

Accommodations Guide For Students with Disabilities 2011-2012

Over the past two years, in a collaborative effort, members from the Department of Public Instruction's Office of Educational Accountability and Special Education teams have been working to develop the Wisconsin *Accommodations Guide for Students with Disabilities*. We are excited to share a draft version of the Wisconsin *Accommodations Guide for Students with Disabilities* with educators in the field and welcome any feedback on the guide. For questions, comments or suggestions please contact:

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Section One: Overview

The *Wisconsin Accommodations Guide for Students with Disabilities* is intended to provide support in selecting, administering, and evaluating the effectiveness of accommodations used by students with disabilities. The guide was developed to inform general and special education teachers, administrators, parents, students, members of Individualized Educational Program (IEP) teams, Section 504 plan teams, and district level assessment staff. This guide also includes information regarding allowable test practices for all students. Decisions regarding accommodations should be made on an *individual student basis* in which disability-related needs and the student's past and present level of performance are considered.

This guide provides information related to instructional accommodations including how they are defined for specific populations of students, such as students with disabilities; and how to decide which accommodations to use for each individual student.

All that is valuable in human society depends upon the opportunity for development accorded the individual.

- Albert Einstein

Additionally the guide provides information on who is responsible for making those decisions and implementing the needed and required accommodations in all educational settings.

This guide also covers information related to assessment accommodations and which accommodations are allowable for the Wisconsin Student Assessment System (WSAS), specifically the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Exam (WKCE) and the Wisconsin Alternate Assessment for Students with

Disabilities (WAA-SwD). Section Four of this guide provides information on the types of accommodations available to use on these assessments and examples of those accommodations. For a complete and updated listing of allowable accommodations for students with disabilities on these assessments refer to the Assessment Accommodations webpage located at <http://dpi.wi.gov/oea/accommtrx.html>.

Accommodation policies related to local assessments (i.e., district-wide interim or benchmark assessments) vary depending on the developer of the assessment. Furthermore, the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) and the Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs[®]) provide their own policies for allowable accommodations. Refer to Appendix Two for more information.

Student Achievement

One of the greatest challenges for educators is to be able to address the wide range of learning needs of all students and at the same time move them toward high levels of achievement. It can be challenging to educators to ensure that all students, including students with disabilities, have equal access to grade-level academic content.

Accommodations provided during instruction and assessment promotes equal access to grade-level content for students with disabilities.

As stated in the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) Accommodations Manual:

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 good information about the student's [ability and language acquisition] and present level of performance in relation to [Wisconsin's academic standards] (Thompson, et al. 2005, 16).

The gathering and reviewing of meaningful information provides educators with the necessary data to evaluate the effective use of accommodations for the individual student in both instruction and assessment. This process should be seamlessly intertwined into day-to-day formative assessment practices.

A student who is provided appropriate accommodations determined through these means is better able to demonstrate his or her knowledge and skills related to academic content.

What are accommodations?

Accommodations are practices and procedures that provide equitable access to grade-level content. Accommodations are intended to reduce or eliminate the effects of a student's disability or level of language acquisition; they do not reduce learning expectations. Accommodations are for students with disabilities and students who are English language learners; accommodations do not change the content or the required skill level of a lesson, activity or test. Examples of accommodations include providing large-print text or the use of a scribe to record student answers. For more information refer to <http://www.dpi.wi.gov/oea/pdf/accomswd.pdf>.

Strategies for providing access that are not accommodations

While accommodations are specifically designed to meet the needs of students with disabilities and/or ELLs, there are other strategies available to educators in instruction and assessment to provide access. These tools are designed to meet the needs of *all* students. In some cases, such as with modifications, the tool may reduce learning expectations. The following strategies and tools may be useful in instruction and assessment, but educators should be aware of their limitations.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) provides a blueprint for creating instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessments that work for *all* learners. It is not a single, one-size-fits-all solution, but rather includes flexible approaches that can be customized and adjusted for individual student needs. UDL calls for creating accessible curriculum from the beginning, not after the fact, and provides:

- *Multiple means of representation* to give students various ways of acquiring information and knowledge,
- *Multiple means of expression* to provide students alternatives for demonstrating what they know, and
- *Multiple means of engagement* to tap into students' interests, challenge them appropriately, and motivate them to learn.

Technology has made the implementation of UDL in many respects easier to address the individual learning needs of students by providing multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement. However, technology itself does not necessarily enhance learning if a student is unfamiliar with how to use it, and many technologies have the same accessibility problems that paper/pencil options might have. Educators also need to consider how accessibility may differ between paper/pencil learning activities and computer-based learning activities. For example, many computer programs have a built-in magnification option to increase font size for easier access. This function may remove the need for a separate large-print paper version of instructional materials and/or additional magnification devices. Teams should consider these differences as they make decisions regarding a student's need for instructional accommodations.

Using universal design principles in instruction and assessment does not necessarily eliminate the need for accommodations for students with disabilities. There will always be the need for some specific accommodations, such as sign language interpreters for students who are deaf or Braille accommodations for students who are visually impaired. Applying universal design concepts in curriculum planning and assessment design will assure fuller access to the content for most students and minimize the need for specific accommodations.

Differentiated instruction is culturally and linguistically appropriate instruction and reflects a dynamic adjustment to student needs such as readiness, interest, or learning style. It is an instructional concept that maximizes learning for *all* students, regardless of skill level or background. When additional supports are necessary due to a student's disability-related needs or linguistic needs, adding accommodations can provide improved access for that student (Staff Development for Educators 2010 and Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction 2010c, 16).

Allowable test practices increase the accessibility of assessments for *all* students, as needed, and provide additional supports during formative assessments. As with accommodations, allowable test practices do not alter the content being measured. Examples of allowable test practices include breaks during an assessment and testing a student in a distraction-free location. For a student with disabilities, allowable test practices must be documented in a current IEP or Section 504 plan in the section for state and district-wide assessments. For information on allowable test practices refer to <http://dpi.wi.gov/oea/pdf/allowtestpr.pdf>.

Modifications are changes in the content or instructional level of an academic subject or test, possibly changing what is being measured. Modifications are *not* allowed for any

student during Wisconsin Student Assessment System (WSAS) testing. Examples of assessment modifications include reducing the number of answer choices and shortening the length of the test. Table 1 provides examples of the difference between accommodations and modifications.

Table 1: Classifications of Various Test Changes as Accommodations or Modifications

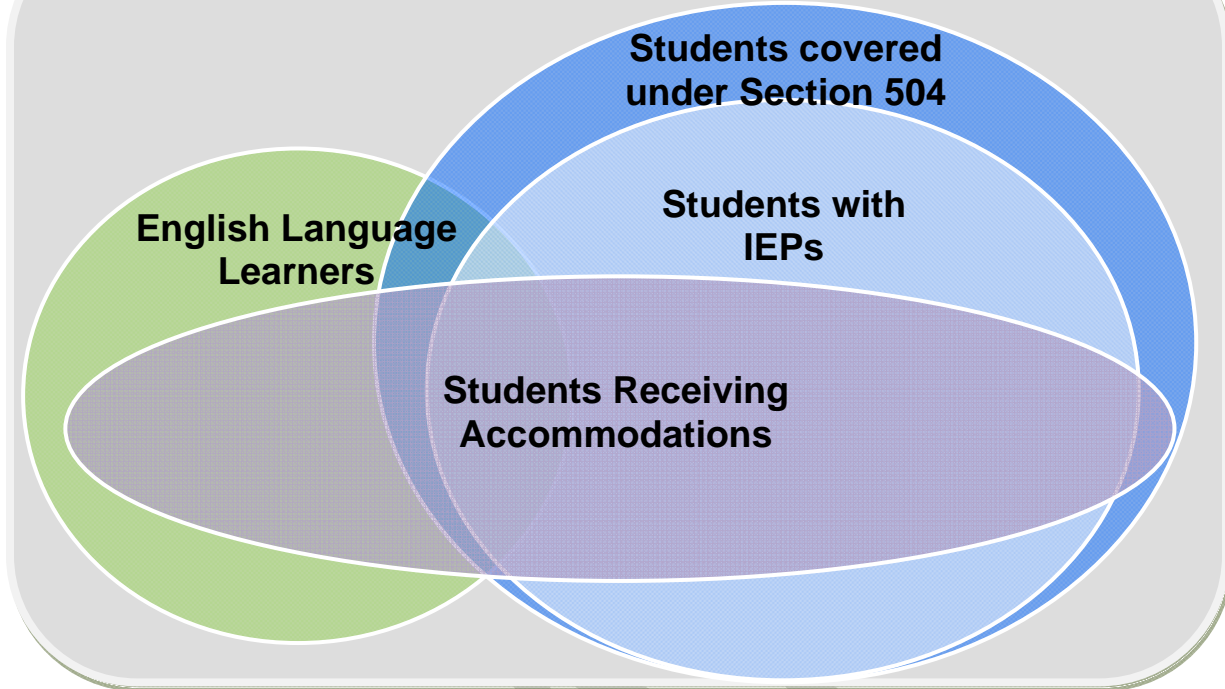
Test change	Test change description	Situation in which it might be considered a modification	Situation in which it might be considered an accommodation
Read-aloud	Having someone (or something, such as a computer) read the test directions, items, and responses aloud to the student	Items/tests are intended to include measurement of the ability to decode	Items/tests are intended to measure ability to distinguish between various types of literature
Calculator	(self-explanatory)	Items/tests are intended to include measurement of fact knowledge	Items/tests are intended to include measurement of problem-solving skill alone
Dictated response	Having someone (or something, such as a tape recorder) record student response	Items/tests are intended to measure writing skills	Items/tests are intended to measure content knowledge

