the MAAAM may have updated versions and staff using the MAAAM should always use the links provided to ensure they are using the most recent version.

This manual addresses Maryland specific policy regarding assessments, accessibility features, and accommodations, and should not be confused with, or substituted for any specific assessment's accommodation/test administration.

# The Structure of this Manual

## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

This brief section presents an introduction and overview of the Manual.

## SECTION 2A: MARYLAND ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

This section summarizes Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) and an overview of assessments that students may participate in.

## SECTION 2B: OVERVIEW OF FEDERAL AND STATE REQUIREMENTS FOR ASSESSMENTS

This section includes an overview of Federal and state laws related to assessment participation for general education students, special education students, and English learners (ELs).

## SECTION 3: STUDENT SUPPORTS IN ASSESSMENT

This section describes three tiers of supports that students may receive (Accessibility Features for all, Selected Accessibility Features, and Accommodations).

## SECTION 4: MAKING DECISIONS ABOUT STUDENT ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

This section provides guidance on how to make student-based decisions on accessibility features and accommodations, the people involved, documentation of the decisions, how to administer them and how to evaluate the student's use.

## SECTION 5: MAKING DECISIONS ABOUT STUDENT ACCOMMODATIONS FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

This section outlines the process for implementing accommodations for instruction and assessment for students who are ELs.

## SECTION 6: NONSTANDARD AND EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATIONS

This section covers unique accommodations, emergency accommodations, testing irregularities, etc.

## APPENDICES

## Section 2A: Maryland Assessment Summary

### OVERVIEW OF MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (MCAP)

Maryland currently operates the following state testing programs that fall under the MCAP umbrella:

- General Assessments
  - English Language Arts (grades 3-8 and 10)
  - Math (grades 3-8 and high school)
  - Social Studies (8)
  - Maryland Integrated Science Assessment (MISA) (grades 5 and 8)
  - LS MISA (high school)
  - American Government (high school)
  - Geometry, Algebra I, and Algebra II (high school)
- Assessments aligned to Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (or “Alternate Assessments”)
  - Dynamic Learning Maps (ELA, Math) (grades 3-8 and 11)
  - Alternate Maryland Integrated Science Assessment (Alt-MISA) (grades 5, 8, 11)
- English Language Proficiency Assessment
  - WIDA ACCESS (K-12)
  - WIDA Alternate ACCESS (1-12)

The following pages provide brief summaries of Maryland’s state testing programs.

## MCAP

### Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program

As of July 1, 2018, Maryland uses the term Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) as an umbrella for state assessments. The Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) provides information to educators, families, and the public on student progress towards proficiency on the Maryland state content standards. Through a strong assessment system, stakeholders gain an understanding of how schools are performing and where assistance can be directed to support student growth and achievement.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires that states administer, and students participate in annual statewide assessments in:

- English Language Arts/Literacy (ELA/L) and Mathematics in grades 3-8 and once in high school
- Science once in each grade band (3-5, 6-8 and high school)
- English language proficiency (identified students in grades K-12)

Maryland state law (Md. Ed. Art 7-203) requires a social studies assessment in:

- Grade 8 (Social Studies)
- High school (American Government)

## ASSESSMENTS ALIGNED TO ALTERNATE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS

### Dynamic Learning Maps

To assess the learning of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who cannot appropriately be assessed on the general assessment even with accommodations, Maryland uses Dynamic Learning Maps® (DLM) in ELA and Mathematics (grades 3-8 and 11), and in science (grades 5, 8 and 11).

The DLM assessments are individually administered, stage-adaptive, and computer-based (with presentation and response options to meet individual student needs). Assessment items are grouped into “testlets” consisting of an engagement activity and three to five questions to be completed in one setting. Each student completes 5 to 10 testlets in each subject area; each testlet is completed in one sitting but the multiple testlets may be spread over multiple sessions through the testing window.

Items on the DLM assessment are based on alternate academic achievement standards, known as Essential Elements (EE), which are derived from the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards (for ELA and Math) and the Next Generation Science Standards (for science) and set grade-level-specific expectations about what students with the most significant cognitive disabilities should know and be able to do. The EE for each grade level reflect significant components of the standards but are reduced in breadth, depth, and complexity. Each EE has multiple “linkage levels” reflecting a trajectory of development related to the skill, from precursor to advanced.

The DLM assessment has four performance levels ranging from 1 to 4 (Emerging to Advanced) with levels 3 and 4 designated as “proficient.” The performance levels describe the knowledge and skills that students master based on the EEs.

### Determining Assessment Participation

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) for each student with a disability describes how the student will participate in Maryland’s assessment program. The vast majority of students with disabilities participate in the general assessment, with or without accommodations. All appropriate accommodations for an individual child are identified through the IEP team decision making process.

A small number of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are determined by their IEP teams to require assessment aligned to alternate achievement standards in order to demonstrate their learning. Eligibility for the alternate assessment is determined annually by the IEP team through a comprehensive review of multiple sources of assessment and performance data.

The **Participation Criteria and Checklist** is provided in Appendix A of the IEP (See link in the appendices section of this manual). To be eligible for participation in the alternate assessment, the student must:

1. Have an IEP that includes Specially Designed Instruction (including accommodations, supplementary aids and services, program modifications, goals and objectives, special education, and related services) and performance data that demonstrates that even with these supports, the student cannot access the breadth and depth of the general standards

**AND**

2. Have a “significant cognitive disability”

**AND**

3. Be learning content derived from the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards in English/language arts and Mathematics and the Next Generation Science Standards

**AND**

4. Require extensive, direct, individualized, and repeated instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in adapted and modified curriculum

The IEP team must also affirm that other factors (such as English learner status, challenging behavior, need for augmentative communication, concern about ability to pass the general assessment, or participation in a particular special education program or placement) are not the basis for determining the student eligible for the alternate assessment. Because continued participation in instruction and assessment aligned to alternate academic achievement standards make it unlikely that the student will be able to meet the requirements for a Maryland high school diploma, parental consent is required.

## ELPA

### English Language Proficiency Assessment

The English language proficiency assessment (ELPA), WIDA ACCESS, is administered annually to English learners (ELs) in grades K through 12 during a testing window in the winter. The assessment measures ELs English language proficiency in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, writing, comprehension, and literacy. ELPA results are reported in six proficiency levels: entering, emerging, developing, expanding, bridging, and reaching.

Assessment results are used by the local school systems to make decisions as to each EL's participation in English language development (ELD) Programs. The state uses ELPA results to measure and report the English language proficiency indicator for accountability.

ELs with the most significant cognitive disabilities may be unable to demonstrate their proficiency on the ELPA, even with accommodations. The IEP team and EL team may jointly determine that a student should participate in the WIDA Alternate ACCESS.

WIDA ACCESS is an English language proficiency test; as such, it is a tool used to assess the construct of EL's receptive and productive skills in English. Because it focuses on language rather than content area knowledge and skills, some accommodations that might be appropriate for the classroom or content area tests should not be used with WIDA ACCESS, as they will invalidate the construct. In other words, ELs would be taking a test that is no longer measuring just their English language proficiency, making any interpretation or inferences from the scores invalid.

The WIDA Alternate ACCESS is designed for ELs with significant cognitive disabilities. In order to receive the most descriptive information from the test, it is very important that only ELs who meet all criteria below and who cannot participate in the WIDA ACCESS- even with the provision of accommodations - be considered for the WIDA Alternate ACCESS.

Participation Criteria:

1. The student has been classified as an EL

**AND**

2. The student has a "significant cognitive disability"

**AND**

3. The student requires extensive, direct, individualized, and repeated instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in adapted and modified curriculum

**AND**

4. The student will participate in the state alternate content assessment based on the alternate achievement standards

English learners who are students with severe visual impairments may participate in taking the braille version of WIDA ACCESS that is available for grades 1-12. The IEP Team and the EL team must collaborate to jointly determine if the student is proficient enough in braille for a meaningful assessment to

determine English language proficiency. LEAs must contact MSDE's EL/Title III office for approval to order braille materials.

ELs who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, including those who communicate primarily in American Sign Language, can generally participate in the reading and writing sections of the test (with allowable accommodations as appropriate according to their IEPs).

Some Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing ELs may be able to participate in the listening and speaking portions of the WIDA ACCESS test using amplification and/or speech reading and oral responses. Translating the listening and speaking prompts into American Sign Language (or another sign language) is equivalent to translating into another spoken language, such as Spanish or Arabic, and therefore is prohibited as it changes the construct (i.e., assesses proficiency in a language other than English) and invalidates that test.

## Section 2B: Federal and State Requirements for Assessments

### OVERVIEW OF FEDERAL AND STATE LAWS FOR ASSESSMENTS

#### Participation

All students must be included to the fullest extent possible in all state assessment programs and have their assessment results be a part of Maryland's accountability system. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) requires all students to participate in state assessment programs unless documented as described in this manual. The Maryland participation requirement is supported by federal legislation requiring the participation of Students with Disabilities (SWD) that have Individual Education Plans (IEPs), students with 504 Plans and English learners (ELs) in standards-based instruction and assessment initiatives. Two key federal acts governing student participation in assessment include The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA).

Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities may take the Alternate Assessment aligned to Alternate Academic Achievement Standards if their IEP teams determine they meet the eligibility criteria and cannot appropriately be assessed on the general assessment. All students in tested grades in Maryland must participate in either the regular or the alternate assessment. Students who transfer from out-of-state or from private schools into the Maryland public school system at any time during the school year, through the date designated by MSDE, must be tested.

#### Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Stronger accountability for education achievement results is one of the basic education reform principles contained in ESSA. This law complements the provisions in providing public accountability at the school, district, and state levels for all students, including those with disabilities. ESSA explicitly calls for participation in such assessments of all students [Section 1177 (1) (B) (vii) (I)]. (The term "such assessments" refers to a set of high-quality, yearly student academic assessments). It also requires that these assessments provide for the reasonable adaptations and accommodations for students with disabilities – as defined under Section 602(3) of IDEA – necessary to measure the academic achievement of such students relative to state academic content and state student academic achievement standards [Section 1177 (1) (B) (vii) (III)].

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

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

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

- How successful schools are including all students in standards-aligned education.

- How well students are achieving standards.
- What needs to be improved upon for specific groups of students.

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

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

### **Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA)**

IDEA specifically governs services provided to students with disabilities. Accountability at the individual level is provided through IEPs developed on the basis of each child's unique needs. IDEA requires the participation of students with disabilities in state and district assessments. Specific IDEA requirements include:

"Children with disabilities are included in general state- and districtwide assessment programs, with appropriate accommodations, where necessary [Section 612 (a) (16) (A)]. The term 'individualized education program' or 'IEP' means a written statement for each child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with this section and that includes...a statement of any individual modifications in the administration of state- or district-wide assessments of student achievement that are needed in order for the child to participate in such assessments; and if the IEP Team determines that the child will not participate in a particular state- or district-wide assessment of student achievement (or part of such an assessment), a statement of why that assessment is not appropriate for the child; and how the child will be assessed [Section 614 (d) (1) (A) (V) and (VI)]."

Based on current trends, the use of assessments for accountability purposes will likely increase in the future, supported by other state-level legislative initiatives related to implementation of educational reform.

Both federal and state laws require that all students with disabilities be administered assessments intended to hold schools accountable for the academic performance of students. Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team members must actively engage in a planning process that addresses:

- Assurance of the provision of accommodations to facilitate student access to grade-level instruction and State Assessments; and
- Use of alternate assessments to assess the achievement of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

### **Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits disability discrimination and requires public schools to provide accommodations to students with disabilities. The definition of “disability” under Section 504 (“a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities”) includes all students who are eligible for services under IDEA and additional students who do not meet the IDEA criteria. Section 504 states:

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

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

- Communicable diseases (e.g., hepatitis)
- Temporary disabling conditions from accidents who may need short term hospitalization or homebound recovery
- Allergies or asthma
- Drug or alcoholic addictions, as long as they are not currently using illegal drugs
- Environmental illnesses
- Attention difficulties
- Any disability that requires accommodations but does not impact the student’s education such that they require specially designed instruction in order to access and progress in the general curriculum

## Section 3: Student Supports in Assessment

### Universal Design for Learning

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles and guidelines provide a framework for curriculum design, instructional processes, and assessment that gives all students equitable opportunities to learn and to demonstrate what they have learned. The use of UDL principles and guidelines are essential in the development and review of existing assessments to remove barriers that impede students with disabilities from demonstrating what they know and can do. With the application of universal design principles to assessments, educators have greater opportunities to gain a more accurate understanding of what students know and can do. UDL guidelines and principles should be used in the planning and delivery of instruction and applied from the beginning of test development through the implementation of assessments.

#### Universal design in relation to assessment is described by Thompson, et al 2002:

“Universally designed assessments are designed and developed from the beginning to allow participation of the widest possible range of students, and to result in valid inferences about performance for all students who participate in the assessment. Universally designed assessments are based on the premise that each child in school is a part of the population to be tested, and that testing results must not be affected by disability, gender, race, or English language ability. Universally designed assessments are not intended to eliminate individualization, but they may reduce the need for accommodations and various alternative assessments by eliminating access barriers associated with the tests themselves”.

Universal design for assessments does not simply mean that tests are administered on computers. As assessments have moved toward becoming more consistently administered on computers, accommodations and universal design considerations have changed. Traditionally, universal design has been thought of as coming first, and accommodations have been applied during testing. With current technology, accommodations can be built into the design of the test itself. Some of these embedded features may also be accommodations that will benefit students with disabilities and English learners. Some students with disabilities and English learners require accommodations beyond the features that are built into the testing platform. For those students, IEP, 504 Plan, or EL Plan Teams must recommend the appropriate accommodation(s) based on individual student’s need(s).

### Accessibility Features

Accessibility features are tools or preferences that are used during instruction and classroom assessments and are, in many cases, built into the assessment system. These can be used by any student (i.e., students with or without disabilities, gifted students, ELs, and ELs with disabilities). Since the accessibility features are intended for all students, they are not classified as accommodations. Students should use these features during instruction and assessment and should have opportunities to select and practice using them on the assessment platform. Even though accessibility features are available to every student, that doesn't necessarily mean they are appropriate for every student. Consideration should be given to the supports a student consistently uses and finds helpful during instruction and when engaging in individual work.

Accessibility features are broken into two categories: accessibility features for all students and accessibility features identified in advanced. Decisions should be made on an individual student basis based on the specific needs of the child as opposed to group decisions for a class or grade. Individualizing access needs

in instruction and on the assessment provides increased opportunities for students to accurately demonstrate knowledge and skills and will reduce the likelihood of giving students incorrect accessibility features or accommodations.

### **Tier 1: Accessibility Features for All Students**

These features are available in classroom instruction and classroom-based assessments and, in many cases, through the online testing platform. Students should determine whether they wish to use the feature on an item-by-item basis based on the features they use during instruction and in daily life.

### **Tier 2: Accessibility Features for All Students Identified in Advance**

Some additional accessibility features (e.g., changing the background or font color, using text-to-speech for the mathematics assessments) may be used by any student (with or without an IEP, 504 or EL plan) who needs them, but must be selected ahead of time by the student in collaboration with educators. Students must practice using these features, either in a classroom or real-world application or setting. During testing, the student can decide whether to use a pre-selected support on a particular test item without any consequence to the student, school, or district.

Students and educators should be cautious about selecting accessibility features that the student does not require or use on a regular basis. Research suggests that providing too many tools on-screen may lead to ineffective use of the tools provided and/or have an impact on a student's test performance. Furthermore, the on-off controls for these features might distract some students if they were shown on-screen or interfere with other features or accommodations. As an example, if a student does not regularly receive text-to-speech or other audio representations on their math textbooks during instruction, text-to-speech for mathematics on an assessment may distract a student or slow their pacing, possibly interfering with their performance.

### **Tier 3: Accommodations**

Accommodations are practices and procedures in the areas of presentation, response and timing/scheduling that provide equitable access during assessments for students with disabilities who are eligible under IDEA, students on Section 504 Plans, and students who are ELs.

Accommodations mitigate the effects of a student's disability, but do not reduce learning or performance expectations. Accommodations do not change the construct being assessed and do not compromise the integrity or validity of the assessment. No accommodation can be provided to a student during state or district testing unless the student had that accommodation available during instruction and classroom assessments. It is critical to note that although some accommodations may be appropriate for instructional use, they may not be appropriate for use on a standardized assessment. There may be consequences (e.g., lowering or not counting a student's test score) for the use of some accommodations during standardized assessments. It is very important for educators to become familiar with Maryland policies regarding accommodations during assessments.

Accommodations must adhere to the following principles:

- Accommodations enable students to participate more fully in instruction and assessment and to better demonstrate their knowledge and skills.

- Accommodations must be based upon individual student needs and not upon a category of disability, English language proficiency, level of instruction, amount of time spent in general classroom, program setting, or availability of staff.
- Accommodations for students with disabilities must be justified and documented in the student's appropriate education plan: the IEP or the Section 504 Plan.
- Accommodations for students who are ELs must be justified and documented in the EL Plan.
- Students who are both EL and have a disability, have the IEP as the controlling document for accommodations, but also must have a completed EL Plan. Students who are both EL and have a disability may qualify for both IEP and EL accommodations. IEP teams and EL teams should work together so that the chosen accommodations are complementary and do not conflict.
- Accommodations must be implemented immediately after the completion of the appropriate education plan (IEP, Section 504 Plan or EL Plan for English learners) and must be aligned with and be a part of daily instruction. Accommodations and accessibility features must be introduced in instruction or through tutorials/practice tools in the specific testing platform. Accommodations used in local district and state assessments must also be used in instruction. Accommodations must not be introduced for the first time during the testing of a student.
- Accommodations must be implemented as specified in this manual.
- Accommodations not explicitly mentioned in this document and/or multiple accommodations do not constitute reasons to exempt students from assessments. The School Test Coordinator (STC) must coordinate with the LAC prior to testing to address issues caused by the need to provide multiple accommodations. The LAC will consult with the MSDE as necessary to resolve accommodation issues.

