



Guide for IEP/504 Teams Considering the Speech-to-Text (STT) State Test Accommodation (August 2022)

The Speech-to-Text (STT) state test accommodation applies to all parts of the Smarter Balanced English Language Arts (ELA), Math, and Science (NGSS) interim and summative assessments and End-of-Course exams, including the **ELA long-write essay**. In the ELA summative assessment, the performance task (ELA-PT) consists of two parts. Part I requires students to produce a short answer, while Part II requires students to compose a long-write essay. The long-write essay measures a student's composition skills against the grade-level ELA Common Core standards for Writing.

The STT accommodation allows students to navigate through and complete the statewide assessments using voice commands to move between items, select answers, and compose short answer or essay responses. Students with motor or processing disabilities or a recent injury (e.g., a broken hand or arm, or have become blind through an injury and have not had sufficient time to learn braille) are provided a means for hands-free navigation, answer selection, and/or essay production. STT is only available as an accommodation, it is not available as a designated support. Without a doctor's note to substantiate any student's condition and need for the electronic transcription of his/her words and commands to complete a state assessment, only a student with an IEP or 504 Plan is eligible to request verification of the Speech-to-Text accommodation for state testing.

For more information about the accessibility supports available for state testing: universal tools¹, designated supports², and accommodation³, see the [Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium: Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines \(UAAG\)](#).

This document contains guidelines for the Speech-to-Text accommodation and is organized into four sections: (I) general principles; (II) legal foundation; (III) critical considerations for teams; and (IV) decision guidance for teams.

Section I: General Principles Regarding State Test Accommodations

The statewide assessments are designed to measure student proficiency and growth over time, curriculum impact and effect, and school achievement and gains. Tests are aligned to standards for learning that are established at the grade-level. Statewide assessments measure our students

¹ Universal tools - available to all students based on student preference and selection. Universal tools are access features of the assessment that are either provided digitally as part of the test system (embedded) or separate from the test system (non-embedded). *Note for Test Coordinators: non-embedded universal tools must be available on site to ensure equitable testing conditions and comparability of results.*

² Designated supports - features that are available for use by any student for whom the need has been indicated. Educators, parents/guardians, students or educator teams may be used for decision-making.

³ Accommodations - available only to those students with IEP/504 Plan documentation of need.

against those standards and the grade-level expectations for achievement found there. In order to yield valid and comparable results, it is essential that our tests measure what students know and can do when measured to the grade-level standard expectations. In Hawai'i, the Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards are used as the metric. For an understanding of how these standards are used as a basis to generate a grade-level proficiency score in writing, see the [Smarter Balanced Scoring Guide for English Language Arts Performance Task Full-Write Baseline Sets](#).

The purpose of state test accommodations is to enable students with disabilities to participate “with adjustments that do not alter the assessed construct” and that are “applied to test presentation, environment, content, format (including response format), or administration conditions” (*Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing, 2014*). State test accommodations are intended to remove obstacles to student demonstration of knowledge and skills resulting from student disability. State test accommodations are not intended to reduce expectations for learning, modify the curriculum, or artificially inflate a student’s test score. **The key for appropriate accommodation provision during statewide assessments is to ensure that the student’s individual needs are met and the assessed “construct” (what a test measures) is not modified or altered.**

Additionally, state test accommodations should:

1. *Not be confused with instructional accommodations that support student learning.* Instructional accommodations may be applied to support emerging skills or reinforce the acquisition of new skills; however, these accommodations are strategically adjusted or removed in the classroom to monitor and/or assess student progress. Removal of the instructional accommodation during classroom assessment in many cases is the only way to acquire an accurate measurement of the student’s current level of skill.
2. Be shown to specifically overcome a student’s disability. The student should have used the support in the past with success in both classroom assessments and interim assessments that are measuring the same skills (construct). *This evidence should be documented under the Present Levels of Educational Performance (PLEP) in the student’s IEP/504 Plan record.*
3. Be assigned only when supported with substantial evidence of need. Documentation of student disability mediation and classroom use during tests of the same construct must be found in the IEP/504 record. *This evidence should be documented in the “Services or Accommodations and Related Services” and the “Statewide Assessment” pages of the student’s IEP/504 Plan record.*

State test accommodations are different from *modifications*. Modifications are allowances made for IDEA students that provide for adjustment(s) to the curriculum or assessment that change what is to be learned or what is to be measured. Examples of testing modifications that reduce expectations for learning and affect the construct of the test include: 1) simplification, clarification, or explanation of test questions or items; 2) use of spell-checking devices on a test of the student's spelling skills; and 3) use of a calculator on a test of the student's computational skills. While

modifications may be used with caution during instruction to support students as they develop their knowledge and skills over time, they are not used in the general summative test.