Source: Bolt and Roach 2009, 40.

Students Eligible for Accommodations

Several categories of students within Wisconsin may be eligible for accommodations, including ELLs, students with disabilities with Section 504 plans, students with disabilities with IEPs, and students who are any combination of the above. Only a certain proportion of these students actually requires and receives accommodations. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of students eligible for accommodations and students receiving accommodations.

Figure 1: Students Eligible for Accommodations



In Wisconsin, approximately five to six percent of the tested population (grades 3-8 and 10) are ELLs. Of the ELL population, typically just under 60 percent receive accommodations on state-wide assessments. Approximately 14 percent of tested students are students with IEPs. Over 60 percent of students with IEPs receive accommodations on state-wide assessments. Those students with Section 504 plans make up about 0.4 to 0.5 percent of the tested population and just above 20 percent of these students receive accommodations. Finally, students who are English language learners and who are also students with disabilities make up from 0.7 to 0.8 percent of the tested population. Of these students, more than 75 percent receive accommodations.

Differences between Accommodations for Instruction and Accommodations for Assessment

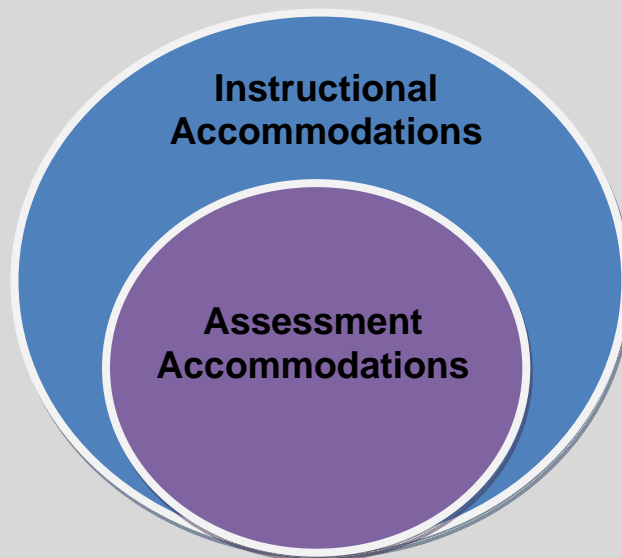
When deciding which accommodations to use for a student, it is important to know the purpose of each instructional task or assessment. Although a student's plan may have several accommodations listed, not all accommodations are necessarily used or provided in every classroom lesson and assessment. Decisions for when to use particular accommodations should be made not only on an individual student basis, but also based on the purpose of the instructional or assessment task.

Some accommodations used in instruction may not be permitted on assessments. For this reason, it is important to know what an assessment is intending to measure, as certain accommodations will invalidate the results of an assessment.

For example, a student may have an accommodation for the use of a spell-checking device listed in the IEP. But if the learning objective in a particular lesson is for students to spell independently, the accommodation should not be provided during this lesson. If, due to the unique learning needs of the student, the spell-checking device is still used, this practice is considered a modification and not an accommodation. Even though the student has this accommodation in the plan, it is still beneficial to provide instruction and practice in the skill of spelling. Additionally, when the student participates in the state writing test, which measures spelling among other writing skills, the accommodation would not be allowed since it violates the construct measured on the test. Knowing that this accommodation is not allowed on the state writing test is further reason to allow the student to practice spelling independently in some classroom lessons and assessments. The spell-checking device accommodation might be provided during instruction and assessment when spelling is not part of the objective, such as writing in mathematics, social studies, science, and other subject-area tasks.

Accommodations provided during assessment should also be used by a student during instruction; they should not be first introduced to a student during an assessment. In general, though, a wider range of accommodations are provided during instruction than on assessment, as depicted in Figure 2 below. Different combinations of accommodations are used during instruction, depending on what the objective is for the learning task.

Figure 2: Accommodations for Instruction vs. Assessment



There are several laws protecting the rights of students with disabilities to receive instructional and assessment accommodations. Appendix One cites each of the laws referenced in this section, which provides a general overview.

There are three major federal laws that protect students with disabilities:

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, overseen by the Office of Civil Rights, protects all individuals-- students as well as adults-- with disabilities from discrimination. Students protected under this law have a Section 504 plan which may include instructional and/or assessment accommodations.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), last reauthorized in 2004, protects the rights of students with disabilities. It is overseen by the Office of Special Education Programs. IDEA defines Special Education categories and requirements, including requiring that each student have an IEP. The IEP must address several areas pertaining to the student's individualized education including specialized instruction and supplementary aids and services, which may include specific accommodations provided for instruction and/or assessment.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) also protects the use of accommodations for students with disabilities. The law requires that each state allows appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities where necessary. ESEA further states that adaptations and accommodations for students with disabilities are sometimes necessary to measure the academic knowledge and achievement of students with disabilities.

Accommodation use by students with disabilities is also covered under Wisconsin State Statutes. The law states that students with disabilities must have appropriate accommodations provided on state and district-wide assessments as indicated in their IEPs.

For additional information on the legal requirements refer to Appendix One.