### Accommodations Not Specified in This Document

Occasionally, a student's individual needs and circumstances may require an accommodation beyond those listed in this document. Local special education, Section 504, EL and school-based staff first identify a potential need for an additional type of accommodation. These staff members would then contact the LAC who would work with them and MSDE to obtain approval for this "unique accommodation." The LAC completes and submits the "Unique Accommodation Request Form for State Assessments" to MSDE for approval. These forms can be found in Appendix F for students with IEPs or 504 Plans or Appendix G for students with EL plans. A copy of this form must be filed in the student's IEP, 504 Plan, or EL Plan and assessment record and a copy must be retained by the LAC. The unique accommodation request must be submitted to MSDE by the LAC six weeks prior to testing to ensure that a final MSDE response is received before testing begins. Responses from MSDE for unique accommodations will occur at least one week prior to the start of the test administration.

As MSDE determines whether to approve a new type of accommodation for assessment, MSDE considers the impact of the unique accommodation on test validity. Addressing the issue of validity of an accommodation in an assessment situation involves an examination of the purpose of the test and the specific skills to be measured. A decision made by MSDE to not allow a unique accommodation during testing does not necessarily imply that the accommodation (or modification, adaptation, or other strategy) cannot be used for instruction.

## Accommodations Vs. Modifications

Accommodations do not reduce learning expectations, they provide access. However, modifications or alterations refer to practices that change, lower, or reduce learning expectations. Modifications can increase the gap between the achievement of students with disabilities and expectations for proficiency at a particular grade level. Using modifications may result in implications that could adversely affect students throughout their educational careers. Providing modifications during classroom instruction and/or classroom assessments may have the unintended consequence of reducing their opportunity to learn critical content. If students have not had access to critically assessed content, they may be at risk for not meeting graduation requirements. **Providing a student with a modification during a state accountability assessment may constitute a test irregularity and may result in an investigation into the school's or district's testing practices.**

Accommodations and modifications required by the student are required to be documented in the student's IEP, 504 or EL plan and should be reviewed annually with all members of the team including parents.

## Definitions

In Maryland, there are three distinct groups of students that receive accommodations: Students with Disabilities (SWD) that have IEPs, SWD that have 504 Plans, and ELs.

The following definitions will help users of the Manual in understanding and implementing accommodations:

**Students with Disabilities (SWD):** Students who are eligible for special education services and who have current IEPs.

**Students Exited from Special Education Services:** Students who are exited from receiving Special Education Services now have their performance tracked on the state Assessments. The purpose of this accounting is to include the exited students for two years for Maryland's Accountability Program reporting purposes with the Special Education student group. These students are not eligible for accommodations on state assessments unless they have a current Section 504 plan.

**Section 504 Students:** Students who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, have a record of such impairment, or are regarded as having such impairment, and have current 504 Plans.

**English Learners (ELs):** Students who have a primary or home language other than English and who may be working toward acquiring the ability to understand, speak, read, or write English. ELs are served in English language development (ELD) programs.

**Refused ELD Services ELs:** ELs who have a primary or home language other than English and who may be working toward acquiring the ability to understand, speak, read or write English. These students are qualified to participate in ELD programs; however, their families have refused such services. Refused ELs still receive an EL Plan, receive accommodations, and participate in all assessments, including the English language proficiency assessment.

## Accessibility Features

Description of Accessibility Features	Administration Guidelines	Allowable Use
<p><b>1a. Answer Masking</b></p> <p>The student can block or cover answer choices.</p>	<p><b>Before Testing:</b> Certain platforms may require that an accessibility feature be identified in advance for the feature to be activated within the platform.</p> <p><b>During Testing:</b> When answer masking is enabled, multiple choice and multiple select answers will be masked. The student will uncover answer options when ready. The student may disable this feature by selecting, "Disable Answer Masking" in the user drop- down menu.</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>
<p><b>1b. Audio Amplification</b></p> <p>Some students may require the amplification of materials, and/or the use of personal amplification devices, to increase clarity. A teacher also may use a system when working with students in a situation that contains a great deal of ambient noise.</p>	<p><b>Before Testing:</b> Ensure proper volume prior to the student starting the testing session. For some testing platforms, the volume level cannot be changed once the test begins.</p> <p><b>During Testing:</b> Student must be tested in a separate setting if unable to wear headphones.</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>
<p><b>1c. Bookmark (flag item for review)</b></p> <p>The student can flag items for future review.</p>	<p><b>During Testing:</b> The student selects the "Bookmark" icon in the toolbar. The student electronically "bookmarks" items to review later. To remove the bookmark, select the "Bookmark" icon again.</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>
<p><b>1d. Color Contrast (Background/Font Color)</b></p>	<p><b>Before Testing:</b> Certain platforms may require that an accessibility feature be identified in advance for the feature to be activated within the platform.</p> <p><b>During Testing:</b> Alternate on-screen background and/or font color is enabled based on need or preference.</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p> <p><b>**Identify in advance-form driven</b></p>
<p><b>1e. Blank Scratch Paper</b></p>	<p><b>Before Testing:</b> Test Administrators must supply at least one page of blank scratch paper (i.e., either unlined, lined, or graph) per student, per unit. If graph paper is used during mathematics instruction, it is recommended that schools provide graph paper as scratch paper for mathematics units. Students with visual impairments may also use braille paper, raised line paper, bold line paper, raised line graph paper, bold line graph paper, abacus, or Math Window.</p> <p><b>During Testing:</b> The student uses blank scratch paper (i.e., lined, un-lined, or graph) to take notes and/or work through items during testing. Additional pages may be provided as needed. Students are not required to write their names on scratch paper.</p> <p><b>After Testing:</b> Test Administrators are responsible for collecting ALL scratch paper after testing is completed to be securely destroyed. Scratch paper must be securely shredded if it has been used.</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>

Description of Accessibility Features	Administration Guidelines	Allowable Use
<p><b>1f. Eliminate Answer Choices</b></p>	<p><b>During Testing:</b> The student selects the "Answer Eliminator" icon in the toolbar. On multiple choice options, a student selects an answer, and a red X appears and "crosses out" the answer choice. The student may disable this feature by selecting "Answer Eliminator" in the toolbar again.</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>
<p><b>1g. General Directions Clarified</b></p>	<p><b>During Testing:</b> The Test Administrator <b>clarifies</b> general administration directions only. No passages or test items may be clarified. The test administrator should not just reread the directions, but instead use different wording to help clarify the directions for the student.</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>
<p><b>1h. General Directions Read Aloud and Repeated as Needed</b></p>	<p><b>During Testing:</b> The Test Administrator reads aloud the general administration directions only. A student may raise their hand to request the directions be repeated.</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>
<p><b>1i. Highlight Tool</b></p> <p>A highlighter, like other visual organizers, is a way for a student to maintain focus on specific sections of an assignment or on an assessment. The use of such tools or strategies should be student initiated, rather than teacher initiated.</p>	<p><b>During Testing:</b> The student electronically highlights text as needed to recall and/or emphasize. The student has the option to remove highlighting over text. The highlighter color option will change depending on the color contrast option selected.</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>
<p><b>1j. Headphones or Noise Buffers</b></p> <p>A student uses a noise buffer to minimize distraction or to filter external noise to maintain focus.</p> <p>A student uses headphones when using Text to Speech (TTS)</p>	<p><b>Before Testing:</b> Test Administrator prepares classroom with headphones for participating students.</p> <p><b>During Testing:</b> The student uses headphones or noise buffers to minimize distraction, access embedded text-to-speech, or filter external noise during testing (in addition to when headphones are required for the ELA/literacy assessment). If headphones are used only as noise buffers, do not plug them into the testing device. No Bluetooth headphones should be used</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>
<p><b>1k. Line Reader Mask Tool</b></p> <p>A line reader, like other visual organizers, is a way for a student to maintain focus on specific sections of an assignment or on an assessment.</p>	<p><b>During Testing:</b> The student selects "Show Line Reader Mask" in the user drop-down menu. The student uses an on-screen tool to assist in reading by raising and lowering the tool for each line of text on-screen. The Line Reader can be resized, and the size of the reader window can be adjusted. The student may disable this feature by selecting, "Hide Line Reader Mask" in the user drop-down menu. The Line Reader includes additional functionality to close the Line Reader window and allow the feature to work as a general masking tool. In addition, the Line Reader window is moveable anywhere within the boundaries of the Line Reader tool. The Line Reader Mask box color will change depending on the color contrast option selected.</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>

Description of Accessibility Features	Administration Guidelines	Allowable Use
<p><b>1l. Magnification/Enlargement Device</b></p> <p>Students who have a visual impairment must have an assessment of their learning and literacy medium to determine the most appropriate medium for them to use. This assessment will determine the optimal print size to provide access to print and electronic materials and maximize literacy learning. Some students will need access to print material for near and/or distance by enlarging the print by using a magnification device.</p> <p>These may include handheld magnifiers, desk top magnifiers, and electronic magnification devices. Text on a computer can be enlarged through computer system/browser access tools or tools built into a testing platform.</p> <p>For students for whom these tools do not provide enough magnification, they will need to use screen enlargement software. (See presentation accommodations: 3a – Assistive Technology)</p>	<p><b>Before Testing:</b></p> <p>Browser/Device Magnification: Magnification options can be set in accessibility/display settings for the computer.</p> <p><b>During Testing:</b></p> <p>Magnifier: The student selects “Enable Magnifier” in the user drop-down menu. The student enlarges text and graphics on-screen via a magnification square/circle (200%). The student may disable this feature by selecting, “Disable Magnifier” in the user drop-down menu.</p> <p><b>Browser/Device Magnification:</b> Magnification options can be set in accessibility/display settings for the computer. The student can use keyboard shortcuts (e.g., Ctrl + for PCs, Command + for Macs) or pinch/zoom for tablets to magnify what’s displayed on the screen (while preserving clarity, contrast, and color).</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Magnifying beyond 300% may affect heading formatting and may cause text- wrapping, and therefore it is not recommended.</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>
<p><b>1m. Notepad</b></p> <p>The student can use actual or virtual scratch paper to make notes or record responses.</p>	<p><b>During Testing:</b> The student selects the “Notepad” icon in the toolbar. The student writes notes using embedded Notepad tool on the ELA/literacy assessments. The student may disable this feature by selecting “Notepad” in the toolbar again.</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>
<p><b>1n. Pop-up Glossary</b></p> <p>Grade- and content- appropriate definitions of specific construct irrelevant terms are shown.</p>	<p><b>During Testing:</b> The student can view definitions of pre-selected, underlined words by hovering over them. The definition appears in a pop-up text box.</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>
<p><b>1o. Redirect Student</b></p> <p>Students may need reminders to stay on task and remain focused during classroom instruction, activities, assignments and assessments. This redirection may be beneficial to students who have difficulty with attention or behavior.</p>	<p><b>During Testing:</b> The test administrator redirects the student’s attention to the test without coaching or assisting the student in any way. There is no limit to the number of times a Test Administrator can redirect a student back to the test. Examples: Providing reminders to stay on task and focused during the assessments; Providing a visual cue to the student to remain on task.</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>

Description of Accessibility Features	Administration Guidelines	Allowable Use
<p><b>1p. Spell Check or External Spell Check Device</b></p> <p>Students who have difficulty producing written text as a result of a difficulty with language recall may benefit from the use of a dictionary or spell checker.</p>	<p><b>During Testing:</b> The student uses the embedded spell check icon to review their written text for errors. If preferred, the student uses an external spell check device. Device may not have embedded grammar check, connect to the internet, or save information.</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>

Description of Accessibility Features	Administration Guidelines	Allowable Use
<p><b>1q. Student Reads Content Aloud to Him or Herself</b></p>	<p><b>During Testing:</b> The student reads aloud the materials to themselves.</p> <p>Students may use an external device such as a whisper phone, read to themselves in a normal voice, or use other strategies from classroom instruction. The student must be tested in a separate setting.</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>
<p><b>1r. Text-to-Speech for the Mathematics, Science and Social Studies Assessments*</b></p> <p><b>(Available in English only)</b></p> <p>Students that have met the criteria for appendix D may also use TTS in other content areas such as Math, Science and Social Studies.</p> <p>Students that do not meet criteria for appendix D but struggle with the readability of content in the areas of math, science and social studies may benefit from TTS. A student should have experience with the use of TTS during instruction and there should be data and/or observations to indicate that there is benefit from the use of this accessibility feature.</p>	<p><b>Before Testing:</b> Certain platforms may require that an accessibility feature be identified in advance for the feature to be activated within the platform. The volume level may need to be determined prior to testing; once the test session begins, the volume level may not be able to be changed.</p> <p>Differences Between Text Only and Text Plus Graphics:</p> <p><b>Text Plus Graphics</b> - Reads all printed text and the hidden alternate text descriptions for images.</p> <p><b>Text Only</b> - Reads printed text but does not read any alternate text descriptions for images.</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p> <p><b>**Must be identified in advanced- form driven</b></p>
<p><b>1s. Human Reader or Human Signer for the Mathematics, Science and Social Studies Assessments*</b></p> <p><b>(Human Reader available in English and in Spanish)</b></p> <p>A student eligible for a Spanish human reader must have attended school in the US for less than three years and/or had prior instruction in Spanish either in their home country or in a US school.</p>	<p><b>Before Testing:</b> This feature will need to be identified in advance in order to assign a human reader or signer to the student.</p> <p>For Spanish based Accommodation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the EL Accessibility and Accommodation Plan</li> <li>• Identification for SR/PNP: Student's SR/PNP must have Paper-Based Edition in Spanish selected</li> <li>• Test Administrators providing this accommodation should ideally be literate and fluent in English and in Spanish, or may be assisted by an interpreter, if available, since test administration directions will be read to the student in Spanish.</li> </ul> <p><b>During Testing:</b> A Test Administrator (Human Reader or Human Signer) reads aloud to a student using the provided Human Reader Script. The student must be tested in an individual or small group setting. Small groups should only be used if all students are able to work at approximately the same pace. The number of students in a small group is determined to be 5 in Maryland.</p> <p><b>After Testing:</b> Human Reader Scripts contain secure item content and should be handled as secure test materials. Test Administrators should return materials to Test Coordinators. Test Coordinators must return the Human Reader Scripts with the nonscorable materials.</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p> <p><b>**Must be identified in advanced- form driven</b></p>

Description of Accessibility Features	Administration Guidelines	Allowable Use
<p><b>1t. Writing Tools</b></p> <p>Writing tools may be used by students with fine motor difficulties. These tools may include adaptive paper, a slant board and features that may be built into the test platform or computer program such as cut and paste, copy, underline and bold.</p>	<p><b>During Testing:</b> The student uses embedded writing process tools for written responses, including copy/paste, bold, italicize, underline, insert bullets, numbered list, undo, redo, and spell check. Writing tools are available in the constructed response items on the ELA/literacy assessment.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> The copy/paste functionality does not include the ability to copy test content. Only text contained within a student response can be copy/pasted.</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>
<p><b>1u. Graphic Organizer</b></p> <p>Graphic organizers are visual representations of a text or a topic. Organizers provide steps or frames for students to identify pertinent facts, to organize information and to record relationship facts and ideas within a learning task. Organizers offer an entry point into complex material for visual learners to increase comprehension and retention.</p> <p>Students may benefit from blank graphic organizers in order to arrange information into patterns in order to organize their work and to stay focused on the content. Graphic organizers that are provided must not include any testing content. A student must start with new blank graphic organizers for each testing section/session. Teachers cannot tell students what graphic organizer to use for a specific item and cannot require a student to use a graphic organizer.</p>	<p><b>Before Testing:</b> Teacher should determine from what type(s) of graphic organizer(s) the student would benefit.</p> <p><b>During Testing:</b> The student has access to blank graphic organizer(s) and can fill in information during the test time.</p> <p><b>After Testing:</b> Test examiners must collect all scrap paper and graphic organizers that the students used and securely shred them.</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>
<p><b>1v. Audio Materials</b></p> <p>Audio materials provide speech output of textbooks, instructional materials, lectures, or tests. Audio materials are typically audio only and do not necessarily display the text.</p> <p>Students may want to also utilize other formats in conjunction with audio materials. Audio materials can be produced in various electronic formats and may require assistive technology to access material.</p>	<p><b>Instruction:</b></p> <p>Access to audio materials should be available for students. Students should have access to audio materials when available for grade level texts and other instructional materials.</p>	<p>Instruction Only</p>

Description of Accessibility Features	Administration Guidelines	Allowable Use
<p><b>1w Spanish Version Computer based assessment</b></p> <p>Students are eligible for this feature if they have attended school in the US for less than three years and/or had prior instruction in Spanish in their home country or in a US school</p>	<p>Spanish versions of assessments include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Math grades 3-8, algebra 1 algebra 2, and geometry</li> <li>-Science grades 5, 8 and high school</li> <li>-Social Studies grade 8 and Government</li> </ul> <p><b>Before Testing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the EL Accessibility and Accommodation Plan</li> </ul>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p> <p><b>Must identify in Advance</b></p>
<p><b>1x. Blue Tooth Hearing Aides</b></p> <p>Students that wear hearing aids, may have blue tooth hearing aids that can connect directly to the testing platform</p>	<p><b>Before Testing:</b> The school team must complete an infrastructure trial to determine if the device (blue tooth hearing aids) can be connected to the testing platform. This accessibility tool will not need to be identified in the testing platform or file, however, there should be documentation at the school level that the student requires use of hearing aids (IEP, 504 plan, medical plan, etc.).</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>
<p><b>1y Electronic Device for Medical Purposes</b></p> <p>Some students may have medical conditions that require the use of an electronic device including a phone. (e.g., student with diabetes may need to monitor blood sugar on their phone during testing).</p>	<p><b>Before Testing:</b> A student's medical disability must be disclosed to the school testing coordinator (STC) if a medical device or electronic device will be used during testing. The STC should work with the student, family, school nurse, and/or the IEP or 504 team to determine and document a plan for use of the device during testing. This plan should include how the student will be monitored when using the electronic device during testing.</p> <p><b>During Testing:</b> The test administrator should be aware of the plan in place for the use of the electronic device. Monitoring should be provided when the student is using the medical or electronic device.</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment</p>

\*Consult each assessment's Test Administrator Manual for allowable accessibility features.