Section II: Legal Foundation for State Test Accommodations

Under the IDEA, State has the responsibility to:

- Ensure that children with disabilities are provided appropriate accommodations on Title I, Part A assessments, where necessary, as determined on an individualized case-by-case basis by their IEP/504 team.
- Develop guidelines for the provision of appropriate accommodations. Under 34 CFR §§300.160(b)(2), the State’s guidelines must identify only those accommodations for each assessment that do not invalidate the score; and instruct IEP teams to select, for each assessment, only those accommodations that do not invalidate the score.

These State guidelines apply to the provision of appropriate accommodations under the IDEA on regular and alternate assessments (34 CFR §300.160 (a)).

Section III: Critical Considerations Before Assigning STT State Test Accommodation

Decisions about assigning the STT state test accommodation should be based on the general principles and laws governing state test accommodations presented in Sections I and II and the specific STT guidelines found below.

Purpose of Speech-to-Text (STT) State Test Accommodation

The purpose of the STT accommodation is to provide students with a motor or processing disability or recent injury that impedes their ability to navigate through and complete an assessment (e.g., select answers, produce an essay response). The STT accommodation allows these students the use of speech-to-text software to transfer their spoken words electronically into typed text or commands. With the STT test accommodation, the student can independently participate in and complete all parts of an assessment, including the long-write essay. For the long-write essay, students are able to fully represent their understanding of writing: how to organize an essay, write for a specific purpose, provide evidence, elaborate ideas, and employ writing conventions with the STT test accommodation.

Construct Measured by the ELA Summative Test Performance Task

A test construct is what a test measures. For example, Parts I and II of the ELA Performance Task (ELA-PT) in the ELA summative assessment measure students’ ability to compose an answer or essay in response to a question or writing prompt. The student’s response on Part II of the ELA-PT is used to generate a writing score and provides information on how well “students can produce effective and well-grounded writing for a range of purposes and audiences” pursuant to the Writing claim in the [Claims for the English Language Arts/Literacy Summative Assessment](#). For

specifics on the three traits of writing that are being measured by the ELA-PT across all grade-levels, refer to the ELA summative test blueprints found in the [Smarter Balanced English Language Arts \(ELA\) general assessment](#).

Documented Need for the STT State Test Accommodation

The STT state test accommodation should only be assigned to students who have documented motor or processing disabilities or medical exception (e.g., recent injuries) that prevent them from being able to navigate independently and select answer options. Also, students who are assigned this support for testing would regularly use this support during classroom assessments of student writing and composition skills. *In comparison to scribe, STT is the preferred state test accommodation for students with physical/processing disorders or injury. STT test accommodation has the advantages of direct transfer of student response, increased student independence, and improved test item security.*

***Note:** If a student uses a STT software program that is incompatible with the state’s Test Delivery System (TDS), then that STT software will have to be used in conjunction with a human scribe. If so, then both the STT and the SC test accommodations would need to be requested for the student to participate in state testing. Consult the **Assistive Technology Manual** for a list of third party software programs that are compatible with the TDS.*

In order to qualify for the STT accommodation, it is necessary to show either 1) the student has motor or processing disabilities or 2) physical impairments (e.g., broken hand or arm) which cause the students’ inability to navigate, select answer options, and/or produce an essay response. In addition, the IEP or 504 record for students with disabilities should clearly describe the conditions under and frequency with which STT is currently applied, including those conditions for classroom-based assessments of writing. For students with a recent injury that impedes their ability to produce a typed essay response, a doctor’s note substantiating the student’s condition and need is required and should be on record at the school.