Cycle of Instruction and Assessment

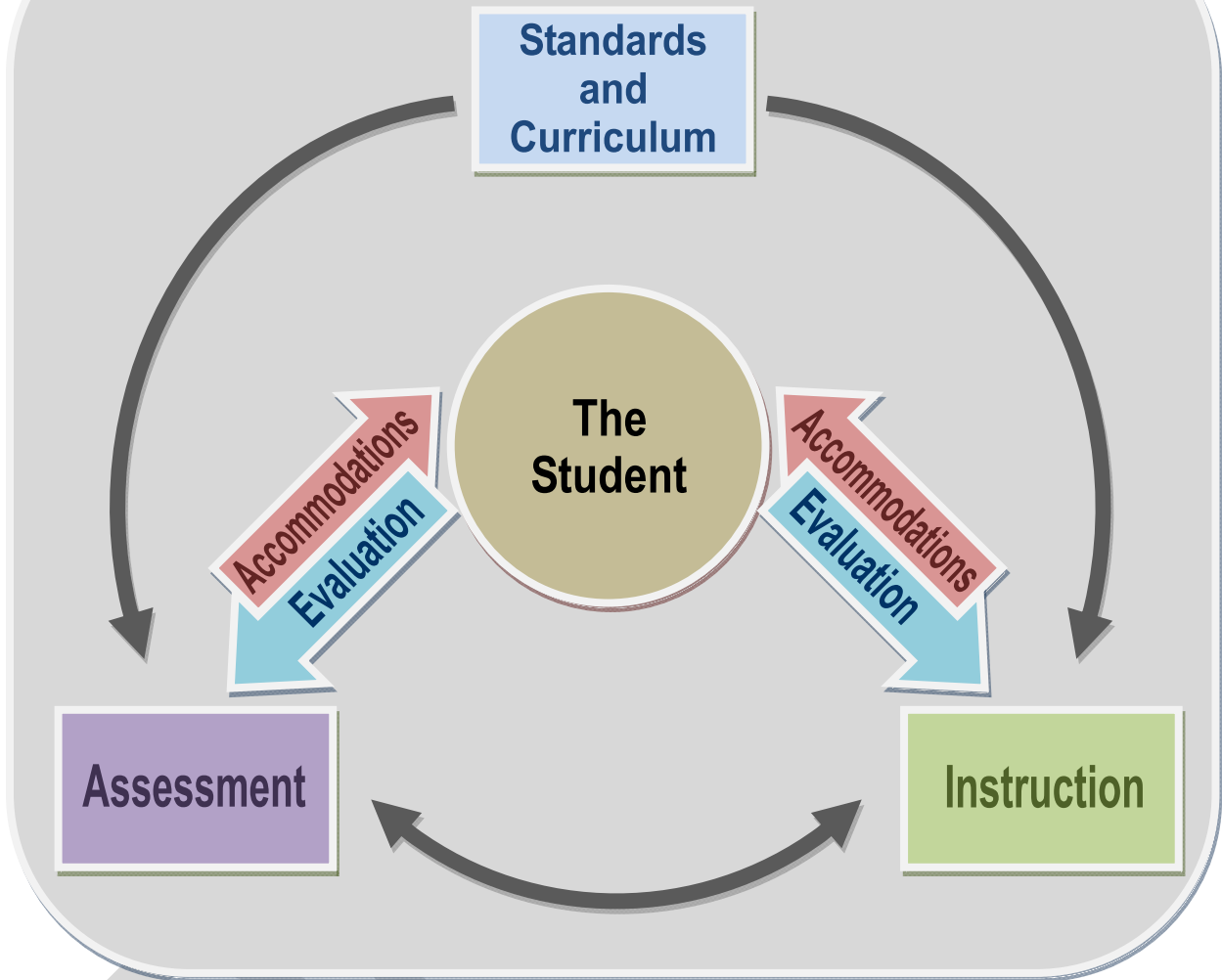
In order to make effective accommodations decisions, it is important to understand the cycle of instruction and assessment and how accommodations decisions fit into the cycle. This cycle starts with a consideration of the standards for instruction and assessment. Standards drive curriculum development at the state and district level. Curriculum is delivered to each student through classroom instruction. Classroom instruction should lead to student learning, which is then measured through assessment. In addition to standards guiding instruction, they also provide a framework for assessment.

Accommodations may be necessary during instruction and/or assessment depending on individual student needs and the purpose of instruction and what the assessment is intending to measure. The use of these accommodations provides access for the student to instruction and assessment, which is ultimately their access to the standards and curriculum. Ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the accommodations being used in both instruction and assessment should accompany the use of accommodations. It is important to remember that throughout this cycle the learning and needs of the individual student are at the core.

Figure 3 exemplifies this cycle. Each component of the cycle is further discussed in detail throughout this guide, beginning with standards and curriculum.

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Figure 3: The Cycle of Instruction and Assessment



Standards for Instruction and Assessment

Standards and Curriculum

It is important that all students are given the opportunity to be instructed on grade-level academic content. The following standards are pillars of education in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin Model Academic Standards

The Wisconsin standards for English language arts and mathematics define the knowledge and skills students should learn and master during their elementary and secondary school education so they are prepared to compete and succeed in the global economy. Wisconsin's state assessment systems are currently based on state standards.

Common Core State Standards

On June 2, 2010, Wisconsin formally adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English language arts and mathematics. Districts are working toward developing curriculum and instruction aligned to these new common standards. While the WKCE is based upon the WMAS, DPI urges districts to begin their transition to the Common Core State Standards now because any systematic and sustained effort to understand CCSS; align local curriculum and instruction; and engage educators in deep analysis will return positive results on statewide and district-wide assessments.

For students with significant cognitive disabilities, Wisconsin created Extended Grade-Band Standards which are aligned with the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards. With the adoption of the CCSS, Wisconsin is currently collaborating with a consortium of states developing alternate achievement standards, known as the Common Core Essential Elements. These Common Core Essential Elements will be the foundation of a new alternate assessment system.

For updates and more information about standards and curriculum visit:
<http://dpi.wi.gov/standards/index.html>.

Section Two: Considerations for Instructional Accommodations

Instruction

As previously mentioned, instructional accommodations should be part of an ongoing cyclical system of standards-based instruction and balanced assessment. This section is intended to provide considerations when making decisions regarding instructional accommodation use. For specific accommodation category definitions and examples, please refer to Section Four.

What are Instructional Accommodations?

Instructional accommodations are practices and procedures that help provide access to instructional content. In Wisconsin, students identified as ELL, with IEPs, and/or with Section 504 plans, are eligible for instructional accommodations to ensure that neither their language proficiency level nor their disability prevent them from learning new academic content or demonstrating what they have learned. For a student with a disability, instructional accommodations should be chosen to reduce or eliminate the impact of the student's disability-related needs within the instructional setting. For ELLs who have a disability, educators should evaluate both language acquisition needs as well as disability-related needs.

Decision-Making Process and Documentation

In Wisconsin, IEP teams should make accommodation decisions for a student with disabilities based on their needs in accordance with state and federal guidelines. For details on state and federal guidelines refer to Appendix One. These decisions should

be made with input from all members of the IEP team taking into account the student's disability-related needs, the course and grade level expectations and, if available, which instructional accommodations have been useful in the past.

A student with a Section 504 plan might be provided instructional accommodations based on the student's individual learning needs if their disability impacts access to academic content. Section 504 plans are developed by a group of the student's teachers, parents and sometimes the student him or herself. Accommodations should be documented in the student's Section 504 plan.

IEP teams and Section 504 teams should determine which disability-related needs a student has that prevent him or her from being academically proficient, and which accommodations will help them access and demonstrate that learning. In essence, the process of making decisions about accommodations is one in which the team members attempt to "level the playing field" so that a student with disabilities can participate in the general education curriculum. Teams should consider the following:

- Which accommodations can reduce the impact of a disability?
- What is the student expected to do to demonstrate acquisition of grade-level content aligned with state standards, including assignments and class tests?
- How consistent are the expectations and plans for classroom instruction?

Steps in Determining Appropriate Accommodations

The purpose of this section is to allow IEP team members, both before and during the planning meeting, to consider the needs of the student for accommodations in the instructional and assessment areas. It is not required that teams use the following steps but it is important to gather input from all members of the team, including parents and general education teachers. Although these steps were developed specifically for IEP teams, these steps may also be used by Section 504 teams. Forms mentioned throughout these steps can be found on the DPI Sample Special Education Forms page at: <http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/forms06.html>.

Step 1: Ensure that the student's IEP team is familiar with pertinent academic content standards at the student's grade-level. The intent of this step is to help all IEP team members understand what is expected academically of the student.

Step 2: Consider the student's individual needs based on documented parental concerns, the student's level of academic achievement and functional performance, how the student's disability affects their involvement and progress in the curriculum, as well as any special factors that impact a student's ability to access academic content. Team members can bring additional data such as classroom work samples, observations checklists, results of student interviews, and parental input about home and community functioning. For more information, refer to Form I-4 IEP: *Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance* and Form I-5 IEP: *Special Factors*. In addition, Tool 1: *Parent Input in Accommodations* provides suggested questions for parents to consider during the review of the student's IEP.

Step 3: Consider the student's individual needs and possible supports and/or instructional accommodations that may be required. Accommodations allowed on the WSAS may be useful as a starting point, but there are many more options that may be provided in the classroom. IEP teams can find the DPI-approved assessment accommodations, as well as allowable test practices at <http://dpi.wi.gov/oea/accommtrx.html>. In consideration of this step, refer to Form I-9: *IEP: Program Summary*. Teams should ask the following questions:

- What are some possible instructional accommodations and/or supports (by subject) that might address the identified disability-related needs?
- What instructional accommodations or strategies are currently being used that are effective?
- What have the student, his/her teachers, parents, and others found effective in the past?
- What subject-specific instructional accommodations are needed?
- Which other areas of support might need to be considered for the student?
- What training or support will the student's classroom teacher(s) need in order to implement the required accommodations?