### Administrative Considerations for All Students

Although students are generally instructed and assessed in their regular classroom and follow the standard schedule for the grade and content area, a building administrator has the authority to schedule instructional and testing sessions in spaces other than regular classrooms, and at different scheduled times. Decisions may be considered, for example, that benefit students who are easily distracted in large group settings by instructing or assessing them in a small group or individual setting. In general, changes to the timing, setting, or conditions of are left to the discretion of the principal or school testing coordinator.

In accordance with principles of universal design for learning, the following administrative guidance is provided regarding the timing and scheduling of instructions and assessments and setting/locations. These administrative considerations are available to all students.

A building administrator may determine that any student can receive one or more of the following administrative considerations, regardless of the student's status as a student with an IEP, 504 or EL Plan.

Description of Accessibility Features	Administration Guidelines	Allowable Use
2a. Small Group	Student is instructed or assessed in a separate location with a small group of students with matching accessibility features, accommodations, or needs as appropriate. Maryland identifies a small group for testing as 10 or less.	Instruction and Assessment*
2b. Time of Day	Student is instructed or assessed during a specific time of day based on their individual needs (e.g., ELA/literacy in the morning; no math after lunch).	Instruction and Assessment*
2c. Separate or Alternate Location	<p>Student is instructed or assessed in a specifically designated location. This is for students that cannot be assessed in the classroom that their peers are being assessed in and requires to be assessed in a different setting (<b>within or out of the school building</b>).</p> <p>Some students may need to receive their educational services and participate in assessments in home, hospital or other settings approved by the Local Accountability Coordinator (LAC). Contact your LAC for additional guidance regarding provision of instruction or the administering an assessment outside of the school building.</p>	Instruction and Assessment*
2d. Specified Area or Setting	<p>Student is instructed or assessed in a specified area or setting (e.g., front of the classroom, seat near the door, library, etc.).</p> <p>Occasionally a setting change may be necessary to increase physical access for a student. For example, a student who uses large print materials may need to work at a table rather than at a desk with a smaller work surface or a student who uses a wheelchair with a specially designed desktop may not have adequate space in an auditorium with theater seating. The student may be required to sit at another location in the auditorium in order to use his or her equipment.</p>	Instruction and Assessment*

Description of Accessibility Features	Administration Guidelines	Allowable Use
<b>2e. Adaptive or Specialized Equipment or Furniture</b>	Student is provided specialized equipment or furniture needed for a successful testing environment (e.g., slant board, low lighting, adaptive seat).	Instruction and Assessment*
<b>2f. Frequent Breaks</b> A student may require breaks during assignments, activities or tests for various reasons. Breaks are allowed and may be given at predetermined intervals or on request	<b>During testing:</b> There are several reasons why a student may need to take a break: Medical Breaks: Student takes a break due to pre-existing or sudden onset of a temporary or long-term medical condition. Student's testing time stops. Individual Bathroom Breaks: Student requests a bathroom break within their overall allotted testing time. Student's testing time does not stop. In-Chair Stretch Break: Student pauses and stretches. Please consult each individual assessment's Text Administration Manual for information on whether the testing time stops for In-Chair Stretch Breaks. Other Frequent Breaks, according to state policy	Instruction and Assessment*
<b>2g. Reduce Distraction to Self</b>	A student may need to complete assignments, activities or assessments in a location other than their classroom in order to reduce distractions to the student. Changes may also be made to the students' location within the classroom. The unique needs of the child will help to determine what location may be best.  *If a change in location is needed please also select 2c or 2d	Instruction and Assessment*
<b>2h. Reduce Distraction to Others</b>	Students who receive a human reader or human scribe accommodation in instruction or on assessments should work in a location that does not allow for other students to be distracted by the use of those accommodations. Students that may have behaviors that are distracting to others may need to be assessed in a different location.  *If a change in location is needed please also select 2c or 2d.	Instruction and Assessment*
<b>2k. Unique Accommodation</b>	Accommodation that is specific to the student. Must follow the outlined process for requesting approval for unique accommodations with MSDE.	Consult assessment-specific guidelines for detailed information on unique accommodations

\*Consult each assessment's Test Administrator Manual for allowable accessibility features.

## Presentation Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Presentation accommodations allow students to access instruction and assessments in ways that do not require them to visually read standard print. Students who benefit 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.

Description of Accommodations	Administration Guidelines	Allowable Use
<p><b>3a Assistive Technology (Non-Screen Reader) (also a response accommodation)</b></p> <p>This accommodation includes all assistive technology devices that aid in the auditory and/or visual presentation of the test material.</p> <p>Assistive Technology (AT) “is used to maintain, increase, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.” (29 U.S.C. 3002)</p> <p>AT devices can be as Low-Tech as a pencil grip, or as High-Tech as an interface which allows someone to control a computer with the movement of their eyes.</p> <p>AT which would fall under the 3a accommodation includes but is not limited to specialized mounts or arms which hold the computer monitor (or printed copy) in a unique viewing position, screen enlargement software, specialized headphones, or induction loop systems.</p> <p>This accommodation is also appropriate for students for whom computer system or platform enlargement tools do not magnify enough to meet their visual needs and will need to use screen enlargement software.</p>	<p><b>Assessment:</b> Students may use a range of assistive technologies in assessment, including devices that are compatible with the online testing platform and those that are used externally on a separate computer.</p> <p><b>Before Testing:</b> Please consult the specific vendors technical approved devices for more information on the compatibility for specific assessments. Prior to testing, STCs should administer an Infrastructure Trial with the assessment platform to confirm compatibility.</p> <p>Speller/grammar checker, word prediction with topic specific dictionary functions, Internet and stored files functionalities must be turned off during state assessments.</p> <p><b>Please refer to Appendix B:</b> Protocol for the Use of the Scribe Accommodation for students who require responses to be transcribed into a regular test book/answer sheet or online. Those students will also require the scribe accommodation indicated on his/her IEP or 504.</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>

Description of Accommodations	Administration Guidelines	Allowable Use
<p><b>3b Screen Reader Version</b></p> <p>Screen readers are primarily used by students who are blind or low vision. A screen reader provides audio output for all information shown on a monitor. The software will provide audio output for desktop icons, keystrokes, menus and text.</p>	<p><b>Assessment:</b> Some online assessments are compatible with Screen Reading Software. Please consult the specific vendors technical approved devices for more information on the compatibility for specific assessments. Prior to testing, STCs should administer an Infrastructure Trial with the assessment platform to confirm compatibility.</p> <p>A student who uses a screen reader may also need a tactile graphics booklet, if available, which contains only the graphics portion of test questions and visual descriptions of pictures and multimedia.</p> <p><b>Before Testing:</b> Screen Reader software should be tested during an Infrastructure Trial with the testing platform.</p> <p><b>During Testing:</b> Due to technical limitations, some online tools may not be available for use with the Screen Reader Version.</p> <p><b>After Testing:</b> If a Tactile Graphics booklet is provided, these booklets contain secure information and test administrators should return the booklets to the School Testing Coordinator.</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>
<p><b>3c Refreshable Braille Display</b></p> <p>Refreshable Braille displays are primarily used by students who are blind or low vision. Refreshable Braille displays provide access to information on a computer screen by electronically raising and lowering different combination of pins in Braille cells.</p> <p>A student who is blind or low vision generally uses a Refreshable Braille display in conjunction with his or her preferred Screen Reader software.</p>	<p><b>Assessment:</b> Some online assessments are compatible with a Refreshable Braille display. Please consult the specific vendors technical approved devices for more information on the compatibility for specific assessments. Prior to testing, STCs should administer an Infrastructure Trial with the assessment platform to confirm compatibility.</p> <p>A student who uses a Refreshable Braille display may also need a tactile graphics booklet, if available, which contains only the graphics portion of test questions and visual descriptions of pictures and multimedia.</p> <p><b>Before Testing:</b> A Refreshable Braille display should be tested during an Infrastructure Trial with the testing platform. The student must also be registered for Screen Reader Version (Accommodation 3b).</p> <p><b>During Testing:</b> Due to technical limitations, some online tools may not be available for use with the Screen Reader Version and Refreshable Braille Display.</p> <p><b>After Testing:</b> If a Tactile Graphics booklet is provided, these booklets contain secure information and test administrators should return the booklets to the School Testing Coordinator.</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>

Description of Accommodations	Administration Guidelines	Allowable Use
<p><b>3d Hard Copy Braille Edition</b></p> <p>Unified English Braille Code for literary material became the standard for North America in 2016. The Braille Authority of North America has decided to let each state choose to implement either Nemeth Code or UEB Technical for mathematical materials, and Maryland chose to use Nemeth Code within UEB Contexts as the standard for transcribing mathematical materials for students. For this accommodation, braille is typically produced in a hardcopy, paper format. For electronic formats, please see 3c – Refreshable Braille Display).</p>	<p><b>Assessment</b></p> <p><b>Before Testing:</b> For some assessments, Braille Kits (including a braille script and embedded tactile graphics) are required. Consult the specific assessment’s Test Administrator Manual for information on ordering braille materials.</p> <p><b>During Testing:</b> If needed by the student, braille test booklets or answer documents may be disassembled for testing (but must be reassembled for return). It is critical that Test Administrators count the number of pages in the test booklet or answer document prior to disassembling the test booklets or answer documents to help ensure that all pages are returned.</p> <p><b>After Testing:</b> If the student is recording their answers directly in the Braille Testing Booklet, then responses must be transcribed verbatim by a Test Administrator into a standard size answer document. Test Administrators should refer to the scribe protocol for the individual assessment.</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>
<p><b>3e Tactile Graphics</b></p> <p>Tactile graphics are raised images to convey non-textual information such as maps, graphs, and diagrams. Tactile graphics have labels in braille. Tactile graphics guidelines are followed to determine if an image should be created and if so, how. Some images are not necessary and can be omitted. Some images are substituted with letters, abbreviations, or words in braille.</p>	<p><b>Before Testing:</b> Students who require tactile graphics may either be registered for Screen Reader Version or Refreshable Braille display. Refer to those accommodations for before testing guidance.</p> <p>Tactile graphics will be embedded in the hard copy braille edition assessments, when needed.</p> <p><b>During Testing:</b> Refer to Screen Reader Version and Refreshable Braille display for more information.</p> <p><b>After Testing:</b> Tactile graphics booklets contain secure item content and should be handled as secure test materials. Test Administrators should return tactile graphics to School Test Coordinators.</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>

Description of Accommodations	Administration Guidelines	Allowable Use
<p><b>3f Large Print Edition</b></p> <p><b>(Available in English or Spanish)</b></p> <p>Large print materials are produced larger than the print used in regular print materials. While regular print materials range from 8-12-point font in size, large print materials are produced in 18-point font or larger. Large print materials should follow the American Printing House for the Blind Large Print Guidelines.</p> <p>Graphics that are to scale for measuring tasks must not be enlarged, so that the student using large print has the same measurements as students using regular print. However, the text accompanying the graphic (questions, answer choices, measurement labels) must be enlarged.</p> <p>Students who are blind or low-vision must have an assessment of their learning/literacy medium to determine if large print is the most appropriate medium for them. This assessment will determine the optimal print size to provide access to materials and maximize literacy.</p> <p>Students who are not blind or low-vision can also use large print materials if data shows that the use of large print improved their performance in reading skills (i.e. comprehension, fluency). The use of large print does not necessarily help students with visual tracking or reading difficulties. When selecting large print materials, consider the weight and size of the books, access to the selected medium, and student performance. Large print in electronic formats can be provided by enlarging foot size or percent of view.</p> <p>A student eligible for the Spanish paper-based accommodation must meet the above requirements and have attended school in the US for less than three years and/or had prior instruction in Spanish either in their home country or in a US school.</p>	<p><b>Assessment</b></p> <p>Current online assessments may have the capability to enlarge font size.</p> <p><b>Before Testing:</b> Some online assessments may require a “Large Print Test Kit,” with supplementary large print materials (large print, ruler).</p> <p>For Spanish based Accommodation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the EL Accessibility and Accommodation Plan</li> </ul> <p><b>During Testing:</b> See the specific assessments in the Test Administrator Manual for instructions on recording student responses for both selected and constructed response items.</p> <p><b>After Testing:</b> If the student is recording their answers directly in the Large Print Test Booklet, then responses must be transcribed verbatim by a Testing Coordinator with another person (not the Test Administrator). This should include two certified Test Administrators under the direction and supervision of the STC. The STC should refer to the scribe protocol for the individual assessment.</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>

Description of Accommodations	Administration Guidelines	Allowable Use
<p><b>3g Paper Based Edition (Paper Test)</b> <b>(Available in English and in Spanish)</b></p> <p>Some students are unable to use a computer due to the impact of his or her disability, or other conditions. Students who use a paper-based edition can include:</p> <p>A student with a disability who cannot participate in the online assessment due to a health-related disability, neurological disorder, or other complex disability, and/or cannot meet the demands of a computer-based test administration.</p> <p>A student with an emotional, behavioral, or other disability who is unable to maintain sufficient concentration to participate in computer-based test administration, even with test accommodations.</p> <p>A student with a disability who requires assistive technology that is not compatible with the testing platform.</p> <p>A student who recently entered the school and has had very little or no prior experience or familiarity with technology.</p> <p>The student is unable to access an online assessment due to religious beliefs.</p> <p>A student eligible for the Spanish paper-based accommodation must meet the above requirements and have attended school in the US for less than three years and/or had prior instruction in Spanish either in their home country or in a US school.</p>	<p><b>Before Testing:</b> For most online assessments, the use of a paper-based edition requires ordering or printing (if allowed) the paper-based edition.</p> <p>For Spanish based Accommodation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the EL Accessibility and Accommodation Plan</li> <li>• Test Administrators providing this accommodation should ideally be literate and fluent in English and in Spanish, or may be assisted by an interpreter, if available, since test administration directions will be read to the student in Spanish.</li> </ul> <p>Spanish paper-based tests are currently available in social studies, science (5 and 8), algebra 1, Government and LS MISA. Please verify with your LAC for Spanish availability.</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>
<p><b>3h. Closed Captioning of Multi-Media Passages</b></p> <p>Captioned videos are those that display the text of the audio portion of the video. Closed Captioning is used in instruction for any video (streaming or otherwise).</p> <p>Some students due to the nature of their disability may require information presented visually as well as auditorily including those that are deaf/hard of hearing.</p>	<p><b>Before Testing:</b> This accommodation must be identified in advance as it currently generates a separate form. Currently videos are not included in any accommodated forms (TTS, Human Reader/Human Signer, AT, and paper) so a student with any of the above accommodations would not require closed captioning. The student should, however, still have this accommodation marked on their IEP for instructional use.</p> <p><b>During Testing:</b> Generally captioning can be turned on and off within the video player as usual. Transcripts may also be available on specific online assessments.</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p> <p><b>Must Identify in Advance (this is form driven)</b></p>

Description of Accommodations	Administration Guidelines	Allowable Use
<p><b>3i Text-to-speech for ELA/Literacy</b></p> <p>The purpose of the embedded text-to- speech accommodation is to provide access to printed or written texts in ELA/L for a very small number of students with print disabilities who would otherwise be unable to participate in instruction or assessment because their disability <b>severely limits</b> their ability to access print.</p> <p>In making decisions on whether to provide the student with this accommodation, IEP teams and 504 Plan Coordinators are instructed to consider whether the student has:</p> <p>Blindness or a visual impairment and has not yet learned (or is unable to use) braille</p> <p>OR</p> <p>A disability that severely limits or prevents them from accessing printed text, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so (e.g., student is unable to decode printed text);</p> <p>When determining the need for this accommodation, it is important to consider the purpose of the tests the student will be taking and the skills the test is intending to measure so that it can be determined how the accommodation might affect the results.</p>	<p><b>Instruction:</b> Any text-to-speech (TTS) software may be used for instruction, but students should be familiar with each testing platform’s version of text-to-speech and its utilities. TTS can be used in instruction even if students do not meet the criteria of Appendix D.</p> <p><b>Assessment</b></p> <p><b>Before Testing:</b> Prior to providing the TTS accommodation for ELA/L, students must have met the qualifications outlined in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Appendix D:</b> Text-to-Speech, ASL Video, or Human Reader/Human Signer Guidance for ELA/L Assessments,</li> </ul> <p>and consult</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Appendix E:</b> Test Administration Protocol for the Human Reader Accommodation for ELA/L Assessments, and the Human Reader Accessibility Feature for Mathematics, Science and Social Studies Assessments.</li> </ul> <p>For TTS, proctor caching, if available, is strongly recommended.</p> <p><b>During Testing:</b> If headphones are not used for text-to-speech, the student must be tested in a separate setting. A consideration may be to use the “reduce distraction to others” administrative consideration (2h).</p> <p><b>After Testing:</b> If all guidelines are NOT met, and the student is given the Text-to-Speech accommodation on an ELA/L assessment, the student’s assessment score may be invalidated and the score would not be counted in the overall assessment results (i.e., the student would be considered a “non- participant” for the ELA/L assessment)</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>

