



Guide for IEP/504 Teams Considering the Text-to-Speech (TTS) or Read Aloud (RA) State Test Accommodation (Updated January 2, 2024)

This document contains guidelines for the Text-to-Speech and Read Aloud state test accommodations and is organized into four sections: (I) general principles; (II) legal foundation; (III) critical considerations for teams; and (IV) decision guidance for teams. Sections I, II, and IV are provided in Appendix A.

The Text-to-Speech (TTS) and Read Aloud (RA) state test accommodations are described as follows:

- The TTS and RA policies only apply to the **Reading Passages** component of the **Computer Adaptive Test English Language Arts (ELA-CAT)** interim and summative assessments, including the paper fixed form for the ELA-CAT summative test.
- Additional guidance on assigning the TTS or RA state test accommodation can also be found in the [Guidelines for Choosing Text-to-Speech or Read Aloud Accommodations for Smarter Balanced Summative and Interim Assessment Reading Passages for Students with Disabilities in Grades 3-5](#).
- This state test accommodation is appropriate for a very small number of students. *In a state test setting, the TTS/RA accommodation would not be used when the purpose of the test is to measure a student's reading level. For state tests that measure a student's reading comprehension, the student is asked to read independently.*
- The TTS and RA for reading passages is intended to provide access to the text, not to make up for being a slow reader.
- The TTS/RA state test accommodation is not the same as the TTS/RA instructional accommodation. The instructional TTS/RA accommodation is used during instruction (read along) to assist students in the acquisition of decoding and fluency skills. Teachers, parents, or peers read along with the student to develop their emerging skills in reading and comprehension.
- Documentation of the approaches that have been taken to strengthen a student's decoding, fluency, or comprehension skills is an important step in determining whether a text-to-speech or read aloud state test accommodation is needed for the **Reading Passages** on the ELA state tests.
- Test readers must follow the [Test Administration Read Aloud Guidelines](#) and sign the *Read Aloud Protocol for HSAP Assessments Security/Confidentiality Agreement*.
- Students who use the RA accommodation will need to be tested individually in a separate setting.
- Students who use the TTS accommodation will need headphones unless tested individually in a separate setting.
- TTS and RA are also available at the designated support level across content areas.

- For the ELA state tests, TTS and RA as designated supports allow the audio or oral delivery of test directions, questions, and answer options (all parts of the ELA state tests **except the Reading Passages**).
- For the math and science state tests, TTS and RA as designated supports allow the audio or oral delivery of the entire test- stimulus, directions, questions, and answer options.

Section III: Critical Considerations before Assigning the TTS or RA State Test Accommodation for Reading Passages

Decisions about assigning the TTS/RA 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 TTS/RA guidelines found below.

Purpose of Text-to-Speech (TTS) or Read Aloud (RA) State Test Accommodation

The purpose of the Smarter Balanced ELA tests is to obtain measures of the student’s skills in reading, writing, research, and speaking/listening comprehension. Reading comprehension is not specifically measured. Instead, a reading score is generated when students are asked to close read increasingly complex text. **The reading score on state tests encompasses decoding, fluency, and comprehension.**

Construct Measured by the ELA Reading Strand

A test construct is what a test measures. The Reading construct for the ELA state tests combines three fundamental components of reading — decoding, fluency, and comprehension—into one score. The student’s response on the ELA Reading Passage items is used to generate a reading score that informs how well “*Students can read closely and analytically to comprehend a range of increasingly complex literary and informational texts*” pursuant to the Reading claim in the [Claims for the English Language Arts/Literacy Summative Assessment](#). Additionally, the content categories of Reading as measured by the ELA Reading Passages are provided in the [ELA Shortened Summative Assessment Final Blueprint](#).

Documented Need for the TTS or RA State Test Accommodation

Based on guidance from the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium and the Department’s Exceptional Support Branch, students with a reading-based disability means that for these students, there is strong evidence of the persistence of the disability despite targeted instruction. The TTS/RA state test accommodation should only be assigned when supported with substantial documented evidence in the student’s IEP to show:

1. The student cannot see the text or utilize braille; e.g., a recently blind student who is unfamiliar with or not yet proficient in braille;
2. The student exhibits such difficulties as difficulty learning letters or letter sounds, difficulty in learning sight words, and difficulty in phoneme blending; or

3. The student has exhibited extremely limited to no growth in decoding and fluency skills over time despite extensive, repeated interventions that have been undertaken and implemented over several years to remediate the reading disability. Documentation must show the varied modifications, the time periods of these modifications, and other interventions that were attempted and found to be ineffective.

Documented Familiarity with the Text-to-Speech (TTS) and Read Aloud (RA) State Test Accommodations

If students are to use the TTS or RA accommodation on state tests, they must know how to work with these test accommodation(s). Students should have familiarity with them and be able to operate them independently or semi-independently (e.g., Read Aloud) as no external assistance beyond test administration and proctoring is allowed during the test.