Tool 2: *Accommodation Use in the Classroom* provides guidance on how to track different aspects of how a student uses accommodations in the classroom.

Step 4: Consider which classroom assessments may be administered in each content area. Teams should ask the following questions related to classroom assessment accommodations:

- What classroom assessment accommodations are needed?
- What training or support will the student's classroom teacher(s) need in order to implement these accommodations?

Step 5: Consider which WSAS test the student takes, the WKCE or the WAA-SwD, as well as any district-wide assessments.

- What are possible accommodations that could be used to help the student demonstrate his or her knowledge and learning?
- Keep in mind, some accommodations that are used in the classroom are not allowed on state-wide assessments because the accommodations may invalidate the test.

Step 6: Ensure that all accommodations for the student are recorded onto Form I-9: *IEP: Program Summary*.

Step 7: Continually, evaluate the effectiveness of accommodations used in instruction and assessment and adjust the use of accommodations as needed. If accommodation use changes, update the IEP as necessary. For more information on evaluating effective accommodation use, refer to Section Five of this guide.

For further information, especially about needed documentation, consult the following DPI documents: *Guide to Special Education Forms* at <http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/doc/forms-guide.doc> and *A Guide for Writing IEPs* at <http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/pdf/iepguide.pdf>.

English Language Learners with Disabilities

For students with disabilities who are also ELLs, the English as a second language (ESL) or bilingual teacher should also be involved in the IEP process. A collaborative dialogue among ESL/bilingual teachers, special education teachers, general education teachers, parents and families, program coordinators, and the student during the IEP process should help determine what is best for the individual student. For ELLs who have a disability, educators should evaluate both language acquisition needs as well as disability-related needs.

For further information about accommodations for ELLs, please refer to DPI's Assessment Accommodations webpage at: <http://www.dpi.wi.gov/oea/accommtrx.html>.

How Participation Decisions Should Not Be Made

Teams should be aware of ineffective practices when making decisions regarding the use of student accommodations. The following are a few examples of possible pitfalls teams can run into when deciding on a student's accommodation needs:

- Having blanket expectations for a specific disability category
- Choosing an accommodation because of educator familiarity with and convenience of a specific accommodation
- Considering the difficulty level of a test for fear that the student will not pass
- Avoiding the implementation of an accommodation due to limited school resources including availability of staff, time, space, funds, etc.
- Ongoing use of the same accommodation without an evaluation of effectiveness
- Making decisions without sufficient evidence of need or success

For more information about ways to determine if a consideration is appropriate refer to Section Six – Tool 3: *Do's and Don'ts When Selecting Accommodations*.

Section Three: Considerations for Assessment Accommodations

Assessment

As mentioned in Section One, assessment accommodations should be part of a cyclical system of standards-based instruction and balanced assessment. This section is intended to provide considerations when making decisions regarding assessment accommodation use.

One way that students demonstrate their progress toward achieving the academic standards in English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies is through participation in the Wisconsin Student Assessment System (WSAS).

Since the 2005-06 school year, the ESEA has required all states to test all students in reading and mathematics in grades 3 through 8 and once in high school (grade 10 in Wisconsin, under s.118.30, Wis. Stats.). Student performance on these assessments is reported in proficiency categories and used to determine the adequate yearly progress (AYP) of students at the school, district and state levels. In addition to reading and mathematics, Wisconsin also assesses student achievement in writing, science, and social studies under s.115.38, Wis. Stats.

What are Assessment Accommodations?

Assessment accommodations are practices and procedures that allow a student to demonstrate knowledge and skills without changing what a test is designed to measure. Accommodations are intended to reduce or eliminate the effects of a student's disability.

The assessment accommodations explained in this guide specifically address the accommodations allowed on the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Exam (WKCE) and the Wisconsin Alternate Assessment for Students with Disabilities (WAA-SwD). Refer to Appendix Two for further information on district-wide and/or other assessments, including computer-based assessments.

Note that some instructional accommodations may not be appropriate for use on certain state-wide assessments. Accommodations should be selected and implemented in ways that maintain the integrity of the assessment so that valid judgments can be made about what students know and can do. For example, reading aloud a portion of the reading assessment to a student is a modification, and therefore not allowed on the Reading portion of the WKCE or the read-by-student items on the WAA-SwD because the reading assessment is intended to measure the ability of the student to decode text independently. Likewise, calculators are not allowed on certain mathematics WKCE items because those items are measuring the student's ability to perform computation independently.

Assessment accommodations for students with disabilities are changes to testing procedures, testing materials, or the testing situation in order to allow meaningful

participation on assessments. Accommodations are designed to allow students with IEPs or Section 504 plans to demonstrate their knowledge and skills related to the academic content standards.

The *Wisconsin Assessment Accommodations Matrix for Students with Disabilities*, available at <http://dpi.wi.gov/oea/accommtrx.html>, provides detailed information on the types of supports available to students with disabilities during statewide testing. A student with an IEP or a Section 504 plan could be provided accommodations in the areas of test directions, presentation, response, setting, and/or timing and scheduling, depending on the student's unique needs.

Accommodation Decision Making Process

Decisions regarding assessment accommodations should take into account many of the same decision making considerations for instructional accommodations. It is important that decisions are made for an individual student based on their unique need. This process should not be based solely on a student's category of disability, the difficulty of the test, or limited school resources.

All accommodations provided to a student during state-wide assessments should also be provided during classroom instruction, classroom assessments, and district assessments. In general, new accommodations should not be introduced at the time of state-wide assessments as there may be a negative impact on student performance.

After instructional accommodation decisions are made, there are other factors to consider. These factors include:

- Knowing what the purpose of the assessment is, and what is intended to be measured;
- Student familiarity and comfort level using each accommodation;
- Analysis of how well the accommodation benefits the student when it is used during instruction;
- Reviewing what accommodations are allowed on a standardized assessment and;
- Federal and state accommodation policies regarding the provision of accommodations on state-wide assessments.

Accommodation policies related to local assessments (i.e., district-wide interim or benchmark assessments) vary depending on the developer of the assessment. Furthermore, the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) and the Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs[®]) provide their own lists for allowable assessment accommodations.

Refer to Appendix Two for more information.

Further factors to consider for accommodating students with disabilities could include:

- Present level of student functioning
- Annual review and evaluation of a student’s IEP or Section 504 plan
- Effectiveness of accommodation use during classroom instruction
- Student willingness to use accommodations during an assessment

For a student with an IEP, the IEP team is responsible for making annual assessment and accommodation decisions, which should be based on individual need in accordance with state and federal guidelines. For a student with disabilities with a Section 504 plan, the Section 504 team should determine the appropriateness of accommodations and document their decisions regularly.

Documentation of Assessment Accommodations

In order for a student to receive an assessment accommodation it should be documented on their IEP or Section 504 plan. More specifically for a student with an IEP, the assessment accommodation would be documented on a student’s IEP in the section for state and district-wide assessment. For a student with a Section 504 plan teams should address assessment accommodations in the appropriate section. Please refer to the current *Assessment Accommodations Matrix for Students with Disabilities* (<http://dpi.wi.gov/oea/pdf/accomswd.pdf>) to see if an accommodation is allowed for a given student.

Additionally, when a student receives an assessment accommodation on a statewide assessment, the test proctor or school staff must ensure that this information is recorded on back cover of the test booklet or student answer document in the *Student Assessment Report* section. The descriptions below provide relevant information regarding the WKCE and WAA-SwD. For annual updates, please refer to the *Test Administration Manual* for the appropriate assessment and grade. For more information refer to the Office of Educational Accountability’s Publications site found online at <http://dpi.wi.gov/oea/publications.html>.

WKCE Student Assessment Report (back cover of the test book)

The WKCE Student Assessment Report, on the back cover of the WKCE test books for grades 3–8 and 10, must be completed for all students who used one or more accommodations on the WKCE. Please refer to the Accommodations Matrix to see if an accommodation is allowed for a given student. Be sure to use a No. 2 pencil when filling out the Student Assessment Report.