Description of Accommodations	Administration Guidelines	Allowable Use
<p><b>3j ASL Video for ELA</b></p> <p>The purpose of the ASL Video accommodation is to provide access to printed or written texts in ELA/L for a very small number of students with print-related disabilities and who are deaf or hearing impaired who would otherwise be unable to participate in instruction or assessment because their disability <b>severely limits</b> their ability to access print.</p> <p>In making decisions on whether to provide the student with this accommodation, IEP teams and 504 Plan Coordinators are instructed to consider whether the student has:</p> <p>A disability that severely limits or prevents them from accessing printed text, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so (e.g., student is unable to decode printed text);</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Deafness or a hearing impairment and is severely limited or prevented from decoding text due to a documented history of early and prolonged language deprivation.</p> <p>When determining the need for this accommodation, it is important to consider the purpose of the tests the student will be taking and the skills the test is intending to measure so that it can be determined how the accommodation might affect the results.</p>	<p><b>Instruction:</b> ASL video accommodation can be used during instruction without the student meeting the criteria in Appendix D.</p> <p><b>Assessment:</b></p> <p><b>Before Testing:</b> Prior to providing the ASL video accommodation for ELA/L, students must have met the qualifications outlined in Appendix D.</p> <p>For ASL video, proctor caching, if available, is strongly recommended.</p> <p><b>During Testing:</b> Student will access ASL videos within the testing platform.</p> <p><b>After Testing:</b> If all guidelines are NOT met, and the student is given the ASL Video accommodation on an ELA/L assessment, the student's assessment score may be invalidated and the score would not be counted in the overall assessment results (i.e., the student would be considered a "non- participant" for the ELA/L assessment).</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>

Description of Accommodations	Administration Guidelines	Allowable Use
<p><b>3k Human Reader/Human Signer for ELA</b></p> <p>The purpose of the Human Reader/Human Signer accommodation is to provide accesses to printed or written texts in ELA/L for a very small number of students with print-related disabilities and/or who are deaf or hearing impaired who would otherwise be unable to participate in instruction or assessment because their disability <b>severely limits</b> their ability to access print.</p> <p>In making decisions on whether to provide the student with this accommodation, IEP teams and 504 Plan Coordinators are instructed to consider whether the student has:</p> <p>Blindness or a visual impairment and has not yet learned (or is unable to use) braille</p> <p>OR</p> <p>A disability that severely limits or prevents them from accessing printed text, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so (e.g., student is unable to decode printed text);</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Deafness or a hearing impairment and is severely limited or prevented from decoding text due to a documented history of early and prolonged language deprivation.</p> <p>When determining the need for this accommodation, it is important to consider the purpose of the tests the student will be taking and the skills the test is intending to measure so that it can be determined how the accommodation might affect the results.</p>	<p><b>Instruction:</b> A human reader or human signer can be used during instruction without the student meeting the criteria for Appendix D.</p> <p><b>Before Testing:</b> Prior to providing the human reader/human signer accommodation for ELA/L, students must have met the qualifications outlined in Appendix D.</p> <p><b>During Testing:</b> A qualified person (as defined by the School Testing Coordinator’s Manual) may be provided to read orally to students who require the Human Reader/Human Signer accommodation.</p> <p>Human Readers/Human Signers must follow the protocols and guidelines listed in the following appendices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Appendix D:</b> Text-to-Speech, ASL Video, or Human Reader/Human Signer Guidance for ELA/L Assessments</li> <li>• <b>Appendix E:</b> Test Administration Protocol for the Human Reader Accommodation for ELA/L Assessments, and the Human Reader Accessibility Feature for Mathematics, Science and Social Studies Assessments</li> <li>• <b>Appendix J:</b> Human Signer Guidelines</li> </ul> <p>A student should have the option of asking a human reader to slow down or repeat text.</p> <p>This is difficult when a person is reading to an entire group of students. However, verbatim reading to a group of students is permitted in testing if the accommodation is provided on that basis during regular ongoing instruction. <b>No more than five (5) students</b> may be grouped together for reading tests aloud by a human reader, since students typically proceed through the test at different rates.</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>

Description of Accommodations	Administration Guidelines	Allowable Use
<p><b>3l American Sign Language (ASL) Video for Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies</b></p> <p>Some students who are deaf or hard of hearing may need assistance accessing text-based instructional or test content. Access for those students is typically provided through sign language. The purpose of the ASL Video is to provide students who are deaf or hard of hearing with an embedded video of a human interpreter for instruction and assessments. When selecting this accommodation for students for assessment, it is important to consider whether the student has been provided this accommodation in instruction. Students not using this accommodation in instruction should not be provided this accommodation for assessment.</p>	<p>Test administrators should refer to the specific assessment's TAM to determine whether ASL video for the content area is available.</p> <p><b>Before Testing:</b> For ASL video, proctor caching, if available, is strongly recommended.</p> <p><b>During Testing:</b> The student may pause and resume the video but cannot adjust the pace.</p> <p><b>After Testing:</b> NA</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment</p>
<p><b>3m Human Signer for Test Directions</b></p> <p>Some students who are deaf or hard of hearing may need the directions that are typically read aloud interpreted into sign language. Access for those students is typically provided through sign language. <b>This accommodation is selected for students that don't have difficulty accessing text-based instruction and assessment.</b></p>	<p><b>Before Testing:</b> NA</p> <p><b>During Testing:</b> A Human Signer will sign the test directions to a student. The student may either be tested in a small group or separate setting based on the student's experiences during classroom assessments.</p> <p><b>After Testing:</b> NA</p>	
<p><b>3n Manual Control of Audio</b></p> <p>This accommodation allows students to indicate when they are ready to hear recorded audio during testing. This accommodation may support students who need additional time for language processing, attention, or focus needs due to a disability. A student must be identified as an EL and have a disability (504 or IEP)</p>	<p>Available for WIDA ACCESS ONLY</p>	<p>Assessment- WIDA</p>
<p><b>3o Repeat Item Audio</b></p> <p>This accommodation allows students to hear recorded audio a second time. This accommodation may support students who need repetition for language processing, attention, or focus needs due to a disability. A student must be identified as an EL and have a disability (504 or IEP)</p>	<p>Available for WIDA ACCESS ONLY</p>	<p>Assessment- WIDA</p>

Description of Accommodations	Administration Guidelines	Allowable Use
<p><b>3p Notes and Outlines</b></p> <p>Written notes may be taken by another student or adult and copied. A teacher could provide a print copy of instructions and assignments. Students may also be given a detailed outline of the materials to be covered during the class period and an outline of materials to be covered (syllabus) at the beginning of each grading period.</p>	<p><b>Instruction Only</b></p>	<p>Instruction</p>
<p><b>3q Unique Accommodations</b></p> <p>Unique accommodations not specifically mentioned above may be used for instruction. A unique accommodation may be proposed by the LAC, Section 504 staff, or Special Education staff.</p>	<p>Unique accommodations used for state assessments must be approved by MSDE Division of Assessment, Accountability, and Performance Reporting. The unique accommodation must be submitted to MSDE by the LAC at least six weeks prior to testing to ensure a final MSDE response is received before testing begins. Refer to Appendix F for the unique accommodation form.</p>	<p>Determined on a case-by-case basis in consultation with MSDE</p>

## Response Accommodations

Response accommodations adapt the way that students demonstrate their learning on activities, assignments, or tests. They may include alternative ways of answering questions and tools to structure tasks and information. Response accommodations can benefit students with physical, sensory, or learning disabilities (including difficulties with memory, sequencing, directionality, alignment, and organization).

Description of Accommodations	Administration Guidelines	Allowable Use
<p><b>4a Assistive Technology</b></p> <p>By definition, Assistive Technology (AT) “is used to maintain, increase, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.” (29 U.S.C. 3002) AT devices can be as Low-Tech as a pencil grip, or as High-Tech as an interface which allows someone to operate a computer with the movement of their eyes.</p> <p>Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) is a method of communication. It can consist of gestures, pictures, symbols, words, or a combination of all of these. It can range from simple picture communication symbols to a sophisticated computer system with voice output. Input can be done by pointing or using switches, voice recognition systems or eye gaze systems. The methods of AAC will vary and be personalized to meet the needs of the individual.</p> <p>AT which would fall under the 4a accommodation includes, but is not limited to switches, specialized keyboards, eye- gaze interfaces, or communication devices</p> <p>*Bluetooth hearing aides are now approved under assistive technology. Please note that blue tooth headphones are NOT permitted.</p>	<p><b>Assessment</b></p> <p>Students may use a range of assistive technologies in assessment, including devices that interface with the online testing platform and those that are used externally on a separate computer.</p> <p><b>Before Testing:</b> Please consult the specific assessment’s Test Administrator Manual for more information on the compatibility for specific assessments. Before testing, School Test Coordinators should administer an Infrastructure trial with the assessment platform to confirm compatibility.</p> <p><b>Any devices with word prediction, topic specific dictionary functions, Internet and stored files functionalities must be turned off during state assessments.</b></p> <p>Please refer to <b>Appendix B: Protocol for the Use of the Scribe Accommodation</b> for students who require responses to be transcribed into a regular test book/answer sheet or online. Those students will also require the 4g: Human Scribe Accommodation</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>

Description of Accommodations	Administration Guidelines	Allowable Use
<p><b>4b Braille Notetaker</b></p> <p>Electronic braille notetakers can be used as a portable word processor. They usually have a braille keyboard for input and speech output. Many also have the option of output via a refreshable braille display. In addition to word processing, they may have options for spreadsheets, calendar functions, email, and Internet access. Files can be printed in regular print by connecting to a regular printer or in braille via a braille embosser. The accommodation is written with a specific focus on students with visual impairments or blindness.</p>	<p><b>Before Testing:</b> For assessments, Internet and stored files functionalities must be turned off.</p> <p><b>During Testing:</b> NA</p> <p><b>After Testing:</b> A student who uses an electronic braille notetaker during assessments must have his/her responses transcribed by a certified Test Administrator, (or by a staff member working under the direct supervision of a certified Test Administrator) exactly as the responses were entered in the electronic braille notetaker. Two people must be present while the student responses are transcribed, and the person transcribing must be proficient in braille.</p> <p>Refer to <b>Appendix B:</b> Protocol for the Use of the Scribe Accommodation. After the student's responses are transcribed, the student's responses must be permanently deleted from the electronic braille notetaker. Refer to the specific assessment's TAM for directions on returning or securely shredding the original word-processed print-out.</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>
<p><b>4c Braille Writer</b></p> <p>A braillewriter is a device for writing braille. It can include a manual or electronic braillewriter or a slate and stylus. The device prints in braille and does not have the option of editing or saving files.</p>	<p><b>Before Testing:</b> NA</p> <p><b>During Testing:</b> Student should be given access to a braille writer when materials for that testing session are handed out. The test administrator should follow directions in the TAM.</p> <p><b>After Testing:</b> A student who uses a braillewriter during assessments must have his/her responses transcribed by a certified Test Administrator, (or by a staff member working under the direct supervision of a certified Test Administrator) exactly as the student entered his or her responses on the braillewriter. Two people must be present while the student responses are transcribed, and the person transcribing must be proficient in braille.</p> <p>Refer to <b>Appendix B:</b> Protocol for the Use of the Scribe Accommodation. Refer to the specific assessment's TAM for directions on returning or securely shredding the original word-processed print-out.</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>

Description of Accommodations	Administration Guidelines	Allowable Use
<p><b>4d Mathematics Tools including Calculator (on Calculator sections of the Mathematics Assessments and Science Assessments)</b></p> <p>If a student's disability affects mathematics calculation, reasoning or access, a calculator or other mathematical tool may be needed. If a student requires use of a special calculator (ie, large buttons, talking, etc), this accommodation should be selected.</p> <p>Some students may need to use mathematical tools such as a large print ruler, braille ruler, tactile compass, braille protractor.</p> <p>Sometimes other mathematical tools are needed by students with disabilities such as arithmetic tables, two-color chips, counters and counting chips, square tiles, base ten blocks, or 100s charts. The specific tool that a student requires should be documented on the student's IEP as an accommodation and/or supplementary aides and services. Students should have experience with using the selected tool during instruction before using it as an accommodation on an assessment.</p>	<p><b>Before Testing:</b> Refer to the specific assessment's TAM or Accommodations Manual for a list of allowable calculation devices and mathematical tools. IEP or 504 team should determine what mathematics tools the student will require on the assessment and make sure that the needed tool(s) are included with the testing materials.</p> <p><b>During Testing:</b> A student uses a specific calculation device or math tool (e.g., large key, talking, or other adapted calculator) <b>other than the embedded grade-level calculator</b> on the calculator section of the mathematics assessment. If a talking calculator is used, the student must use headphones or be tested in a separate setting. The calculator cannot include functionality beyond the embedded grade-level calculator.</p> <p><b>After Testing:</b> NA</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>

Description of Accommodations	Administration Guidelines	Allowable Use
<p><b>4e Mathematics Tools including Calculator (on non-Calculator sections of the mathematics assessments)</b></p> <p>The purpose of a calculation device on the non-calculator sections of the Mathematics Assessment is to provide access for students with a disability that <b>severely limits or prevents</b> their ability to perform basic calculations (the IEP team should determine appropriate data for this decision). For these students, a calculation device may be used on the non-calculator and calculator sections of the mathematics assessments. The IEP or 504 plan must specify which device(s) or manipulatives.</p> <p>Calculation devices assist with computation. It is important to determine whether the use of a calculation device is a matter of convenience or a necessary accommodation. It is important to know the goal of instruction and assessment before making decisions about the use of calculation devices. For example, if students are learning subtraction with regrouping, using a calculator would not give students an opportunity to show regrouping. On the other hand, if students are learning problem solving skills that include subtractions (e.g., bargain shopping for items with a better value), the use of a calculation device may be a valid accommodation.</p> <p>Sometimes other mathematical tools are needed by students with disabilities such as arithmetic tables, two-color chips, counters and counting chips, square tiles, base ten blocks, or 100s charts. The specific tool that a student requires should be documented on the student's IEP as an accommodation and/or supplementary aides and services. Students should have experience with using the selected tool during instruction before using it as an accommodation on an assessment.</p>	<p><b>Before Testing:</b> Refer to the specific assessment's TAM or Accommodations Manual for a list of allowable calculation devices and mathematical tools. IEP or 504 team should determine what mathematics tools the student will require on the assessment and make sure that the needed tool(s) are included with the testing materials.</p> <p><b>During Testing:</b> A student uses a specific calculation device (e.g., large key, talking, or other adapted calculator) or mathematical tool on the non-calculator section of the mathematics assessment. If a talking calculator is used, the student must use headphones or be tested in a separate setting. The calculator cannot include functionality beyond the embedded grade-level calculator.</p> <p><b>After Testing:</b> If all guidelines are NOT met, and the student is given a Calculation device and Mathematics Tools without proper documentation, the student's assessment score may be invalidated and the score would not be counted in the overall assessment results (i.e., the student would be considered a "non-participant" for the mathematics assessment).</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>

Description of Accommodations	Administration Guidelines	Allowable Use
<p><b>4f Speech-to-Text</b></p> <p>The student dictates responses verbally, using an external speech-to-text device.</p> <p>Students with motor and/or writing difficulties may use speech-to-text software to produce written documents. This type of software translates oral speech into a typed document.</p>	<p><b>Before Testing:</b> All speech-to-text devices and software must be tested in an Infrastructure Trial to test whether the speech-to-text device or software will interact directly with the testing platform. If the device or software will not interact directly with the platform, a second testing device may be needed.</p> <p><b>Currently, no online MCAP testing platform has embedded speech-to-text functionality.</b></p> <p><b>During Testing:</b> Student uses device to answer questions</p> <p><b>After Testing:</b> A student who uses a speech-to-text device during assessments must have his/her responses transcribed by a certified Test Administrator, or by a staff member working under the direct supervision of a certified Test Administrator exactly as the responses were voiced. Refer to <b>Appendix B: Protocol for the Use of the Scribe Accommodation.</b> After the student's responses are transcribed, the memory of the communication device must be cleared. Refer to the specific assessment's TAM for directions on returning or securely shredding the original word-processed print-out.</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>

Description of Accommodations	Administration Guidelines	Allowable Use
<p><b>4g Human Scribe Response</b></p> <p>A scribe writes down responses produced by a student using speech, pointing, an augmentative communication device, or visual language (e.g., ASL, Sign Language, or Cued Speech) via an interpreter/transliterator</p> <p>In making decisions whether to provide the student with this accommodation, IEP teams and 504 Plan Coordinators should consider whether the student has:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">A physical disability that severely limits or prevents the student's motor process of writing through keyboarding</p> <p>OR</p> <p>A disability that severely limits or prevents the student from expressing written language, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so.</p> <p>The scribe for a student should be familiar with the student's accent or means of expressive language and will recognize the words a student is saying without writing down unusual phonetic spellings</p>	<p>Much skill is involved in being a scribe, a skill that requires extensive practice. 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 must allow the student to review and edit what the scribe has written. Individuals who serve as scribes must be assured that he or she knows the vocabulary involved and understands the boundaries of the assistance to be provided. The role of the scribe is to write what is dictated, no more and no less.</p> <p><b>Before Testing:</b> Before listing the accommodation in the student's IEP or 504 Plan, teams/coordinators should also consider whether:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student's ability to express in writing is documented in evaluation summaries from locally administered diagnostic assessments; and</li> <li>• The student routinely uses a scribe for written assignments; and</li> <li>• The student receives ongoing, intensive instruction and/or interventions to learn written expression, as deemed appropriate by the IEP team or 504 Plan Coordinator.</li> </ul> <p>Test administrators providing the scribe accommodation must review <b>Appendix B: Protocol for the Use of the Scribe Accommodation</b></p> <p><b>During Testing:</b> The scribe follows the procedures outlined in <b>Appendix B</b>. During assessments, a scribe accommodator may only administer the scribe accommodation to one student at a time during a test session. The accommodation must be administered so that other students are not able to hear the accommodated student's response.</p> <p><b>After Testing:</b> Refer to the specific assessment's TAM for directions on returning or securely shredding the original student material if necessary.</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>