Documentation of Designated Supports and State Test Accommodations for IDEA and Section 504 Students

IDEA, Section 504, and English Learner (EL) students with disabilities who may have certain characteristics and access needs that require accessibility supports on statewide assessments must document those supports in their IEPs/504 Plans. The IEPs/504 Plans are stored in the [electronic Comprehensive Student Support System](#) (eCSSS).

Test Coordinators (TCs) and/or school authorized contacts must provide documentation of their students' use of designated supports and state test accommodations either under the "*Present Levels of Educational Performance*" (PLEP), "*Services*," or "*Accommodations and Related Services*" tab of their students' IEPs/504 Plans (refer to **slides 130-131** of the [Webinar: 2023-2024 Accessibility and Accommodations Training \[PowerPoint\] \(Updated January 2, 2024\)](#)).

Designated supports are provided to any student based on their school's testing policies. Test Coordinators (TCs) and/or authorized school contacts must set/record designated supports in the [Test Information Distribution Engine](#) (TIDE) for all students who are assigned designated supports for state testing. In addition, for those students with IEPs/504 Plans, Test Coordinators and/or authorized school contacts must document evidence of designated supports in their students' IEPs/504 Plans (refer to **slides 130-131**) and ensure the documentation represents their students' designated support settings in TIDE.

In accordance with the [IDEA, Sec. 300.160 \(b\)](#), School IEP and Section 504 Teams are instructed to select only those state test accommodations that do not invalidate test scores. If directed by their school Teams, Test Coordinators are to submit state test accommodation verification forms to the Assessment Section (refer to the "*Guidelines for Verifying Accommodations on Statewide Assessments*" below and **slides 138-157**). The Assessment Section will verify state test accommodations based on the IDEA, Sec. 300.160 (b) and documentation in the students' IEPs/504 Plans (refer to **slides 128-129, 130-131**). Upon verification, the state test accommodations will be set/recorded in TIDE by the Assessment Section. Further, Test Coordinators and/or authorized school contacts should follow *established* procedures to ensure the state test accommodations listed under the "Statewide Assessment" tab of their students' IEPs/504 Plans represent their *verified* state test accommodation settings in the TIDE.

Guidelines for Verifying Accommodations on Statewide Assessments

The guidance on and deadlines for submitting the SY 2023-2024 Hawai'i State Test Accommodation Verification Request Form ("Form") for IEP/504 students are as follows:

- School IEP/504 Team meets to review the following resources on accessibility supports before instructing their school Test Coordinator (TC) to submit the Form:
 1. The Universal Tools and Designated Supports that are available for state testing without verification are provided on Table 1 and Table 4 of the [Crosswalk of Accessibility Features Across State Assessments in Hawai'i 2023-2024](#) ("Crosswalk"), respectively;
 2. The range of accommodations that are available for state testing with verification, including the applicability of accommodations to selected section(s) of the tests, are described on Tables 7-9 of the [Crosswalk](#); and
 3. Critical considerations and documented evidence to support the need for state test accommodations are provided in the [State Test Accommodation Guides 2023-2024](#).
- As announced in the [July 14, 2023 DOE memo](#), only American Sign Language (ASL), Braille (includes Audio Transcriptions and Emboss), and Closed Captioning (CC) accommodations will be carried over for use in SY 2023-2024.
- School TCs are to submit the Form by logging in to the Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE) (<https://www.hitide.org>) and under *Preparing for Testing*, select *Submit Test Administration Forms > Submit a Form > State Test Accommodations Verification Request*.
- The Form should be submitted one month before the opening of the test window. In all cases, it should be submitted no later than 14 days before interim or summative testing of a student.
- The Assessment Section will review the submitted Form, email its decision to the TC (via TIDE and/or hsa@k12.hi.us), and set/record the student's state test accommodation in TIDE if it is verified. *TCs should ensure that records of verified state test accommodations in eCSSS (IEPs/504 Plans) match those in TIDE; if these records are inconsistent, then TCs will need to follow established procedures to update the eCSSS records.*
- Do not submit a Form for IEP/504 students who will take the HSA-Alternate Assessments.

Additional Resources in the [Accessibility and Accommodations](#) folder on alohahsap.org

- [Hawai'i State Test Accommodation Guides](#)
- [Crosswalk of Accessibility Features Across State Assessments in Hawai'i \(CAF\)](#)
- [Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium: Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines 2023-2024 \(UAAG\)](#)
- [Assistive Technology Manual and Braille Resources SY 2023-2024](#)

If there are any questions, please contact Dr. Elaine Lee in the Assessment Section by email at elaine.lee@k12.hi.us or by phone at 808-307-3636.