WAA-SwD Student Assessment Report (back cover of the student Answer Document)

Student Assessment Report			
Write student's name in this box:		All students must take either the complete WAA-SwD or the complete WAA-SwD—not part of both. The choice is for students whose instruction is based on the Extended Grade Band Standards. The WAA-SwD is for students whose instruction is based on the Extended Grade Band Standards.	
Student Performance Level Survey			
Circle the Performance Level Descriptor based on the Extended Grade Band Standard before completing this section. This survey is used to monitor progress and will not be returned to the school. Do not check any boxes unless you are completing the assessment. The results of this survey are confidential and only the school and the state will have access to the information. Do not check any boxes unless you are completing the assessment. Do not check any boxes unless you are completing the assessment. Do not check any boxes unless you are completing the assessment.			
	Reading	Mathematics	Science
WAA-SwD Minimal Performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
WAA-SwD Basic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
WAA-SwD Proficient	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
WAA-SwD Advanced	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
WAA-SwD Assessment Accommodations			
Directions: Complete this section for students who participated in the WAA-SwD with one or more of the following accommodations. Mark all that apply.			
Type of Accommodation	Reading	Mathematics	Science
Instructional	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical condition and conductive device	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VisualAids	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VisualAids device (e.g., text-to-speech, adaptive keyboard, picture symbols)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VisualAids or manipulatives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VisualAids or DP approved communication	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alternate Assessment Results for Social Studies, Language Arts, and Writing			
Directions: Complete this section for all students with disabilities who participated in the alternate assessment for Social Studies, Language Arts, and Writing. Results must be based on CPI Administration Guide and WAA-SwD.			
	Reading	Math	Writing
WAA-SwD Minimal Performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
WAA-SwD Basic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
WAA-SwD Proficient	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
WAA-SwD Advanced	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The WAA-SwD Student Assessment Report, on the back cover of the WAA-SwD student Answer Document for grades 3–8 and 10, must be completed for all students who used one or more accommodations on the WAA-SwD. Be sure to use a No. 2 pencil when filling out the Student Assessment Report.

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Section Four: Accommodation Categories

Accommodations

The two previous sections presented considerations for accommodation use in both instruction and assessment. This section supports earlier sections by providing explicit accommodation categories and examples of accommodations within those categories for instruction and assessment. For the complete list of allowable accommodations on the WKCE and WAA-SwD, refer to the Assessment Accommodations Matrices at <http://dpi.wi.gov/oea/accommtrx.html>.

Sample Instructional and Assessment Accommodations for SwDs/504s

In Wisconsin, accommodations are practices and procedures in the areas of presentation, response, setting, and timing/scheduling that provide equitable access to grade-level content for students with disabilities. Accommodations that are provided by test administrators to a student during state assessments should also be the same accommodations provided by educators and test administrators during classroom instruction, classroom assessments, and district-wide assessments – if allowed. However, some classroom instructional accommodations may not be appropriate for use on certain statewide assessments and/or district-wide assessments. For example, a student may have materials read to him/her during classroom instruction, but reading portions of a reading test may invalidate the test.

Test Direction Accommodations

Test direction accommodations provide directions in a variety of formats. They may also allow the student to ask questions about directions, receive clarification on directions, and/or to reread directions. These accommodations provide students with better access to directions to help the student understand and complete each task. They may also be appropriate for students who have difficulty understanding what they need to do to complete a task.

For example:

Instruction: Providing a sign language interpretation of the directions to the student on a classroom quiz.

Assessment: Allowing the student to restate the directions on a reading assessment in their own words.

Content Presentation Accommodations

Content presentation accommodations allow the student to receive access to academic content in a different format or mode of access. This accommodation can take the form of an auditory input, a tactile input, a visual input, or any combination of

the three. These accommodations may be appropriate for students who have difficulty accessing and/or processing information due to their disability.

For example:

Instruction: Provide the student with a large-print version of an assignment.

Assessment: Allowing the test administrator to read the test passages and questions aloud to the student on a mathematics assessment.

Response Accommodations

Response accommodations allow the student to use a variety of methods to effectively communicate in instruction and assessment. These accommodations may include, but are not limited to, the use of assistive devices, manipulatives, or appropriate resources. These accommodations may be appropriate for students who have difficulties with memory, sequencing, directionality, alignment, organization, and/or other communication-related needs due to their disability.

For example:

Instruction: Allow the student to use a calculator on a mathematics assignment that evaluates their ability to problem solve.

Assessment: The student responds to a science test orally with the aid of a scribe.

Setting

Setting accommodations allow the student to receive instruction or participate in assessment in a different location or with changes to their current location. Ensure that all locations are as distraction free as possible and provide an appropriate lighting and comfort level for the student. These accommodations may be appropriate for students who are easily distracted by large groups or for students who require access to special equipment or specific room conditions due to their disability. Many of these accommodations may also be considered allowable test practices for all students when it comes to assessment, but must still be documented in the student's IEP or Section 504 plan.

For example:

Instruction: Allow the student to move, stand, or pace during classroom instruction.

Assessment: Allow the student to use a different room during the administration of a science assessment if they have a reading device to

provide a distraction free environment.

Timing and Scheduling Accommodations

Timing and scheduling accommodations allow the student to receive additional time or a different schedule to complete assignments and assessments. This accommodation may include extra breaks, extra time, a change in when an activity takes place, and spreading out an activity over multiple days. These accommodations may be appropriate for a variety of students with disabilities. Students who need extra time to process material, students who need extra time to benefit from special equipment or devices, students who have difficulty concentrating, and students with medical-related issues which may impact their alertness or energy levels due to their disability may benefit from timing and scheduling accommodations.

For example:

Instruction: Provide the student with extra time to finish an assignment.

Assessment: Allow the student several breaks during the administration of a science assessment.

For a listing of different instruction and assessment accommodations, please see *Tool 4: Accommodations*. For a complete list of allowable accommodations on the WKCE and the WAA-SwD, please refer to the Assessment Accommodations Matrices at <http://dpi.wi.gov/oea/accommtrx.html>.

Section Five: Evaluation of Accommodation Use

Evaluation

The ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of accommodations provided to a student is an essential part of the IEP process and culminates the cycle of instruction and assessment. Without an understanding of the effectiveness of the implemented accommodations, IEP teams are unable to ensure a student's meaningful access to academic content aligned with the standards. This section provides recommendations for evaluation of the implementation of accommodations. A thorough examination of accommodation use should consider both instruction and assessment. Additionally, it is important for educators to remember that what may be effective for one student may not be effective for another and to ensure that each individual student's needs are being met.

Documentation and Data Collection

The first step in the ongoing evaluation of the use of accommodations is a review of the IEP or Section 504 plan. Proper documentation within an IEP or Section 504 plan ensures that all team members are aware of a student's disability-related needs and what accommodations should be provided during instruction and assessment. IEP or Section 504 plan documentation provides the foundation necessary for teams to properly evaluate the effective use of accommodations. After reviewing the IEP or Section 504 plan, educators should collect further information and data to determine if the student's needs are being met by the use of their documented accommodations.

Before the evaluation of accommodation use can take place, it is imperative that students are receiving accommodations documented in their IEP plans.

There are several ways by which educators can collect information about the effectiveness of accommodations. Educators should not rely on one source of information, but instead use multiple sources to provide an accurate picture of how well the provided accommodations are working for the student in both instructional and assessment settings. Depending upon which accommodations are provided, there are several options regarding how to evaluate their effectiveness.

Possible sources of data include:

- Assessments,
- Classroom instruction,
- Student observations,
- Teacher collaboration,
- Parent and student feedback,
- Student history,
- School demographics,
- School-wide performance, and
- District-wide performance.

Data collection does not necessarily only mean test statistics and quantitative results. Data collection also applies to observations, surveys, work samples, and a wide variety of other qualitative measures.

Data collection should occur at the start of the implementation of the student's IEP or Section 504 plan and continue throughout the school year or IEP term. As with all types of data, an evaluator will gain more substantive information from many different data points across time. Therefore, it is beneficial to collect data continuously throughout the school year. Once the team determines the accommodations provided, the student's teachers and support team can collect data using formative strategies and benchmark assessments, collaborating with the student's parents and other teachers, and through other quantitative and qualitative measures.