Documented Familiarity with STT, Including Student Ability to Review and Edit

If students are to use the STT accommodation for the **long-write essay** on the ELA assessments, they must know how to work with the speech-to-text software to dictate, review, and edit the electronic transcription. For the essay, the student must specifically dictate what they want written and review and revise all generated text, including spelling, punctuation, and organization. Students should have fluid familiarity with the software and be able to operate it independently as no external assistance is allowed when this accommodation is used while testing.

Section IV: Guidance for IEP/504 Teams for Verifying the Need for STT State Test Accommodation on the ELA Long-Write Essays

This section provides IEP/504 Teams a tool with a set of questions to help guide the STT test accommodation decision-making process. The questions are intended to support team discussion and to help frame criteria that can serve as supporting evidence when considering student STT test

accommodation needs. These questions and the answers that are generated may be used to determine when and if there is sufficient evidence of student need supporting the provision of the STT test accommodation. The intent is for IEP/504 Teams to use the questions found in Table 1 as a starting point from which to engage in dialogue, examine evidence, record data, and indicate the team decision based upon knowledge of the student and the evidence found in the student's IEP/504 Plan. A preponderance of evidence as well as care should be used when making this team decision. (Table 1 is not intended to be a tally sheet.)

Table 1: Questions to Guide IEP/504 Team Decision about the Need for SPEECH-TO-TEXT (STT) State Test Accommodation for answering options and/or the ELA Long-Write Essay

The purpose of this table is to guide IEP/504 team discussions about student accommodation needs and help generate appropriate decisions and recommendations regarding the STT test accommodation. The completion of this table is optional.

Questions	Team Response	Evidence/ Comments
1. Does the student have a documented motor or processing disability?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
2. Is there evaluative information indicating that the student’s disability impedes his/her ability to navigate on the computer, select answer options, and/or compose text?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
3. Does the student have a recent physical injury (e.g., broken arm or hand, or have become blind through an injury and have not learned braille) that impedes his/her ability to produce a typed essay response? Is there a doctor’s note that states the student’s condition and need?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
4. Is the student able to use speech-to-text software to produce a typed essay response?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
5. Is the STT accommodation always assigned during classroom assessments of writing?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
6. Is there evidence that the student’s composition improves when STT is used to record the student’s spoken words and commands into print?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
7. Is there an expectation that the student will need the STT accommodation when pursuing post-secondary career opportunities and/or higher education?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	
8. Has the student provided input or stated a preference for using STT during classroom assessments of writing?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
9. Are there additional considerations for recommending the STT state test accommodation for this student, specific to his/her unique disability-related needs or condition?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Select the IEP/504 team recommendation that is decided to be most appropriate for the student.

STT should be recommended for this student at the **accommodation level** with the electronic transcription of students’ words and commands to navigate, provide responses, and compose ELA long-write essay on assessments.

More information is needed before making this decision.

Please list the names and titles of the IEP/504 team and other persons who were part of the state test accommodation decision-making team for the student (use the back if needed).

Name	Title	Date

Follow-up on this decision-making meeting by documenting any selected state test accommodations in the student’s IEP or 504 record, which is stored in the [electronic Comprehensive Student Support System](#) (eCSSS). Refer to the [eCSSS Directions](#) for documenting evidence to support the need for state test accommodations.

If the IEP/504 team makes the decision to recommend the STT state test accommodation for a student, then the School Testing Coordinator (TC) should consult the “Hawaii State Test Accommodations Identification and Request Process for Test Coordinators and School Assessment Teams” document available in the [Accessibility and Accommodations](#) resources folder on the [AlohaHSAP.org](#) portal website for guidance to submit state test accommodation requests.

In addition to the documented evidence in the IEPs/504 plans and the consultations with the Exceptional Support Branch and the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Design, the Assessment Section verifies state test accommodations in accordance with the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA). As stated in 34 CFR §300.160(b)(2):

The State’s guidelines must identify only those accommodations for each assessment that do not invalidate the score; and instruct IEP teams to select, for each assessment, only those accommodations that do not invalidate the score.

The Assessment Section recommends that [state test accommodation verification requests](#) be submitted one month prior to the opening of the test window. In all cases, state test accommodation requests should be submitted to the Assessment Section no later than 14 days prior to state (interim or summative) testing.

If you have any questions, please email Elaine Lee at Elaine.Lee@k12.hi.us or call the HIDOE Assessment Section at (808) 307-3636.