Description of Accommodations	Administration Guidelines	Allowable Use
<p><b>4h Human Signer Response</b></p> <p>The student dictates responses using American Sign Language (ASL), Signed English, or Cued Speech.</p>	<p>A student who uses a human signer during assessments must have his/her responses transcribed by a certified Test Administrator, or by a staff member working under the direct supervision of a certified Test Administrator exactly as the responses were voiced.</p> <p><b>Before Testing:</b> Refer to <b>Appendix J: Human Signer Guidelines</b></p> <p><b>During Testing:</b> Student will sign their responses</p> <p><b>After Testing:</b> Refer to <b>Appendix B: Protocol for the Use of the Scribe Accommodation</b>. After the student's responses are transcribed, the memory of the communication device, if used with sign language, must be cleared. Refer to the specific assessment's TAM for directions on returning or securely shredding the original student work, if needed.</p>	
<p><b>4i Monitor Test Response</b></p> <p>This accommodation is to ensure that the student is marking the answer for the problem the student intends to answer. For example, a student may accidentally put two answers for one problem on the same line or accidentally skip a question.</p>	<p><b>Paper Assessment:</b> The Test Administrator or assigned accommodator monitors the placement of student responses on a test book/answer sheet.</p> <p><b>Computer Based Assessment:</b> The test administrator or assigned accommodator monitors that the student is answering/responding to questions prior to clicking the next button and ensures that the student is familiar with the review items feature.</p> <p><b>The Test Administrator or assigned accommodator cannot assist the student with changing a response to the correct answer.</b></p>	Instruction and Assessment*

Description of Accommodations	Administration Guidelines	Allowable Use
<p><b>4j Word Prediction- External Device</b></p> <p>The student uses an external word prediction device that provides a bank of frequently or recently used words on- screen after the student enters the first few letters of a word. The student must be familiar with the use of the external device prior to assessment administration. The device may not connect to the internet or save information. If the connection to the internet cannot be turned off a monitor must be provided to ensure that a student is not accessing the internet during testing.</p> <p>In making decisions whether or not to provide the student with this accommodation, IEP teams and 504 Plan Coordinators should consider whether the student has:</p> <p>A physical disability that severely limits or prevents the student's motor process of writing through keyboarding</p> <p>OR</p> <p>A disability that severely limits or prevents the student from expressing written language, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so.</p>	<p><b>Before Testing:</b> Before listing the accommodation in the student's IEP or 504 Plan, teams/coordinators should also consider whether:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student's ability to express in writing is documented in evaluation summaries from locally administered diagnostic assessments; and</li> <li>The student routinely uses a scribe for written assignments; and</li> <li>The student receives ongoing, intensive instruction and/or interventions to learn written expression, as deemed appropriate by the IEP team or 504 Plan Coordinator.</li> </ul> <p><b>During Testing:</b> NA</p> <p><b>After Testing:</b> A student who uses an external word prediction device during assessments must have his/her responses transcribed by a certified Test Administrator, or by a staff member working under the direct supervision of a certified Test Administrator exactly as the responses were voiced. Refer to Appendix B: Protocol for the Use of the Scribe Accommodation. After the student's responses are transcribed, the memory of the device must be cleared.</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>
<p><b>4k Answers Recorded in Test Book (for students taking a paper assessment)</b></p> <p>This accommodation allows a student to write directly in a test book rather than on an answer sheet, or online. Students who do not have much experience with test- taking (and filling in circles) or who have fine motor difficulties may need the option of writing in their responses in another format.</p>	<p><b>After Testing:</b> A student who responds in a test book during assessments may need to have his/her responses transcribed by a certified Test Administrator, or by a staff member working under the direct supervision of a certified Test Administrator exactly as the responses were voiced. Refer to <b>Appendix B: Protocol for the Use of the Scribe Accommodation</b>. Refer to the specific assessment's TAM for directions on returning or securely shredding the original word- processed print-out.</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>
<p><b>4l Recording Devices</b></p> <p>A student uses a recording device to record classwork or test responses rather than writing on paper.</p>		<p>Instruction Only</p>
<p><b>4m ACCESS for Scribe</b></p>	<p>All ELs' responses must be transcribed verbatim. Students need to spell the words and indicate where to provide punctuation and paragraph breaks. Once a word has been spelled, it does not have to be spelled again.</p>	<p>Instruction and ACCESS</p>

Description of Accommodations	Administration Guidelines	Allowable Use
<p><b>4n Partner Assisted Scanning</b></p> <p>Some students with significant physical disabilities are unable to directly access communication. For some of these students, the use of a communication partner allows them to express themselves.</p> <p>Partner Assisted Scanning is a methodical process in which the partner ‘scans’ through a set of items* and the communicator makes an indication when their desired response is presented. (This ‘indication’ is very individualized and may only be properly perceived by a partner who is familiar with the student.)</p> <p>The length of each presented item varies based on the student or the activity. An entire paragraph could be expressed one sentence, one word, or one letter at a time. A student using Partner Assisted Scanning in conjunction with a pre-developed communication book or system has the same access to language as a student who can directly access the book or system.</p> <p>*It is important to note that altering or developing the set of items presented based on the desired response to an assessment item, may invalidate the student’s response to that item.</p>	<p>In partner assisted scanning, the partner to the student is similar to the role of a scribe. Much skill is involved in being a scribe, a skill that requires extensive practice. 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 must allow the student to review and edit what the scribe has written. Individuals who serve as scribes must be assured that he or she knows the vocabulary involved and understands the boundaries of the assistance to be provided. The role of the scribe is to write what is dictated, no more and no less.</p> <p><b>Before Testing:</b> Test administrators providing the scribe accommodation must review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Appendix B:</b> Protocol for the Use of the Scribe Accommodation</li> <li>• The test administrator or partner may view the test to ensure that the visual choices/notebook has needed vocabulary for the assessment.</li> </ul> <p><b>During Testing:</b> The scribe/partner follows the procedures outlined in <b>Appendix B</b>. The student would read or listen to the choices and then indicate which one they want by scanning. For CR questions the student will use their book or device to access the vocabulary that they need to respond to the question. During assessments, a scribe/partner accommodator may only administer the accommodation to one student at a time during a test session. The accommodation must be administered so that other students are not able to see the accommodated student’s response.</p> <p><b>After Testing:</b> Refer to the specific assessment’s TAM for directions on returning or securely shredding the original student material if necessary.</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment</p>
<p><b>4o Unique Response Accommodations</b></p> <p>Unique accommodations not specifically mentioned above may be used for instruction. A unique accommodation may be proposed by the LAC, Section 504 staff, or Special Education staff.</p>	<p>Unique accommodations used for state assessments must be approved by the MSDE Division of Assessment, Accountability, and Performance Reporting. The unique accommodation must be submitted to the MSDE by the LAC at least six weeks prior to testing to ensure a final MSDE response is received before testing begins. Refer to <b>Appendix F</b> for the unique accommodation form.</p>	<p>Determined on a case-by-case basis in consultation with MSDE</p>

\*Consult each assessment’s Test Administrator Manual for allowable accessibility features.

## Timing and Scheduling Accommodations

Timing and scheduling accommodations change the allowable length of time to complete assignments, tests, and activities, and may also change the way the time is organized. Timing accommodations give students the time and the breaks they need to complete activities, assignments, and tests. Other changes may include the particular time of day, day of the week, or number of days over which a particular activity, assignment, or test takes place.

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

Students who cannot concentrate continuously for an extended period or who become frustrated or stressed easily may need frequent or extended relaxation breaks. It may also help to schedule classes and tests that require the greatest concentration in the morning for students who have difficulty concentrating and staying on task as the day progresses. Scheduling changes might also be helpful for students on medications that affect their ability to stay alert, or who have more productive times of day.

Some students with health-related disabilities may have functioning levels that vary during the day because of the effects of medications or diminishing energy levels. For example, blood sugar levels may need to be maintained by eating several times a day at prescribed times. These students could be accommodated by scheduling tests and activities around the eating schedule, or by allowing food to be taken to the classroom or testing site. Students who fatigue easily may need to take some academic classes and tests before rather than after a physical education class or recess or may need to reduce physical activity.

Description of Accommodations	Administration Guidelines	Allowable Use
<p><b>5a. Extended Time</b></p> <p>Timing accommodations are most helpful for students who need more time than generally allowed to complete activities, assignments, and tests.</p> <p>Extended time may require a student's IEP or 504 team to determine a specific amount of extra time to complete assignments, projects, and tests.</p> <p>Decisions regarding extended time must 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.</p> <p>School teams may choose between time and a half (1.5) and double time (2). If a student requires more than double the amount of time, then a unique accommodation must be requested. 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. Students who have too much time may lose interest and motivation to do their best work.</p> <p>Teachers and Test Administrators must make certain that the extended time accommodation is selected when other accommodations such as human reader, text-to-speech software, or scribe which may increase the time needed for the student to respond are chosen.</p>	<p>Extended time is used for <b>each</b> session/part of an administered test. The extended time accommodation <b>must</b> be given in one <b>continuous</b> block of time at the end of each section. The student with extended time cannot be told to close the book at the end of the standard session testing time and then be brought back to that session later to complete the extended time accommodation. Special attention must be considered when arranging testing groups to ensure that students without the extended time accommodation do not receive more than the specified testing time stated in the Test Administrator Manual for each assessment. Test Administrators may not extend a single session/part of a test over multiple days. If a student is unable to complete multiple test sessions/parts in one day due to the amount of extended time required, then the multiple day accommodation may be appropriate for the student. (Multiple Days are now covered under Unique Accommodation).</p> <p>Each student's IEP or 504 Plan must document the amount of extended time typically required for assessments. IEP or 504 Teams should determine the routine for providing extended time to students.</p> <p>When administering the extended time during assessments, it is imperative for the school test coordinator to carefully plan ahead of time in order to be prepared to administer the assessment.</p> <p><b>Refer to Appendix C:</b> Guidance for Extended Time Accommodation.</p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment*</p>

Description of Accessibility Features	Administration Guidelines	Allowable Use
<b>5b. Unique Timing and Scheduling Accommodation</b>	Unique accommodations used for state assessments must be approved by MSDE Division of Assessment, Accountability, and Performance Reporting, and the MSDE Division of Early Intervention and Special Education or other appropriate state staff. The unique accommodation must be submitted to MSDE by the LAC at least six weeks prior to testing to ensure a final MSDE response is received before testing begins. Refer to <b>Appendix F</b> for the unique accommodation form.	Instruction and Assessment*

## Section 4: Making Decisions about Accommodations

### STEP 1: EXPECT STUDENTS TO ACHIEVE GRADE-LEVEL STANDARDS

#### Equal Access to Grade-level Content

As previously noted, several important laws require the participation of students with disabilities in standards-aligned instruction and assessment initiatives. These include federal laws such as ESSA and IDEA. (See section 2B for more information about federal and state laws)

With the focus of legislation aimed at accountability and the inclusion of all students comes the drive to ensure equal access to grade-level Content Standards. Academic Content Standards are educational targets for students to learn at each grade level. Teachers ensure that students work toward grade-level Content Standards by using a range of instructional strategies based on the varied strengths and needs of students. Providing accommodations during instructions and assessments may also promote equal access to grade-level content. To accomplish this goal of equal access:

- Every IEP Team member must be familiar with Content Standards and accountability systems at the state and district level; and
- Every IEP Team member must know where to locate standards and updates; and
- Collaboration between general and special educators must occur for successful student access.

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

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

### STEP 2: LEARN ABOUT ACCOMMODATIONS FOR INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT

#### What are accommodations?

Accommodations are practices and procedures that mitigate the effects of a student’s disability, but do not reduce learning or performance expectations. (See section 3 for more information on accommodations)

Accommodations are commonly categorized in four ways: presentation, response, setting (also known as administrative considerations), and timing/scheduling:

- **Presentation Accommodations:** Allow students to access information in ways that do not require them to visually read standard print. These alternate modes of access are auditory, multi-sensory, tactile and visual. Students who benefit 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.

- **Response Accommodations:** Allow students to complete activities, assignments, and assessments in different ways or to solve or organize problems using some type of assistive device or organizer. Response accommodations can benefit students with physical, sensory, or learning disabilities (including difficulties with memory, sequencing, directionality, alignment, and organization).
- **Timing and Scheduling Accommodations:** Increase the allowable length of time to complete an assessment or assignment and perhaps change the way the time is organized. Timing accommodations give students the time and the breaks they need to complete activities, assignments, and tests. Other changes may include the particular time of day, day of the week, or number of days over which a particular activity, assignment, or test takes place.
- Timing accommodations are most helpful for students who need more time than generally allowed to complete activities, assignments, and tests. Extra time may be needed to process written text (e.g., a student with a learning disability who processes information slowly), to write (e.g., a student with limited dexterity as a result of arthritis), or to use other accommodations or equipment (e.g., assistive technology, audio tape, or scribe).
- Students who cannot concentrate continuously for an extended period or who become frustrated or stressed easily may need frequent or extended relaxation breaks. It may also help to schedule classes and tests that require the greatest concentration in the morning for students who have difficulty concentrating and staying on task as the day progresses. Scheduling changes might also be helpful for students on medications that affect their ability to stay alert, or who have more productive times of day.
- Some students with health-related disabilities may have functioning levels that vary during the day because of the effects of medications or diminishing energy levels. For example, blood sugar levels may need to be maintained by eating several times a day at prescribed times. These students could be accommodated by scheduling tests and activities around the eating schedule, or by allowing food to be taken to the classroom or testing site. Students who fatigue easily may need to take some academic classes and tests before rather than after a physical education class or recess or may need to reduce physical activity.

### STEP 3: IDENTIFY ACCOMMODATIONS DURING INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT

To ensure that students with disabilities are engaged in standards-based instruction and assessments, every IEP Team member must be knowledgeable about the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards and assessments. Effective decision making about the provision of appropriate accommodations begins with making good instructional decisions. In turn, making appropriate instructional decisions is facilitated by gathering and reviewing data about the student's disability and present level of academic achievement and functional performance in relation to local and state academic standards. The IEP Team identifies barriers to access and progress in the curriculum that are caused by the student's disability and the adaptations and supports needed to address them. Some of these supports are effective instructional practices that embody the principles of Universal Design for Learning and are made available for all students during some or all instructional activities by effective teachers. For some students with disabilities, however, these accommodations/supports are more than instructional tools; they are necessities for access. If a student requires the use of a particular accommodation to remove or minimize a barrier caused by his or her disability in order to have equal access to the curriculum, that accommodation

or support should be documented in the IEP and must be implemented consistently across the school environment.

Each member of the IEP Team must be informed of responsibilities related to implementing the student's IEP. Those responsibilities include selecting, administering, and evaluating accommodations during instruction and assessment. Accommodations must be selected based on the individual student need(s) and must be used consistently for instruction and assessment.

The role of IEP or 504 Plan key players and suggestions for carrying out their respective responsibilities are described below. As part of the IEP or 504 Plan decision making process any team member listed below may provide information to be considered during an IEP or 504 Team meeting regarding the selection, implementation, and/or evaluation of accommodations appropriate for a student.

### School Principal

The principal promotes the expectation at the school building level that students with disabilities are capable learners who will participate and succeed in all local and state testing programs. The principal in each school is responsible for:

- Implementing the school district's policies that provide equal access to instructional and assessment programs for all students.
- Ensuring that accommodations are fully, consistently, and appropriately implemented during the administration of local and state assessments and classroom quizzes and tests, as specified in each student's IEP or 504 Plan.
- Exercising professional discretion on an emergency basis. For example, allowing certain testing accommodations for a student who incurs a temporary disabling condition that interferes with test performance shortly before or within the testing window of a state assessment (such as the student breaks his/her arm and will need a scribe). Refer to **Appendix H: Emergency Accommodation Form** for state assessments.

School principals should also be familiar with the policies and procedures included in the various Test Administrators/Coordinators Manuals for the various Maryland Assessments.

### General Education Teacher

As a member of the IEP or 504 Plan Team, the general education teacher has an active and significant role in the determination and use of instructional and testing accommodations for students with disabilities or disabling conditions. General education teachers are familiar with curriculum content and the purpose of state and district assessments. Ensuring that students with disabilities and disabling conditions have full access to the programs and services that are available to their nondisabled peers often requires that general education teachers, in collaboration with special education teachers, provide appropriate instructional and testing accommodations. The results of assessments provide teachers with information that will support the individual student in achieving state standards. The testing accommodations listed in the student's IEP or 504 Plan must be consistently provided in the classroom. General education teachers are critical team members who must also be familiar and knowledgeable of each student's accommodations and how to appropriately administer them.

### Special Education Teacher

The special education teacher plays an important role in providing information on how to match learning characteristics of the student with a disability to appropriate instructional and testing accommodations, ensuring that the student can demonstrate his/her knowledge and skills without being limited or unfairly restricted by his/her disability. In collaboration with general education teachers and related service providers, special education teachers assist in recommending and implementing appropriate instructional accommodations used in the classroom. These recommendations will serve as a link to the types of testing accommodations a student may need for classroom, state and district assessments. Special educators may directly provide the testing accommodations or may assist school staff in the administration of testing accommodations that are included in a student's IEP or 504 Plan.

### Related Service Providers

Related service providers such as speech-language pathologists, school psychologists, physical therapists, and occupational therapist serve vital roles in supporting the education of many students with disabilities in school environments. Related services personnel, as part of school teams, bring knowledge and expertise in their respective disciplines to help the team select appropriate accommodations and as needed, assist the student in learning to use them with maximal independence. The collaborative skills required to work effectively with others in the context of a team-centered approach in a variety of educational environments is critical. EL teachers must be included as a part of a student's IEP team when a student receives both special education services and support from an EL teacher.

### Student

Beginning with the development of the IEP that will be in effect when they turn 14 (and earlier if appropriate), the student must be invited to participate in their IEP. Students themselves can provide valuable information to the IEP or 504 Plan Team on accommodations needed. They can provide information on their strengths and how the accommodations they use for instruction are working. This information from the student can inform decisions regarding the appropriateness of recommended accommodations during tests. At times, students may be reluctant to use certain testing accommodations because they do not want to appear to be different from their peers. Including students in "will help them to understand the purpose of the accommodation and may likely result in their willingness to consistently use the accommodation. The testing accommodations that a student needs must be reviewed at least annually by the IEP or 504 Plan Teams. Accommodations recommended for students early in their school careers may not be as needed as they develop skills, knowledge and experience to increase their ability to demonstrate what they know and can do.