Another approach to examining the effectiveness of accommodation at the school level is to perform a self-assessment. In conducting a self-assessment, staff can not only determine building/staff capacity, but also identify areas that are in need of improvement. Based on information collected during the self-assessment process, staff can determine the need to improve the monitoring of inclusive practices and accommodations use by individual students in their school/district. Once the self-assessment has been conducted, staff can then develop a plan to continually evaluate the effectiveness of accommodation use for both instruction and assessment (Rivera, et al. 2009, 17).

Analysis of Data

When reviewing data on accommodations, there are several different levels of data analyses which are important for different purposes and different stakeholders. For example, a district administrator might convene a team to review general trends in accommodations usage on state and district tests. A building principal may want to look at accommodation patterns by teacher, grade, or subgroup of students. These are important practices, and should be addressed by committees or work groups designed to address school and district improvements. Table 2 is a set of questions to guide school and district level analysis of accommodation use.

Table 2: Questions to Guide Evaluation of Accommodation Use at the School or District Level

1. 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?
2. Are there procedures in place to ensure test administration procedures are not compromised with the provision of accommodations?
3. Are students receiving accommodations as documented in their IEP and 504 plans?
4. Are there procedures in place to ensure that test administrators adhere to directions for the implementation of accommodations?
5. How many students with IEPs or 504 plans are receiving accommodations?
6. What types of accommodations are provided and are some used more than others?

7. How well do students who receive accommodations perform on state and local assessments? If students are not meeting the expected level of performance, is it due to the students not having had access to the necessary instruction, not receiving the accommodation, or using the accommodations that were not effective?

Source: Thompson, et al. 2005, 23.

Since accommodations decisions should be made on an individual student level, the analysis discussions in the remainder of this section are focused on student-level data.

The next step after collecting and compiling data and documentation is to review this information. Just as the collection of data is ongoing, the review of data should also occur on an ongoing basis throughout the school year. A thorough analysis includes a review of the most current collected documentation and data as well as consideration of what additional information may be needed to evaluate the use of accommodations. This documentation must include relevant sections of the student's IEP.

The following questions provide an outline of an approach to evaluate the use of accommodations at the student level. This evaluation should include all educators responsible for the accommodation decisions for a student and not be the responsibility of one educator.

Table 3: Questions to Guide Evaluation at the Student Level in Instruction and Assessment

1. What accommodations are used by the student during instruction and assessments?
2. 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?
3. What is the student's perception of how well the accommodation worked?
4. What combinations of accommodations seem to be effective?
5. What are the difficulties encountered in the use of accommodations?
6. What are the perceptions of teachers and others about how the accommodation appears to be working?

Source: Thompson, et al. 2005, 24.

Table 3 provides just one example of a process to evaluate the use of accommodations. Educators are encouraged to use additional means of evaluation when analyzing accommodations.

The final step in this process is to use this analysis to determine whether or not an accommodation is effective for the student. A thorough collection of data and analysis of this data should provide enough information for IEP teams to conclude if the student is accessing instruction and assessment through the best means possible by each accommodation. Based on this result, teams will determine if each accommodation

should continue being provided or if new accommodations for the student should be implemented.

The following tools and appendices provide additional information and resources to facilitate the selection, administration and evaluation of accommodations for students with disabilities. It is important to remember that this process is cyclical, in that IEP teams and educators should be consistently evaluating the effectiveness of accommodations, in both instruction and on assessment. By introducing and implementing accommodations for students, educators are working to ensure equitable access to grade-level content as well as potentially reducing or eliminating the effects of a student's disability or level of language acquisition, which ultimately will contribute to the improvement of outcomes for students with disabilities.

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Tools

Tool 1: Parent Input in Accommodations

Questions Parents Should Ask About Accommodations in Instruction and Assessments

About Instruction

- Is my child expected to reach regular or alternate achievement standards? Does this affect what types of accommodations are available to my child in instruction or on assessments?
- What accommodations does my child need to access and reach the academic standards?
- Are there accommodations that could be allowed in instruction that are not currently being provided?
- Are there accommodations being used at home that could be used in instruction to help students access and learn content or help them in performing certain academic tasks?
- How can my child and I advocate to receive accommodations not yet provided in instruction?
- Are the accommodations my child is receiving in instruction meant to be a temporary support? If yes, what is the plan to help determine when to phase out or discontinue the use of a certain accommodation?
- How are the various staff members who work with my child providing accommodations? (across regular, special education, ESL/bilingual, or other staff)

About Assessment

- What are the tests my child needs to take, what do they measure (e.g., regular or alternate academic standards), and for what purpose is each given?
- Are the accommodations allowed on state tests also provided for district tests?
- Can my child participate in part of an assessment with or without accommodations?
- If my child is not taking the general assessment, is it because the test is “too hard” or because the accommodation needed is not allowed on the assessment?
- Are there consequences for allowing certain changes to how my child participates in a test? How will my child’s test scores count?
- Do consequences of accommodations vary by type of test? If my child is also an ELL, are the accommodations allowed on tests of English language proficiency the same as other tests?

Questions for Instruction and Assessment

Is the need for each accommodation documented in my child's IEP or 504 Plan?

Are there too many or too few accommodations being provided?

What are my child's preferences for specific accommodations?

If my child needs accommodations, how will they be provided?

If an accommodation used in instruction is not allowed on a test, is there another option to support the student that is allowed? If yes, has it been documented and tried in instruction first? If no, how is my child being prepared to work without the accommodation before the test?

Other questions you may have.....

Source: Thurlow, et al. 2008, 48-49.

Tool 2: Accommodation Use in the Classroom

Use this chart to track different aspects of how a student uses an accommodation in your classroom. This will help inform decision making on assessment accommodations.

Student _____ Date _____

What accommodation(s) does the student use in the classroom? List them under “accommodation” in the chart. Then follow the questions in the chart.

List Accommodation(s):

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Questions

1. Is it noted in student's IEP?

2. For what task(s) is it used?
(e.g., task type* or content/standard)

3. Does the student use it for that task every time?
Note how often.

4. Is the need for it fixed or changing?

5. Does the student use it alone or with assistance?
(e.g., Aide, peers?)

6. Notes: (e.g., does one accommodation seem more effective used with another on a task, etc.)

Source: Thurlow, et al. 2008, 50.

Tool 3: Do's and Don'ts When Selecting Accommodations

Do...make accommodation decisions based on individualized needs.

Don't...make accommodations decisions based on whatever is easiest to do (e.g., preferential seating).

Do...select accommodations that reduce the effect of the disability to access instruction and demonstrate learning.

Don't...select accommodations unrelated to documented student learning needs or are intended to give students an unfair advantage.

Do...be certain to document instructional and assessment accommodation(s) on the IEP or Section 504 plan.

Don't...use an accommodation that has not been documented on the IEP or Section 504 plan.

Do...be familiar with the types of accommodations that can be used as both instructional and assessment accommodations.

Don't...assume that all instructional accommodations are appropriate for use on assessments.

Do...be specific about the “Where, When, Who, and How” of providing accommodations.

Don't...simply indicate an accommodation will be provided “as appropriate” or “as necessary.”

Do...refer to Wisconsin accommodations guidelines and understand implications of selections.

Don't...check every accommodation possible on a checklist simply to be “safe.”

Do...evaluate accommodations used by the student.

Don't...assume the same accommodations remain appropriate year after year.

Do...get input about accommodations from teachers, parents, and students, and use it to make decisions at IEP team or Section 504 planning committee meetings.

Don't...make decisions about instructional and assessment accommodations alone.

Do...provide accommodations for assessments routinely used for classroom instruction.

Don't...provide an assessment accommodation for the first time on the day of a test.

Do...select accommodations based on specific individual needs in each content area.

Don't...assume certain accommodations, such as extra time, are appropriate for every student in every content area.

Source: Thompson, et al. 2005, 43.

Tool 4: Accommodations



Items related to technology-based platforms are denoted with the symbol of a computer mouse throughout this tool.

Adaptive furniture

Some students benefit from the use of adaptive or special furniture (for example, for sitting upright) during instruction or assessment. Other students find it helpful to use a slant board or wedge to minimize eye strain and provide a better work surface.

Adaptive writing tools

While responding to instructional or assessment content, some students need assistance constructing narrative text. There are a number of methods for assisting students in generating narrative responses. Spelling and grammar devices can be used in both a paper and computer environment.

E.g., Writing tools include larger diameter pencil and pencil grip.



A student may type on a word processor or alternate keyboard. Assistive technology that can be used for typing includes customized keyboards, mouth or headstick or other pointing devices, sticky keys, touch screen, and trackball. Speech-to-text conversion or voice recognition allows students to use their voices as input devices. Voice recognition may be used to dictate text into the computer or to give commands to the computer (e.g., opening application programs, pulling down menus, or saving work).

Additional examples

To better understand a task or assessment item, some students need to have additional examples provided.

E.g., In a paper-based instructional or assessment environment, teachers may supply additional examples to assist the student.



In a computer-based environment, pre-defined examples for instructional content or assessment items can be programmed and accessed by the student as needed.

Alternate location

In some circumstances, distractions for an individual student or for a group of students can be reduced by altering the location in which an individual student interacts with instructional materials or assessment content. For students who are easily distracted by the presence of other students, an alternate location accommodation allows the student to work individually or in small groups. Changes may also be made to a student's location within a room, such as away from windows, doors, or pencil sharpeners. Sitting near the teacher's desk or in the front of a classroom may be helpful for some students.

Physically enclosed classrooms (classrooms with four walls) may be more appropriate than open classrooms, and study carrels might also be helpful. Some students may benefit from being in an environment that allows for movement such as being able to walk around. In some instances, students may need to interact with instructional or assessment content outside of school, such as in a hospital or their home. The use of some accommodations, such as a human reader, sign interpreter or scribe, can distract other students. In addition, some students may perform better when they can read content aloud and think out loud or make noises that may be distracting to other students. To reduce distractions to other students when these strategies and/or accommodations are provided, an alternate location must be employed.

E.g., Provide a different location within the classroom or a different room.

- **Caution:** When providing a different location within the classroom or a different room, care must be taken to ensure that security of assessment materials is maintained.

Audio amplification

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

E.g., Use headphones or assess in a separate room.

Audio description of content

Students with vision needs may need assistance accessing instructional or assessment content represented graphically. Access to graphics for students with vision needs is often provided through auditory descriptions of tables, pictures, and graphics.

E.g., Readers should use even inflection so that the student does not receive any cues by the way the information is read. It is important for readers to describe graphics and other symbols exactly as they appear. Readers may not clarify, elaborate, or provide assistance to students. Readers need to be familiar with the terminology and symbols specific to the content. This is especially important for high school mathematics and science. Graphic materials may be described but should also be made available in print or tactile formats.



Provide pre-recorded human voice recordings or synthesized voice recordings of descriptions of mathematics and science symbols and nomenclature and other graphics. Students benefit by listening to a fully approved, standardized human voice, assuring correct pronunciation of words, symbols, and equations. The system should allow students to decide when they want to hear the text read to them, and allow them to play sound clips repeatedly.

Auditory calming

For students who focus better when receiving auditory input, background music or sounds can be provided while they access and interact with content.

E.g., Auditory calming can be provided by CD or mp3 player with headphones.



Background music and sounds can be embedded into the system, so no extra hardware is needed, and there are no concerns about monitoring the content.

Braille and tactile graphics

Braille is a method of reading a raised-dot code with the fingertips. Not all students who are blind read Braille fluently or choose Braille as their primary mode of reading. Even if they use it as their primary mode of reading, Braille users should also build skills in using audiotope, compact discs, and speech synthesis.

When auditory descriptions of graphics either violate the construct being measured or are cumbersome for a student to process, tactile overlays can be used to assist the student in accessing content through touch.

E.g., Decisions also need to be made about whether a student will use contracted or uncontracted Braille. Check to see if practice assessments are available in Braille. If instructional tasks or assessments are timed, a Braille user may need additional time to complete the task.

Tactile graphic images provide graphic information through fingers instead of eyes. Graphic material (e.g., maps, charts, graphs, diagrams, illustrations) is presented in a raised format (paper or thermoform). Tactile sensitivity (recognizing graphic images through touch) is less discriminating than visual reading, making many diagrams too complicated to understand without significant additional information. Additional information can be created through picture/word descriptions.

Brailier

A Brailier is a Braille keyboard used for typing Braille that can then be printed in standard print or Braille (embosser). The Brailier is similar to a typewriter or computer keyboard. Paper is inserted into the Brailier and multiple keys are pressed at once, creating Braille dots with each press.



Through an alternative computer port, newer Brailiers can simultaneously act as a speech synthesizer that reads the text displayed on the screen when paired with a screen reading program.

Breaks

Breaks may be given at predetermined intervals or after completion of assignments, assessments, or activities. Sometimes a student is allowed to take breaks when individually needed.

E.g., In a paper-based environment, assessment booklets can be divided into shorter sections so students can take a break between sections of an assessment (sometimes referred to as “short segment assessment booklets”).



In a computer-based environment, the number of items per session can be flexibly defined based on the student’s need. If the length of a break is predetermined, a timer might be used to signal the end of the break.

Calculation assistance

If a student’s disability affects mathematics calculation but not reasoning, a calculator or other assistive device, such as an abacus, arithmetic table, manipulatives, or number chart, may be used.

E.g., 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. In some cases, calculators may be adapted with large keys or voice output (talking calculators). In other cases, an abacus may be useful for students when mathematics problems are to be calculated without a calculator. The abacus functions as a paper and pencil device for students with visual impairments.



In a computer-based environment, calculators can be embedded into the delivery system and can be magnified and use read aloud features.

Clarify/Repeat directions

To accurately understand the task a student is being asked to engage in, some students need to have directions to a task or an assessment simplified.

E.g., In a paper-based environment, teachers may clarify directions through restatement or simplification of language for the student.



In a computer-based environment, directions can be re-read to students and access to a simplified version of directions can be provided to students.

Change in the order of activities

Assessments and activities that require focused attention could be scheduled for the time of day when a student is most likely to demonstrate peak performance. To reduce fatigue and increase attention, activities or assessments can be administered over multiple days—completing a portion each day.

Color contrast

Some students with visual needs are better able to view information through color contrast.

E.g., Students can choose from a variety of color transparencies, which are placed over the content. Alternatively, content can be printed using different colors.



A content or assessment delivery system could allow students to alter the contrast in which content is presented in the following ways:

- **Color overlays:** Students can choose from a variety of color tints that are placed over the content, questions, and directions.
- **Reverse contrast:** Students reverse the colors for the entire interface.
- **Color chooser:** Students change the font and background colors for the content. Students pick the font and background color combinations that help them perceive text-based content. This differs from color overlays in that only the text and background colors change. Lines and graphics are not affected by the color changes.

Note that these alterations in contrast may not always work well together.

Dictionary/Glossary

To understand instructional or assessment content, some students may need to look up words in a dictionary, glossary, or thesaurus.

E.g., In a paper-based environment, students are provided with standard English dictionary, glossary, or thesaurus.



A computer-based content and delivery system could embed dictionary, glossary, and thesaurus terms in the content for students to access as needed.

Extended time

Extended time may require a student's IEP team to determine a fairly specific amount of extra time to complete assignments, projects, and assessments.

E.g., For timed assessments, a standard extension may be time and one-half. This means that a student is allowed 90 minutes to take an assessment that normally has a 60-minute limit. Double time may also be allowed. Decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis, keeping in mind the type of accommodations being provided, the disability involved, and the type of assignments, assessments, and activities. Usually "unlimited" time is not appropriate or feasible. Sometimes students who request extended time end up not needing it because of the reduction in anxiety of simply knowing that plenty of

time is available. Students who have too much time may lose interest and motivation to do their best work.

Highlighting/Markers/Visual cues

Highlighting, using markers, and providing visual cues can draw attention to key content.

E.g., Teachers or students may use markers, arrows, stickers, or highlighters to draw attention to key words in directions, content, or assessment items.



In a computer-based content and delivery system, visual cues such as arrows, markers, and highlighting can be pre-defined and activated at the teacher's or student's request. In computer-based assessment, these accommodations are student-selected only.

Large print/Magnification

Students with visual impairments or other print disabilities may need assistance viewing content. Access for students with visual needs is typically provided through enlarging or magnifying content.

- **Caution:** When enlarging content, avoid enlarging measurement items or objects that are to be measured, as this changes the content being presented and could result in an inaccurate response.