### Parents/Guardians

As members of the IEP or 504 Plan Team, parents participate in the development, review, and revision of their child's IEP or 504 Plan. Parents are familiar with the strengths and needs of their child and can provide valuable information to enhance discussions about the need for instructional and testing accommodations. Parents have information about strategies their child uses to complete homework assignments and other tasks around the home. To enable parents to participate in meaningful discussions it is important that they have information about the following:

- The need and rationale for testing accommodations, when and where appropriate
- The types of testing accommodations and how they are administered; and
- The purpose of tests, what they measure and how the results are used.

## Choosing and Documenting Accommodations

IEP teams should be judicious in the decisions regarding accommodations, assistive technology, and other supports in order to ensure that the selection specifically addresses the learning needs of an individual student as they relate to the student's disability and the student's participation and progress in general education curriculum, appropriate preschool activities, extra-curricular and non-academic activities, and participation with students without disabilities and nondisabled peers, as appropriate. Accommodations must be specific and appropriate to meet the needs of the student as defined in the IEP.

Accommodations:

- Enable students to participate more fully in instruction and assessments and to better demonstrate their knowledge and skills.
- Must be based upon individual student needs and not upon a category of disability, level of instruction, time spent in general classroom, or program setting.
- Must be justified and documented in the student's IEP.
- Must be implemented as soon as possible after completion of the IEP and must be aligned with and be a part of daily instruction.
- Accommodations used during testing should be those routinely used during instruction and classroom assessments; accommodations must not be introduced for the first-time during testing.
- Must be approved as specified in the Maryland Assessment, Accessibility, and Accommodations Manual in order to be used during state testing. If the student required additional adaptations during instruction, they should be documented under supplementary aids and services in the IEP, with the understanding that they cannot be used during state assessments.
- Are not a reason to exempt students from assessments, even if the student requires an accommodation not explicitly mentioned in the "Maryland Assessment, Accessibility & Accommodations Manual" and/or multiple accommodations. The School Test Coordinator (STC) must coordinate with the Local Accountability Coordinator (LAC) prior to testing to address issues caused by the need to provide multiple accommodations.

The student's IEP team should decide on the appropriate accommodation(s) at the IEP development or review meeting for the year in which the student is scheduled to participate in district or statewide assessments and indicate the decision on the student's IEP. Accommodations must be justified, utilized within the instructional setting, and documented in the student's IEP. There are potentially three areas in which accommodations can be addressed in the IEP:

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

- “Consideration of Special Factors [Sec. 614 (d) (3) (B)]. This section should be where the need for AT devices and services and the decision-making process is documented. The supports should still be listed in the relevant area of the IEP (e.g., accommodations).”
- “Supplementary Aids and Services [Sec. 602 (33) and Sec. 613 (d) (1) (i)]. This area of the IEP includes “aids, services, and other supports that are provided in regular education classes or other education- related settings to enable students with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled students to the maximum extent appropriate.”

A 504 Plan spells out the accommodations that will be needed for these students to have an opportunity to perform at the same level as their peers, and might include such things as wheelchair ramps, blood sugar monitoring, interpreting/transliteration services, preferential seating, an extra set of textbooks, a peanut-free lunch environment, home instruction, or a tape recorder or keyboard for taking notes. Each student who meets the eligibility guidelines for accommodations under Section 504 will have a Section 504 Plan developed for him/her to use in school. The Plan specifies the nature of the impairment, the major life activity affected by the impairment, accommodations necessary to meet the student’s needs, and the person(s) responsible for implementing the accommodations.

It is critical for students with disabilities to understand their disabilities and learn self-advocacy strategies for success in school and throughout life. Some students have had limited experience expressing personal preferences and advocating for themselves. Teachers and other IEP team members can play a key role in providing guidance and feedback to students with disabilities on skills needed to effectively advocate for themselves in the selection, use, and evaluation of accommodations. The ability to advocate for him or herself is a skill each student with a disability will need in their post-school adult life in order to identify and request reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

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

The questions below guide the selection of appropriate accommodations for students receiving special education services for the first time and for students who are currently using accommodations:

- What is the student’s learning strengths and areas of further improvement?
- How do the student’s learning needs affect the achievement of grade-level content standards?
- What specialized instruction (e.g., learning strategies, organizational skills, reading skills) does the student need to achieve grade-level content standards?
- What accommodations will increase the student’s access to instruction and assessment by addressing the student’s learning needs and reducing the effect of the student’s disability? These may be new accommodations or accommodations the student is currently using.
- What accommodations does the student regularly use during instruction and assessments?
- What are the results for assignments and assessments when accommodations were used and not used?

- What is the student’s perception of how well an accommodation “worked?”
- Are there effective combinations of accommodations?
- What difficulties did the student experience when using accommodations?
- What are the perceptions of parents, teachers, and specialists about how the accommodation worked?
- Should the student continue to use an accommodation, are changes needed, or should the use of the accommodation be discontinued?

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

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

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

#### **STEP 4: ADMINISTER ACCOMMODATIONS IN INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT**

##### **Accommodations During Instruction**

The student must be provided the selected accommodations during instructional periods that necessitate their use. Accommodations should not be used for the first time on a state assessment. Instead, it is important to address these instructional concerns before taking a state assessment:

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

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

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

As Maryland moves forward with providing all state assessments online, IEP or 504 Plan Teams must ensure that students have opportunities to become familiar with the technological aspects of the assessment process. In addition to taking practice tests using the same testing platform, it is also important for educators to provide opportunities for all students to use technology for learning.

## PLANNING FOR TESTING DAY

Once decisions have been made about providing accommodations to meet individual student needs, the logistics of providing the actual accommodations during state and district assessments must be coordinated well ahead of administration. It is not uncommon for members of the IEP Team, most often special education teachers, to be given the responsibility for arranging, coordinating, and providing assessment accommodations for all students who may need them. Thus, it is essential for all IEP Team members to know and understand the requirements and consequences of district and state assessments, including the use of accommodations. It is important to engage the appropriate personnel to plan the logistics and provisions of assessment accommodations on test day. It is essential that special educators, who are most familiar with the accommodations being administered, give assistance to general educators in how to properly provide particular accommodations.

Prior to the day of a test, be certain test administrators and proctors know what accommodations each student will be using and how to administer them properly. For example, test administrators and accommodators need to know whether a student will be allowed extra time to complete the test and when the testing time is ended, and what plan exists for the student to continue working. Staff administering accommodations, such as reading to a student or writing student responses, must adhere to specific guidelines so that student scores are valid.

Current designs of technology-based testing platforms may allow for accommodations to be provided on the testing platform itself. Through a process of creating a student profile, an IEP or 504 Plan Team may be able to individualize the test to provide certain accommodations, like colored backgrounds, templates, and sign interpretation. Providing such accommodations through the testing platform can guarantee that the provision of accommodations is standardized from student to student and district to district. However, it is important to monitor the provision of accommodations on test day to ensure that accommodations are delivered as recommended, and the technology is operating appropriately.

State policy requires that an archive of testing accommodations be maintained at the school for each test administered for six years per COMAR 13.A.03.04. In addition, please note that consistent with Federal Requirements [20USC §1416(a)(16)(D) and 34CFR §300.160(f)(1)], Maryland must report on students using accommodations.

## Administering Assessments and Accommodations

State laws, regulations and policies specify practices to assure test security and the standardized and ethical administration of assessments. In Maryland, testing regulations and policies are contained within the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) as well as this manual; the Test Administration Manual (TAM) and Test Coordinator's Manual (TCM) are other materials provided by the state for each testing program. Test Administrators, proctors, and all staff involved in test administration in any way are required to adhere to these policies. The Code of Professional Responsibilities in Educational Measurement (NCME, 1995) states that test administrators and others involved in assessments must:

- Take appropriate security precautions before, during, and after the administration of the assessment.
- Understand the procedures needed to administer the assessment prior to administration.
- Administer standardized assessments according to prescribed procedures and conditions and notify appropriate personnel if nonstandard or delimiting conditions occur.
- Avoid any conditions in the administration of the assessment that might invalidate the results.
- Provide for and document all reasonable and allowable accommodations for the administration of the assessment to persons with disabilities or special needs.
- Avoid actions or conditions that would permit or encourage individuals or groups to receive scores that misrepresent their actual levels of attainment. [National Council on Measurement in Education. (1995) Code of Professional Responsibilities in Educational Measurement. Washington DC: Author.]

Failure to adhere to these practices may constitute a test irregularity or a breach of test security and must be reported and investigated according to state and local testing policies. All Maryland educators must be familiar with COMAR and receive training regarding test administration, accommodations, and security procedures. Staff should check with their Local Accountability Coordinator (LAC) for more detailed information regarding test security procedures.

**If a student refuses an accommodation listed in his or her IEP or 504 Plan, the school should document in writing that the student refused the accommodation. However, the accommodation must be offered and remain available to the student during the test administration. Refer to Appendix I for the Student Accommodation Refusal Form.** This form must be completed and placed in the student's assessment file. Also, on the day of the student's refusal of an accommodation, a copy of the completed form must be sent home to the parent. The School Test Coordinators (STCs) should work with Test Administrators to determine who else should be informed of the student's refusal of the accommodation. In addition, the IEP Team may want to consider discussing this issue at the student's next IEP meeting.

## ELIGIBLE ACCOMMODATORS

Test Administrators and the following individuals may provide accommodations to students during testing:

- Non-certified instructional assistants and aides; and
- Substitutes or other staff members who are regular employees of the school's system.

Note: The above individuals must be under the supervision of a Maryland state- certified Test Administrator and must sign the Test Administration and Certification of Training Form and Non-Disclosure Agreement, which is kept on file.

## ETHICAL TESTING PRACTICES

Ethical testing practices must be maintained during the administration of a test. Unethical testing practices relate to inappropriate interactions between test administrators and students taking the test. Unethical practices include allowing a student to answer fewer questions, changing the content by paraphrasing or

offering additional information, coaching students during testing, editing student responses, or given clues in any way.

## STANDARDIZATION

Standardization refers to adherence to uniform administration procedures and conditions during an assessment. Standardization is an essential feature of educational assessments and is necessary to produce comparable information about student learning. Strict adherence to guidelines detailing instructions and procedures for the administration of accommodations is necessary to ensure test results reflect actual student learning.

## TEST SECURITY

As mentioned in Step 3, test security involves maintaining the confidentiality of test questions and answers and is critical in ensuring the integrity and validity of a test. Test security can become a particular concern when accessible test formats are used (e.g., braille, large print) or when someone other than the student is allowed to see the test (e.g., interpreter, human reader, scribe). In order to ensure test security and confidentiality, test administrations must (1) provide proper training in both specific test administration procedures for each testing program as well as training in specific test security procedures for each test, (2) keep testing materials in a secure place to prevent unauthorized access, (3) keep all test content confidential and refrain from sharing information or revealing test content with anyone, and (4) return and account for all materials as instructed.

Some of the same considerations for test security apply when students are taking a technology-based assessment. For example, ensuring that only authorized personnel have access to the test and that test materials are kept confidential are critical in technology-based assessments. In addition, it is important to guarantee that students are seated in such a manner that they cannot see each other's workstations, are not able to access any additional programs or the Internet when completing the assessment and are not able to access any saved data or computer shortcuts.

In the event of errors in administration, such as a student being provided a test accommodation that was not listed in his or her IEP or 504 Plan **OR** not being provided a test accommodation that is listed in his or her IEP or 504 Plan, the school must notify the LAC, who in turn will complete the necessary documents. All or part of the student's score may be invalidated for Maryland's Accountability Program purposes.

**As noted previously, all staff involved in any way with state testing are required to become familiar with and comply with the state regulation governing Test Administration and Data Reporting Policies and Procedures (COMAR 13.A303.04).** In addition, all staff are required to comply with procedures for each testing program as outlined in the Test Administration Manual (TAM) and Test Coordinator's Manual (TCM) and any other ancillary materials produced by the state for each assessment. In addition, local district assessments require compliance with general state procedures as well as any district-specific procedures. Check with your LAC for more information.

The following code of ethics conforms to the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing developed by the American Education Research Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education:

IT IS A BREACH OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL TO PROVIDE VERBAL OR NONVERBAL CLUES OR ANSWERS, TEACH ITEMS ON THE TEST, SHARE WRITING PROMPTS, COACH, HINT, OR IN ANY WAY INFLUENCE A STUDENT'S PERFORMANCE DURING THE TESTING SITUATION. A BREACH OF ETHICS MAY RESULT IN INVALIDATION OF TEST RESULTS AND LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY (LEA) OR MSDE DISCIPLINARY ACTION.

VIOLATION OF TEST SECURITY CAN RESULT IN PROSECUTION AND/OR PENALTIES AS IMPOSED BY THE MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND/OR THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS IN ACCORDANCE WITH COMAR 13.A.03.04 AND 13A.12.05.

### **ACCOMMODATION MONITORING BY MSDE**

MSDE will send representatives to schools throughout the state to monitor and observe the use of accommodations during instruction and assessment. During testing, the monitor will ensure that standardized testing procedures are being followed. All monitors will follow local procedures for reporting to the school's main office and signing the school's visitor log. Monitors will also sign Non-Disclosure forms as requested by the school and provide a copy of a memorandum from the Assistant Superintendent, Division of Assessment, Accountability, and Performance Reporting giving authorization to monitor instruction and testing relating to the use of accommodations during testing.

### **STEP 5: EVALUATE THE USE OF ACCOMMODATIONS IN INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT**

Accommodation must be selected based on the individual student's needs and must be used consistently for instruction and assessment – accommodations cannot be used for assessment only. Collecting and analyzing data on the use and effectiveness of accommodations are necessary to ensure the meaningful participation of students with disabilities in state and district assessments. Data on the use and impact of accommodations during instruction allows teams to make changes to the student's IEP/504 as needed, based on the data. Data on the use and impact of accommodations during assessments may also reveal questionable patterns of accommodation use, as well as support the continued use of some accommodations or the rethinking of others. Examination of the data may also indicate areas in which the IEP Team, 504 Plan Team, and test administrators need additional training and support.

In addition to collecting information about the use of accommodations within the classroom, information also needs to be gathered on the implementation of accommodations during assessment. Observations conducted during test administration, interviews with test administrators, and talking with students after testing sessions will likely yield data that can be used to guide the formative evaluation process at the school or district level and at the student level. Information on the use of accommodations can be feasible to collect when it is coded on the test form with other student information. Accommodation information can be analyzed in different ways. Here are some questions to guide data analysis at the school, district, and student level.

#### **Questions to Guide Evaluation of Accommodations Use at the School and District Level**

- Are there policies to ensure ethical testing practices, the standardized administration of assessments, and that test security practices are followed before, during, and after the day of the test?
- Are there procedures in place to ensure test administration procedures are not compromised with the provision of accommodations?

- Are students receiving accommodations as documented in their IEP and 504 Plans?
- Are there procedures in place to ensure that test administrators adhere to directions for the implementation of accommodations?
- How many students with IEP or 504 Plans are receiving accommodations?
- What types of accommodations are provided and are some used more than others?
- How well do students who receive accommodations perform on state and district assessments? If students are not meeting the expected level of performance, is it due to students not having had access to the necessary instruction, not receiving the accommodation, or using accommodations that were not effective?

### Questions to Guide Evaluation at the Student Level

- What accommodations are used by the student during instruction and assessments?
- What are the results of classroom assignments and assessments when accommodations are used versus when accommodations are not used? If a student did not meet the expected level of performance, is it due to not having access to the necessary instruction, not receiving the accommodations, or using accommodations that were ineffective?
- What is the student's perception of how well the accommodation worked?
- What combinations of accommodations seem to be effective?
- What are the difficulties encountered in the use of accommodations?
- What are the perceptions of teachers, parents, and others about how the accommodation appears to be working?

These questions can be used to formatively evaluate the accommodations used at the student level, as well as the school or district levels. School and district level questions can be considered by a committee responsible for continuous improvement efforts, while the student-level needs to be considered by the IEP Team. It is critical to stress that formative evaluation is not the responsibility of just one individual. The entire IEP Team should contribute to the information gathering and decision-making processes.

## Section 5: The Six-Step Process for Accommodating English Learners (ELs)

### STEP 1: SETTING EXPECTATIONS – EXPECT ENGLISH LEARNERS TO ACHIEVE GRADE-LEVEL ACADEMIC CONTENT STANDARDS

#### Who is an English Learner?

An EL is a student who may have been born outside of the U.S.:

- who communicates in a language other than English; or
- whose family uses a primary language other than English in the home; and
- whose English language proficiency falls within the range established by the state for an English language development (ELD) program.

#### Criteria for Identifying ELs

The Home Language Survey (HLS) must be administered to all new students in Maryland schools. On the student enrollment form, each LEA asks three consistently worded HLS questions to determine which language other than English, if any, is spoken in the home and by the student. Certain responses to these questions indicate that the student may be an EL. The next step is to test the student using the English language proficiency screener to determine his/her eligibility to participate in the ELD program.

#### Ensuring Equal Access to Instruction and Assessment

Over the past two decades, achievement and accountability reforms in the U.S. have focused on supporting the broad goal of achieving equality of opportunity in our society. The realization of this goal in large-scale testing requires all students to have equal access to grade-level content.

Proponents argue that by including ELs in federal and state assessment accountability systems, there is a greater likelihood of creating a more accurate picture of overall student achievement and growth.

Having individual diagnostic information on which ELs have achieved English language proficiency and no longer need ELD support is extremely valuable to parents of ELs, their teachers, and school administrators. It indicates ELs' mastery of academic English as well as social proficiency in English. If ELs' academic achievement is not reaching desired performance levels, student test scores may provide information that can be used in designing specific policies or funding to improve ELs' academic performance.

The inclusion of ELs in state assessment and accountability systems is protected by federal and state legislation and civil rights court decisions. These protections mandate that historically excluded student populations such as ELs be included for purposes of equal opportunity, accountability, and representation. LEAs are obligated to follow all federal and state guidelines in providing equal educational opportunities to all students. Therefore, it is necessary that the district take care in evaluating and meeting the needs of ELs. The rights of this group of students to an equal education are protected by the force of legislation, judicial opinion, and administrative regulation.

## Legislation Requiring Participation of ELs

Both federal and state legislation now require the participation of all students, including ELs, in state assessment and accountability systems. Federal provisions for inclusion and accommodation of ELs in state systems are found in the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). ESEA provisions require the participation of all students, including ELs, in standards-based instruction and assessment initiatives. These provisions were first presented in The Improving America's Schools Act (IASA) in 1994, updated in 2001 in The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, and then reauthorized in 2015 in Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

IASA stipulated that states “provide for...the inclusion of limited English proficient students who shall be assessed, to the extent practicable, in the language and form most likely to yield accurate and reliable information on what such students know and can do, to determine such students’ mastery of skills in subjects other than English” (U.S. Congress, 1994, Section 111(b)(3)(F)(iii)).

Under Title I of ESEA, states must include ELs in their assessments of academic achievement in reading/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies and must provide ELs with appropriate accommodations, including, to the extent practicable, assessments in the language and form most likely to yield accurate data on what ELs know and can do in the academic content areas until they have achieved English language proficiency.

In addition, the educational experience of ELs is significantly influenced by the mandates of Title I and Title III under the most recent authorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESSA); ELs are one of the targeted subgroups within ESSA. In ESSA, EL accountability is now under Title I and it will be measured at the school level. A school system is obliged under Title III to provide support and services to ELs to help them become more skilled in the language. Further, per these regulations, all ELs are expected to attain state-defined levels of English proficiency, and ELs in Grades 3-8 are also expected to attain the targeted content proficiencies in English language arts/literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies. At the high-school level, ELs are held accountable for the targeted content proficiencies in English, Algebra, and Science. English language skills are assessed through an English language proficiency assessment (ACCESS for ELLs or WIDA Alternate ACCESS).

Students are eligible for support under Title III if their skills in English fall within a certain range of proficiency. The parents of ELs have the right to refuse services offered through the ELD program; however, the refusal does not remove the child’s designation as an EL. A refusal of service does not exempt the schools from being held accountable for the students’ performance on the English language proficiency and content proficiency assessments administered by the state.

Maryland participation requirements support the federal requirements for EL participation in state assessments.

## STEP 2: SETTING EXPECTATIONS – UNDERSTANDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND CONTENT IN THE SCHOOLING EXPERIENCE OF AN EL

ELs’ language and content proficiencies are assessed separately to meet the requirements of ESSA, but it is important to recognize that in the schooling experience, language and content are interrelated. Students learn content through language, and students’ language skills are deepened through study of content. Social language skills (used to follow basic directions and engage in personal conversations at school) typically develop at a much faster rate than the skills associated with academic language use (reading a

long text, writing a long response). It is very possible that an EL can speak English fluently (meaning that they can follow what is said and engage in conversations with little difficulty) but may struggle to analyze a text, make inferences, and write English with the same skill of structure and variety as is found in spoken language. This gap is normal; if the gap does not appear to close over an extended period, this could be a sign that additional targeted instruction is needed, or of an underlying special education need.

ELs have the intellectual capacity to meet the cognitive demands of the K-12 classroom; their challenges in the classroom are most often a function of their language knowledge or skills than anything else. The ease with which ELs develop their skills in English is influenced by a number of factors including (but not limited to) the structure of their first or home language, the similarities between their first or home language and English, their literacy skills in their first or home language, their prior schooling experiences, the support they receive in learning language and content in their Maryland classroom, their level of access to English input and output outside of school, the level of U.S. schools' demands in relation to the targeted skills compared to schools in their home country, and their overall apprehension about the schooling or language-learning experience. ELs develop their proficiency in English at different rates because of these influences, and it is important to note that even if the EL has a documented special education need, there is research indicating that disabilities or disorders do not preclude bilingual and/or sequential second language development (Genesee, Paradis, and Crago, 2004).

An EL's ability to convey to the classroom teacher their understanding of the content and/or application of a skill can be significantly influenced by the way in which the student is asked to display this knowledge/skill. In many American classrooms, one of the ways in which we test students' mastery of content is to have them explain it in their own words. Sometimes, we ask students to do this by means of different terms we have used during instruction to challenge the students' thinking and confirm our perceptions of their grasp of the content. For ELs, this lexical variety or language manipulation can prove to be quite difficult because they are coming from language traditions in which there is only one way to express an idea and/or label a concept: they might not know that different words can mean the same thing or that the same word can have different meanings. Further, to be able to pick up new words in context, ELs need to know even more language in the text than a native-English speaker would need to decode the meaning, and chances are they will struggle to differentiate the nuances among words with similar meanings. If a new term is used (e.g., "notice," instead of "observe") to prompt students to describe the features of the object under the microscope, ELs may think you are asking them to do something very different and thus give you a completely off-base answer.

At that point, we may make a judgment about their content knowledge, even though a language barrier caused the confusion. In many instances, it is important to use the same language structures or terms to teach and assess content knowledge, but that does not mean that an educator should not help the EL deepen his or her understanding of language that can be used in your content area. It just may require more explicit consideration to be most effective.

### **STEP 3: LEARNING ABOUT ACCOMMODATIONS FOR INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS**

#### **What are Accommodations?**

Accommodations help provide access to grade-level content and materials. Accommodations for ELs involve the application of a standard, preferably research-based, protocol for providing equitable access to instructional and testing procedures, testing materials, or the testing situation to allow students

meaningful participation in general educational content. Linguistic accommodations for ELs are different from disabilities accommodations.

Effective accommodations for ELs:

- reduce the linguistic load necessary to access the content of the curriculum or assessment; and
- address the unique linguistic and sociocultural needs of the student by reducing barriers caused by language rather than by the content being assessed, which will help ensure that instruction and assessment are more likely to focus on the content being taught and assessed rather than on English language proficiency; and
- do not alter the content being assessed. In large-scale assessment, accommodated scores should be sufficiently equivalent in scale so that they can be pooled with unaccommodated scores (Acosta, Rivera, & Shafer Willner, 2008, p. 38.)

Accommodations offered during instruction and assessment must be consistent for the student. During instruction, accommodations are one subset of differentiated support which promote equal access to grade-level content. Additional differentiated support provided to ELs includes specialized teaching strategies and classroom-based techniques (such as those outlined in the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol; the Cognitive Analytical Language Learning Approach, and Response to Intervention) and interventions as appropriate. During large-scale assessments, providing accommodations is the primary strategy for ensuring that ELs who are included in state reading, mathematics, science, social studies, or writing assessments are more likely to be tested on their knowledge of the content standards being assessed rather than on their English language proficiency. Therefore, it is very important for educators to become familiar with MSDE's policies regarding accommodations during assessments.

### Accommodation Categories for ELs

There is sometimes confusion among school-based educators concerning the rationales for accommodations intended for ELs and accommodations intended for students with disabilities as indicated in Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs) (Shafer Willner, Rivera, & Acosta, 2007). Current practice among many states is to define accommodations for ELs in relation to ELs' unique linguistic and other background needs, rather than using the categories used for students with disabilities.

Accommodations for ELs provide two types of support: direct linguistic support and indirect linguistic support.

- Direct linguistic support accommodations involve adjustments to the language of the test. Such accommodations can be provided in the student's native language or in English.
- Indirect linguistic support accommodations involve adjustments to the conditions under which ELs take the test.

Refer to Step 4 (Selecting Accommodations for Instruction and Assessment of an Individual EL) for MSDE accommodations allowed for ELs.

### Accommodations vs. Modifications

Accommodations do not reduce learning expectations; they are one strategy for providing access to grade-level content. In contrast, modifications or alterations change, lower, or reduce learning expectations.

Modifications can increase the gap between the achievement of ELs and expectations for proficiency at a particular grade level. Using modifications may result in implications that could adversely affect students throughout their educational careers.

Examples of modifications include:

- requiring the student to learn less content material than native English-speaking peers (e.g., fewer objectives and shorter units or lessons), thereby omitting content included in the MCCRS.
- qualitatively reducing assignments and assessments so that a student only needs to complete the less difficult problems or items (see below a note regarding quantity of items).
- revising assignments or assessments to make them less difficult (e.g., by crossing out half of the response choices on a multiple-choice test so that a student only must pick from two options instead of four).
- giving a student hints or clues to correct responses on assignments and tests.

NOTE: Reducing the quantity of assignments or items is not normally a modification; rather, reduction in quantity is a reflection of the fact that ELs may require extra time to complete each assignment and therefore may not be able to complete the same number of items as other students. These students, however, are expected to work on assignments of similar content depth and complexity.

Providing modifications to students during classroom instruction and/or classroom assessments may have the unintended consequence of reducing their opportunity to learn critical content and is not a recommended practice for ELs. If students have not had access to critical, assessed content, they may be at risk for not meeting graduation requirements. Providing a student with a modification during a state accountability assessment may constitute a test irregularity and may result in an investigation into the school's or district's testing practices.

#### **STEP 4: SELECTING ACCOMMODATIONS FOR INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT OF AN INDIVIDUAL EL**

The process of making decisions about accommodations is one in which members of the EL team attempt to provide equal access to grade-level content so that ELs can participate meaningfully in the general education curriculum. EL team meetings that simply engage people in checking boxes on a state or local compliance document are not conducive to sound decision-making practices, nor do they advance equal opportunities for students to participate in the general education curriculum.

##### **Gathering and Reviewing Student Information**

Effective decision-making about the provision of appropriate accommodations is facilitated by gathering and reviewing a variety of information about the student's level of English language proficiency and current level of academic performance in relation to local and state academic standards.

In the weeks prior to the team meeting during which the EL Plan will be completed and discussed, gather information on student achievement, including:

- Student demographic information
- EL identification and placement information

- Student level of academic achievement
- Student instructional program

### English Learner (EL) Plan

All ELs in Maryland must have a documented EL Plan. One of the goals of this plan is to facilitate student access to grade-level instruction and state assessments. The components of the plan may be contained in several different documents or data sources. The EL Plan should be developed using a team approach, rather than be developed by one educator at the school. The team should involve EL staff, academic content staff, and the principal or other school administrator designee. School staff should make every effort to involve parents and the student (especially at the middle-school and high-school levels) in the development and review of the EL Plan.

Each student's EL Plan must contain the following elements:

- Student demographic information, including:
  - Language(s) first spoken
  - Language(s) spoken at home
  - Language used most often to communicate
  - Date of entry into a U.S. school
  - Local school system enrollment status (date)
  - Schooling background, including instances of interrupted schooling
    - Short-term: in the past six months
    - Long-term: for a period of six months or more and resulting in the student having little or no literacy in his or her native language. (This information can be obtained from parent reporting or on registration forms.)
- EL identification and placement information, including:
  - Reason for identification of student as qualifying to participate in ELD program
  - Level of English proficiency (using the English language proficiency (ELP) assessment as approved by the Maryland State Board of Education); and
  - Program exit or expected date of transition for EL
- Student level of academic achievement
  - State test scores
  - Classroom test scores and, if available, informal assessments
- Student instructional program

- Method of instruction (content, instructional goals, use of English and native language) in the student's program and in other available programs
- How the instructional program will address the student's educational strengths and individual needs
- How the program will address English language learning and acquisition (placement in a language instruction educational program)
- How the student will meet age-appropriate academic achievement standards and demonstrate growth
- Specific accommodations permitted for instruction and for the state-required assessments based on ELP assessment results
- Parental notification elements
  - The right to remove the child from the instructional program upon request
  - The right to decline services from the ELD program
  - Separate parent notification within 30 days if the LEA fails to meet the objectives described to the parents for their child
  - Whether or not the student will participate and/or be included in accountability in the state-required assessment and accountability system this year, based on whether this is the student's first year of enrollment in a U.S. school
- EL team signatures on EL Accessibility Features and Accommodation Plan (Appendix G)
  - A list of the names of persons who reviewed the documentation and made the decisions
  - Signatures of parents or guardians or documented attempts to obtain those signatures (However, the implementation of the EL Accessibility Features and Accommodation Plan is not dependent upon receipt of the parental signatures.)
  - Signature of the principal of the appropriate school as an indication of approval for the described accessibility features and accommodations

### General Eligibility Requirements for Receiving Accommodations

- An EL who has been assessed with an English language proficiency assessment, meets the criteria as an EL, has evaluation data in the EL Plan that demonstrates a need for accommodations, and is participating in instructional programs and services to meet the language and academic content needs of the student.
- An EL whose family has refused instructional services offered through the ELD program, who has been assessed with an English language proficiency assessment, meets the criteria as an EL, and has evaluation data in the EL Plan that demonstrates a need for accommodations.

In each example above, EL accommodations documentation must be prepared and implemented.

Reclassified ELs (RELs) who have exited the ELD program may have access to the accessibility features all students are allowed to receive.

Reminders:

- For state content assessments, an EL who also has either an IEP or a 504 Plan may receive additional accommodations as identified in that plan. Please note that he or she is also eligible for EL accommodations that may not be included in the IEP or 504 Plan.
- For the ELP assessment, accommodations in the EL plan are not allowed.
- For ELs with disabilities, not all accommodations in the IEP or 504 Plan are allowed for the ELP assessment. Refer to the language in the IDEA (1997 and 2004) 34 CFR § 300.160 (b)(2)(i) and 34 CFR § 300.160 (b)(2)(ii).

### **Recommended Procedure for Selecting Accommodations for ELs**

The EL team may use the following guidance to select accommodations for ELs (and to record these in the student's EL Plan).

#### **General Principles for Accommodating ELs**

It is important to remember there is no one-size-fits-all approach to EL accommodations (Abedi, Mirocha, Leon, & Goldberg, 2005). Rather than ask what accommodation was found to be most effective for all ELs, it is important to focus on the effectiveness of each accommodation based on the individual EL's English language proficiency and other student background factors that influence a student's achievement of English language proficiency. More is not always better; in fact, too much of the wrong type of support can hinder student performance.

While the main characteristic by which ELs are defined is the fact that they are in the process of acquiring the English language, ELs are not, by any means, a homogeneous group. The group is quite heterogeneous in nature. EL achievement is influenced by many factors in addition to the shared feature of being in the process of learning English.

Thus, it is important to select accommodations based on specific EL needs. Research indicates that ELs with selected accommodations matched to their linguistic and cultural needs scored higher than (a) ELs with incomplete accommodations — i.e., selection done without matching accommodations to EL-responsive criteria, and (b) ELs who were not provided any accommodations at all (Kopriva, Emick, Hipolito-Delgado, & Cameron, 2007). Remember: the primary purpose of EL assessment accommodations is not to improve ELs' rate of passing the state assessments but to allow ELs to more accurately demonstrate their knowledge of the content being assessed.

#### **Guidance for Individualizing EL Accommodation Selection**

When more guidance is needed, use the following three considerations to inform the criteria in FACT SHEET EL-1. These considerations are derived from EL accommodation research and based on the recommendations found in the Descriptive study of State Assessment Policies for Accommodating English Language Learners (Shafer Willner, Rivera, and Acosta, 2008), available at

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED539753.pdf>

## Consider the Student's Level of English Language Proficiency (ELP) as Measured by the State's ELP Assessment

The ELP level for each EL is determined by either the student's screener or summative ELP overall composite score. Schools have the option to choose accommodations appropriate for their students within the suggested or permitted accommodations for their ELP level. The ELP assessment performance levels (and how they map to the research based on EL accommodations most appropriate for levels of ELP) are as follows:

- ELs with Beginning ELP- ELs at the lowest levels of ELP (levels 1 and 2) tend to experience the greatest need for accommodations but are the least able to use them. In general, the use of oral supports is recommended over written accommodations in English; however, most of these would not be expected to produce much of an effect for the lowest proficiency levels.
- ELs with Intermediate ELP- ELs at the intermediate level of ELP (levels 3 and 4) have usually developed some literacy in English and are expected to benefit from a wider variety of both written and oral accommodation options. Decision makers should note that the need for accommodations at this level varies considerably depending upon the unique background characteristics of the student as well as the literacy demands of the test. The existing research suggests that like ELs with beginning ELP levels, those with intermediate ELP levels may find useful native language accommodations such as bilingual word-to-word dictionaries and extra time to use them.

English Language Proficiency Levels		ELP Levels for which ELs Receive Accommodations
Level 1	Entering	Beginning
Level 2	Emerging	
Level 3	Developing	Intermediate
Level 4-4.4	Expanding	
Level 4.5	Bridging (Reclassified English learners- REL)	Proficient- no EL accommodations applicable
Level 5	Bridging (REL)	
Level 6	Reaching (REL)	

## Consider the Student's Literacy Development in English and/or the Native Language.

Adjust the list of accommodations selected based on student background factors concerning the student's literacy development in English and the native language.

- **Native Language Literacy**  
If the student has developed literacy in his or her native language after receiving instruction in the

specific content area being assessed either in his or her home country or in the U.S., provide the student a word-to-word bilingual dictionary along with extended time to use it.

- **Interrupted Schooling or Literacy Development in English and Native languages**

If the EL has experienced interrupted formal education during his or her schooling career and as a result, has weaker literacy skills in his or her native language and English, it is highly probable that the EL is more oral- dominant in his or her developing English language proficiency. In this case, provide the EL with oral language support accommodations that are generally offered to ELs with beginning ELP.

### Consider Factors that Impact Effective Usage of Accommodations

Adjust the list of accommodations selected based on student background factors which can help ensure that accommodations are useful to the student. Grade or age, affective needs, and time in U.S. schools may all impact student ability to use EL accommodations. (For example, older students sometimes refuse accommodations due to the embarrassment of receiving additional support in front of classmates. Students who have just arrived in the U.S. need to gain familiarity with U.S. testing practices and expectations. Anxiety can raise an EL's affective filter and impact test performance.)

- Include the student in the process of assigning accommodations to ensure use of the accommodation and student understanding of its use.
- If the student is unfamiliar with standardized testing or computer-based testing, provide test preparation activities prior to the assessment.
- Ensure that the student has used the accommodations prior to test administration.
- Administration of tests in special settings, with specialized personnel, in small groups, or individually, while not accommodations, are administrative considerations that might be helpful for increasing students' level of comfort, facilitating test administration, and ensuring more accurate test results, and they should be used when appropriate.

Review your decision.

- Document your decision on the Accommodation Documentation Form for ELs and include it in the student's EL Plan.
- Verify that accommodation(s) are being used on a regular basis during classroom instruction and assessment.
- Review the decision both at the end of the initial EL team meeting and throughout the school year. It is also recommended that the EL team meet prior to the state-required assessment to examine any feedback provided by the student's teacher concerning the effectiveness and appropriateness of the accommodation provided.

You may wish to use the questions below as a guide:

- What accommodation(s) is or are regularly used by the student during classroom instruction and assessment?

- What are the results for assignments and assessments when accommodation(s) are used (or not used)?
- What difficulties did the student experience in using the accommodation(s)?
- What is the student's perception of how well the accommodation(s) worked?
- What are the perceptions of parents, teachers, and specialists about how the accommodation(s) worked?
- Should the student use accommodation(s), or are changes needed?

Remember: there is no one-size-fits-all set of accommodations for ELs because ELs are not a homogenous group. Testing accommodations, accessibility features, and administrative considerations need to be customized to the different strengths and needs these students have as they develop English language proficiency.

## **STEP 5: ADMINISTERING ACCOMMODATIONS DURING INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENTS FOR AN EL**

### **Provision of Accommodations During Instruction**

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

### **Provision of Accommodations During Assessment**

#### **Planning for Test Day**

Once decisions have been made about providing accommodations to meet individual student needs, the logistics of providing the actual accommodations during state and district assessments must be mapped out. It is essential for all EL team members to know and understand the requirements and consequences of district and state assessments, including the use of accommodations. It is important to engage the appropriate personnel in planning the logistics and provisions of assessment accommodations on the test day.

Prior to the day of a test, be certain test administrators and accommodators know what accommodations each student will be using and how to administer them properly. For example, test administrators and accommodators need to know whether a student will be allowed extra time to complete the test when the testing time is ended and what plan exists for the student to continue working. Staff administering accommodations must adhere to specific guidelines so that student scores are valid.

Please note: Accommodations based on EL status are not allowed on the English language proficiency assessment. Disability-based accommodations are allowed based on IEP or 504 plan, within the limits allowed on the specific assessment to not invalidate the testing construct.

### **Administering Assessments and Accommodations**

State laws, regulations, and policies specify practices to ensure test security and the standardized and ethical administration of assessments. In Maryland, testing regulations and policies are contained in the following documents: the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR), this manual, and the Test Administration and Coordination and Examiner's Manuals (TAM and TCM) for each state testing program.

Test examiners, accommodators, proctors, and all other staff involved in test administration in any way are required to adhere to these policies. The Code of Professional Responsibilities in Educational Measurement (National Council on Measurement in Education, 1995) states that test administrators and others involved in assessments must:

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

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

#### **Accommodations Monitoring by MSDE**

MSDE will send representatives to schools throughout the state to monitor and observe the use of accommodations during instruction and assessment. During testing, the monitor will ensure that standardized testing procedures are being followed. Schools will not be notified in advance of a monitor's visit. All monitors will follow local procedures for reporting to the school's main office and signing the school's visitor log. Monitors will also sign Non-Disclosure Forms as requested by the school and provide a copy of a memorandum from the Assistant Superintendent of Assessment, Accountability, and Performance Reporting giving authorization to monitor instruction and testing relating to the use of accommodations testing. LEAs who permit central office personnel to make observations during Maryland state testing must train personnel on how to administer accommodations during instruction and assessment.

#### **STEP 6: EVALUATING AND IMPROVING ACCOMMODATIONS USED IN INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT OF ELS**

After the assessment, the members of the EL team should debrief one another on how well accommodations worked at the LEA, school, and individual student level. Accommodations must be selected based on the individual student's needs and must be used consistently for instruction and assessment. Collecting and analyzing data on the use and effectiveness of accommodations are necessary to ensure the meaningful participation of ELs in state and district-wide assessments. Data on the use and impact of accommodations during assessments may reveal questionable patterns of accommodation use as well as support the continued use of some accommodations or the rethinking of others. Examination of the data may also indicate areas in which the EL team and test administrators need additional training and support.

In addition to information about the use of accommodations within the classroom, information on the implementation of accommodations during assessment needs to be gathered. Observations conducted during test administration, interviews with test administrators, and talking with students after testing sessions will likely yield data that can be used to guide the formative evaluation process at the school or district level and at the student level. Information on the use of accommodations can be feasible to collect when it is coded on the test form with other student information. Accommodation information can be analyzed in different ways. Here are some questions to guide data analysis at the LEA, school and student levels.

### Questions to Guide Evaluation of Accommodations Use at the LEA and School Levels

- Are there policies to ensure that testing practices are ethical, that administration of assessments is standardized, and that test security practices are followed before, during, and after the day of the test?
- Are there procedures in place to ensure that test administration procedures are not compromised with the provision of accommodations?
- Are students receiving accommodations as documented in their EL Plans?
- Are there procedures in place to ensure that test administrators adhere to directions for the implementation of accommodations?
- How many ELs are receiving accommodations?
- Are students using the accommodations provided to them? If not, why not?
- What types of accommodations are provided, and are some used more than others?
- How do students who receive accommodations perform on state and local assessments? How many students are being accommodated?

Possible explanations to explore: if students are not meeting the expected level of performance, is this due to their not having had access to the necessary instruction, not having received the accommodation, or having used accommodations that were not effective?

### Questions to Guide Evaluation at the Student Level

- What accommodations are used by the student during instruction and assessments?
- Are students using the accommodations provided to them? If not, why not?
- What are the results of classroom assignments and assessments when accommodations are used versus when accommodations are not used? If a student did not meet the expected level of performance, is it due to not having had access to the necessary instruction, not having received the accommodations, or having used accommodations that were ineffective?
- What is the student's perception of how well the accommodation worked?
- What combinations of accommodations seem to be effective?
- What are the difficulties encountered in the use of accommodations?

- What are teachers' and others' perceptions of how the accommodation appears to be working?

These questions can be used to formatively evaluate the accommodations used at the student level, as well as at the school or LEA levels. School-level and LEA-level questions can be addressed by a committee responsible for continuous improvement efforts, while the student-level questions need to be considered by the EL team. It is critical to stress that formative evaluation is not the responsibility of just one individual. The entire EL team should contribute to the information-gathering and decision-making processes.

## ACCOMMODATIONS FACT SHEETS FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS (ELS)

### Detailed Documentation for EL Accommodations Permitted on State Content Assessments

This Fact Sheet should be used by the EL committee when selecting and documenting accommodations on each English learner's EL Plan. It contains information on each accommodation allowed for ELs during instruction and assessment, the ELs for which the accommodation is appropriate, and the administration directions and/or requirements for testing.

### Accommodations Conditions for Use

Notations in the columns on the following pages indicate the conditions under which each type of accommodation may be provided. These conditions are defined as:

1. Instruction: the accommodation is applicable to instructional situations.
2. Assessment: the accommodation described is permitted for assessment and results in a standard administration of the assessment provided that the accommodation is allowable based upon the specific assessment's accommodation/test administration manual.

### Accommodations Code

Each accommodation is assigned a code for use in data capture and analysis. The code will be listed with a number followed by a letter and then the title of the accommodation. For example, 7a: Extended Time. The current coding system used for EL accommodations has been updated from previous years.

### Accommodations for English Learners

The table below lists the accommodations on state assessments that are available to ELs and cross-references the accommodations with administration guidelines and allowable uses.

The table below lists Accommodations for ELs. The table describes the activities needed before, during, and after testing necessary to administer these accommodations appropriately.

Accommodations for ELs must be preselected for the students.

REs may have access to the accessibility features all students are allowed to receive and are not eligible to receive EL accommodations.

Description of Accommodations	Administration Guidelines	Allowable Use
7a. Extended Time	<p><b>Before Testing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification for SR/PNP: Student's SR/PNP must have extended time selected. The amount of time a student receives must be indicated in the student's EL Plan.</li> <li>• Test Administrator Training: Test Administrators providing this accommodation must review:</li> <li>• Appendix E: Guidance for Selecting and Administering the Extended Time Accommodation</li> </ul> <p><b>During Testing:</b> Students have until the end of the school day to complete a single test unit administered during the prescribed testing window. It is recommended to test students receiving the extended time accommodation in a separate setting in order to minimize distractions to other students and to schedule these students for testing in the morning in order to allow adequate time for completion of a test unit by the end of the school day</p>	Instruction and Assessment*
7b Word-to-Word Dictionary (English/native language)	<p><b>Before Testing:</b></p> <p>Identification for SR/PNP: Student's SR/PNP must have word-to-word dictionary selected.</p> <p>Materials: Word-to-word dictionaries are provided to students by their school. These dictionaries are based on those used by the student for routine classroom instruction.</p> <p><b>During Testing:</b> The student uses a published bilingual, word-to-word dictionary that does not include definitions, phrases, sentences, or pictures. The student should be familiar with the dictionary he or she will use during testing. Students should be given ample time to complete the test using the accommodation. If no printed word-to-word dictionary can be found for a specific language, an electronic translator may be used. The device may not connect to the Internet or store information, and therefore, web-based translators are not allowed. A sample list of approved bilingual word-to-word dictionaries is available at:</p> <p><a href="http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/lep-bilingual-dictionary.pdf">http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/lep-bilingual-dictionary.pdf</a></p>	Instruction and Assessment*

Description of Accommodations	Administration Guidelines	Allowable Use
<p><b>7e General Administration</b>  <b>Directions read aloud and repeated in Spanish</b></p>	<p><b>Test Administrator Training:</b> Test Administrators or other qualified interpreters providing the general administration directions in Spanish must review the directions in advance in order to provide consistent trans adaptations. Test Administrators providing this accommodation will ideally be literate and fluent in English as well as in Spanish, or they may collaborate with a local translator, if available.</p> <p><b>During Testing:</b> The Test Administrator or other qualified interpreter reads aloud the general administration instructions in Spanish. The student may request that directions be repeated. <b>The student must be tested in a separate setting.</b></p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment</p>
<p><b>7f General Administration</b>  <b>Directions Clarified as Needed in the Student's Native Language</b></p>	<p><b>Test Administrator Training:</b> Test Administrators providing this accommodation should be literate and fluent in English as well as in the student's native language.</p> <p><b>During Testing:</b> The Test Administrator clarifies general administration directions only in the student's native language. Test Administrators or other qualified interpreters providing this accommodation should ideally be literate and fluent in English as well as in the student's native language, or they may be assisted by a translator who speaks the language of the student, <b>if available.</b></p>	<p>Instruction and Assessment</p>

## Section 6: Non-Standard and Emergency Accommodations

### OVERVIEW OF UNIQUE ACCOMMODATIONS, EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATIONS, AND STUDENT EXEMPTIONS

#### Exempted Students

In general, no students are exempt from participation in the Maryland State Assessment Programs. The IEP, 504 and EL Teams do not determine exemptions. However, under two circumstances, (listed below) students can be exempted for accountability purposes.

#### Special Exemption Conditions for ELs on the ELA Assessment

ELs who have recently arrived in the United States may be exempted from one administration of the state ELA Assessment. A recently arrived EL is one who has attended school(s) in the United States for less than 12 cumulative months. Students must still participate in the mathematics, science, and social studies state assessments.

#### Special Medical Exemption Conditions for Assessments

Students may be exempted from a state assessment when a significant medical emergency has rendered the student incapable of participating in any academic activity and/or statewide assessment. This includes long-term hospitalization without access to academics, severe trauma, mental health crisis (student is in danger to self or others), or placement in hospice care. For accountability data purposes, the medical exemption is reviewed during the MSDE nonparticipation reconciliation process.

For the student to be considered for a medical exemption, the following protocol applies: The Local Education Agency (LEA) will notify the Data Specialist in the Division of Assessment, Accountability and Performance Reporting via email, that they have students to be considered for a medical exemption. No Personally Identifiable information is to be transmitted via email.

1. The local education agency must provide the following for each student via the Secure Server:
  - a. A completed Request for Medical Exemption Form for each student.
  - b. The school testing calendar for the current academic year.
  - c. Supporting medical documentation from a licensed medical provider with the student's SASID included on each document.
  - d. Relevant attendance records for the student.
2. The local education agency will contact the MSDE Contact to notify them that the request and supporting documentation has been placed on the secure server.
3. MSDE Contact will acknowledge receipt of the documentation.
4. MSDE will notify the Local Accountability Coordinator of the final determinations. After MSDE has reviewed the documentation, the LEA will be contacted, via email, stating that the exemption has either been approved or denied.

MSDE will include the results from the medical exemption review for reporting student performance and accountability on the MD Report Card. If the exemption has been approved, the student will not be included in performance, accountability, and participation reporting. If the exemption has been denied, the student will be counted as a non-participant for performance, accountability, and participation reporting which includes the MD Report Card. The student cannot be reviewed again after a denied exemption.

### Summary of Exempting Students

Program	Who may be Exempted?	Guidance
ELA State Assessments	ELs who have recently arrived to the United States may be exempted from one administration of the state ELA assessment. A recently arrived EL is one who has attended school(s) in the United States for less than 12 cumulative months. Students must still participate in the Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies State assessments.	EL committee decision and documented in the student's EL plan in student's cumulative record.
State Assessments	Students with a significant medical emergency that has rendered the student incapable of participating in any academic activity and/or statewide assessment.	Medical emergency process must be completed and provided to MSDE as part of the non-participation reconciliation process.
WIDA ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS	None	N/A

### Excused Students

Under ESSA and the IDEA, all students must participate in state and district assessments. All school teams must follow the guidelines as indicated in the Manual when considering if they choose to excuse or exempt a student from a Maryland assessment.

**Prior to a test administration**, if the principal or school administrator and at least one other qualified school staff member in conjunction with the LAC decide that testing would be severely harmful to a student, the student may be excused. The reason for the excusal must be documented in the student's record. Examples of acceptable reasons include:

- The student exhibits intense or extreme anxiety behaviors during testing.
- The student has had a recent traumatic experience, which has made him/her unable to cope with the testing situation.

**During testing**, if a student demonstrates extreme frustration, disrupts others, becomes ill, etc., the teacher/test administrator may excuse the student from the test. The student should be given an opportunity to attempt the test again, or to make it up at a later date. Procedures for excusing students from specific testing programs are described in the Test Administration Manual which accompanies each assessment. Local school staff should always consult their LAC if they have any questions about excusing a

student from testing. During the nonparticipation reconciliation process, the student is to be coded with the appropriate nonparticipation reason code and still may be included as a non-participant.

### **Emergency Accommodations**

If prior to or during testing, the school principal (or principal's designee) determines that a student requires an emergency accommodation, this form must be completed and submitted to the Local Accountability Coordinator (LAC) for approval. The LAC should contact MSDE to discuss the impact of the requested accommodation. A copy of this form must be filed in the testing archives and a copy must be retained by the LAC at the central office. See Appendix H.

### **Unique Accommodations**

The LAC must submit to the MSDE, for approval, any accommodation beyond those listed in this document. These accommodations would be considered "unique" accommodations. The process involves local special education, Section 504, EL and school-based staff first identifying a potential need for an additional type of accommodation. These staff members would then contact the LAC who would work with them and MSDE to obtain approval for the accommodation. The unique accommodation request must be submitted to MSDE by the LAC six weeks prior to testing to ensure that a final MSDE response is received before testing begins. Responses from MSDE for requests received by the LAC for unique accommodations will occur at least one week prior to the start of the test administration.

If a unique accommodation request is required (the student requires an accommodation that is not included in this manual), the LAC must complete and submit the "Unique Accommodation Request Form for state assessments" to MSDE for approval. These forms can be found in Appendix F for students with IEPs or 504 Plans or Appendix G for students with EL plans. A copy of this form must be filed in the student's IEP, 504 Plan, or EL Plan and assessment record and a copy must be retained by the LAC. A decision made by MSDE to not allow a unique accommodation during testing does not necessarily imply that the accommodation (or modification, adaptation, or other strategy) cannot be used for instruction. As MSDE determines whether to approve a new type of accommodation for assessment, MSDE considers the impact of the unique accommodation on test validity. Addressing the issue of validity of an accommodation in an assessment situation involves an examination of the purpose of the test and the specific skills to be measured.

## Appendices

Please note that links will provide the most updated Appendices. Printed or hard copy versions of the appendices may not be the most up to date version. The electronic version of the appendices document can be found [here](#).

### **Appendix A- Guidance documents for IEP teams on Participation of the Alternate Assessment**

Maryland Guidance to IEP Teams on Participation Decisions for the Alternate Assessment

Participation Criteria and Checklist

Parent Consent Form

Eligibility Participation Decision Flowchart

### **Appendix B- Protocol for the Use of the Scribe Accommodation**

### **Appendix C- Guidance for the Extended Time Accommodation**

### **Appendix D- Text-to-Speech, ASL Video, or Human Reader/Human Signer Guidance for English Language Arts/Literacy Assessments**

### **Appendix E- Protocol for the Use of a Human Reader**

### **Appendix F- Unique Accommodation Request**

### **Appendix G- EL Accessibility Features and Accommodations Plan on State Assessments**

### **Appendix H- Emergency Accommodation Form**

### **Appendix I- Student Accommodation Refusal Form**

### **Appendix J- Human Signer Guidelines**

### **Appendix M- References**