E.g., Large print: Large print editions of instructional materials and assessments are required for some students with visual impairments or print disabilities. It is recommended that regular print materials be manipulated to reformat assessment items and enlarge or change the font as needed. All text and graphic materials—including labels and captions on pictures, diagrams, maps, charts, exponential numbers, notes, and footnotes—must be presented in at least 18-point type for students who need large print. Students, working with their teachers, need to find an optimal print size and determine the smallest print that can still be read. (Copyright issues may need to be addressed). It is important for the print to be clear, with high contrast between the color of the print and the color of the background.

Magnification: Students may use a magnifying glass or other projection device that allows them to magnify instructional or assessment content.



A content- or assessment-delivery system could allow students to manipulate the size with which text and graphics are presented on the screen. It is important that the system is able to clearly enlarge all material, including narrative text, formulas and equations, information presented in scientific and mathematical nomenclature, tables, graphs, charts, figures, and diagrams. The system should also provide tools that allow students to either view material in

magnified form on an occasional/as-needed basis or on a more permanent basis. Students should be provided the option of enlarging content at least eight fold. The system should also allow students to easily move content that is forced off the screen into viewing mode. The system should also allow magnifying tools to work in conjunction with other accessibility tools and/or accommodations provided. Finally, students should have the option of enlarging the entire assessment interface, including navigation buttons, menu options, and directions, or only instructional or assessment content.

Masking/Templates

A common technique for focusing a student's attention on a specific part of an assessment item is provided by masking. Masking involves blocking off content that is not of immediate interest to the student.

E.g., Students may use a variety of methods to mask content, including masking templates, sticky notes, rulers or straight-edges, or blank sheets of paper.



A digital content delivery system may include tools that allow students to mask or hide portions of instructional or assessment content, as well as the interface, so that the student can focus on content that is of immediate interest. For an assessment, masking tools should allow students to cover and reveal individual answer options and all navigational buttons and menus. Tools should also be available that allow students to create custom masks that simulate the placement of sticky notes over any sized area of the screen (e.g., a graphic, chart, table, or narrative block of text). Students should be able to move, hide, and reposition any masking element placed on the screen.

Minimize distractions

While students are accessing and interacting with information presented in instructional or assessment content, some students need help reducing distractions and/or maintaining focus.

E.g., A teacher or proctor can highlight information, employ visual cues, organizers, monitor placement of responses, and prompt students. Altering the environment in which a student works on instructional or assessment content can reduce distractions to the student or to classmates.



A content and assessment delivery system could have pre-defined highlighting, cues or organizers that can be revealed when a student requests them. The system could be programmed to prompt students after a pre-defined number of minutes have elapsed since a student interacted with the item. Computer application of these methods to maintain focus standardizes delivery, decreases the burden on teachers and proctors, and empowers the student to access the tools when needed.

Multiple breaks, extended time, and changing the order of activities are also tools to help students maintain focus and can be managed manually on paper or programmed into a computer-based environment. In addition, a student may wear buffers, such as earphones, earplugs, or headphones to reduce distractions and improve concentration.

Multiple or frequent breaks

Breaks may be given at predetermined intervals or after completion of assignments, assessments, or activities. Sometimes a student is allowed to take breaks when individually needed.

E.g., Assessment booklets can be divided into shorter sections so students can take a break between sections of an assessment (sometimes referred to as “short segment assessment booklets”).



The number of items per session can be flexibly defined based on the student’s need. If the length of a break is predetermined, a timer might be used to signal the end of the break.

Read aloud of text

Students with reading-related disabilities may need assistance accessing instructional or assessment content by having all or portions of the content read aloud.

- **Caution:** This accommodation is not allowed on reading portions of statewide assessments. Additionally, this accommodations is not appropriate for local and district-wide assessments that measure reading capacity.



In a computer-based environment, a content and assessment delivery system could allow students to have text read aloud while being highlighted. Students should be able to select pieces of text to have it re-read when requested. A screen reader may also be utilized to read all information on a computer screen. This tool may be very helpful for instruction.

E.g., A qualified person may be provided to read orally to students who are unable to decode text visually. Readers should use even inflection so that the student does not receive any cues by the way the information is read. It is important for readers to read text word for word exactly as written. Readers may not clarify, elaborate, or provide assistance to students. Readers need to be familiar with the terminology and symbols specific to the content. This is especially important for high school mathematics and science. Readers should be provided to students on an individual basis—not to a group of students. A student should have the option of asking a reader to slow down or repeat text. This cannot occur when a person is reading to an entire group of students.



Provide pre-recorded human voice recordings or synthesized voice recordings for reading directions and assessment items to students. Students benefit by listening to a fully approved, standardized human voice or synthesized voice recordings that have been vetted for correct pronunciation, assuring accurate presentation of words, symbols, and equations. The system should allow students to decide when they want to hear the text read to them, and allow them to play sound clips repeatedly. All components of the delivery interface containing text, such as buttons, menu options, and directions, should have read-aloud available for them.

Response assistance

For some students, responding to instructional or assessment content with text interferes with the construct being measured.

E.g., Audio recording: For students who have difficulty generating text in written form, a recording device may also be used to create an audio recording of a student's narrative response. The oral response can be recorded as an analog or digital file.

Monitor responses: Students who are able to use bubbled answer sheets may benefit from having an adult simply monitor the placement of their responses to ensure they are actually responding to the intended question.

Page turner: The student receives assistance turning the pages of the assessment booklet.

Responding in assessment booklet: This accommodation allows a student to write directly in an assessment booklet rather than on an answer sheet (e.g., scannable "bubble" sheet).

Pointing: Students who are not able to respond to items in an answer sheet or an assessment booklet can point to responses and a proctor then translates this response onto an answer sheet.

Scribe: A scribe is a skilled person who has been trained to write down what a student dictates by an assistive communication device, pointing, sign language, or speech. A scribe may not edit or alter student work in any way and must record word for word exactly what the student has dictated. The student must be able to edit what the scribe has written. Individuals who serve as a scribe need to carefully prepare to assure they know the vocabulary involved and understand the boundaries of the assistance to be provided. The role of the scribe is to write only what is dictated, no more and no less.



Assistive communication devices: For students who have difficulty manipulating a mouse or standard keyboard, there are a variety of assistive

communication devices that allow them to control a computer program and record responses. These assistive communication devices include Intellikeys, sip-and-puff devices, single switch devices, eye tracking devices, and touch screens. A computer-based content and assessment delivery system could be programmed to function accurately with any and all assistive communication devices.



Speech-to-text software: Speech-to-text conversion or voice recognition allows students to use their voices as input devices. Voice recognition may be used to dictate text into the computer or to give commands to the computer (e.g., opening application programs, pulling down menus, or saving work). Older voice recognition applications require each word to be separated by a distinct space. This allows the machine to determine where one word begins and the next stops. This style of dictation is called discrete speech. Continuous speech voice recognition allows students to dictate text fluently into the computer. These new applications can recognize speech at up to 160 words per minute.

Digital recording: For students who have difficulty generating text in written form, a recording device may also be used to create an audio recording of a student's narrative response. The oral response can be recorded as a digital file by a computer-based content or assessment delivery system.

Sign interpretation

Some students who are deaf or hard of hearing may need assistance accessing text-based instructional or assessment content. Access for these students is typically provided through sign language.

E.g., In a paper-based environment, access to content is provided by having a teacher sign content to an individual student or to a group of students in either ASL or Signed English. Sometimes an interpreter is only needed or allowed to sign instructions and to assist in communication. Some students may need all print materials interpreted while learning to read print. Interpreters need to be able to translate in the same method of sign language typically used by the student (e.g., American Sign Language, Cued Speech). Interpreters must not paraphrase, clarify, elaborate, or provide assistance with the meaning of words, intent of assessment questions, or responses to assessment items. Graphic materials may be described but should also be available in print or tactile formats. A standard video presentation of an assessment in sign language may be used to increase quality, consistency, pacing, and accuracy.



In a computer-based environment, a content and assessment delivery system could allow students to have text signed by an avatar or video of human signing. The video and the assessment content can be viewed in close proximity to each other and to the student. Students can also be provided with individualized control over the size of the video displayed on their computer

screen. Segments of video can also be linked to blocks of text or portions of an item (e.g., each answer option) such that a student can click on the text and the associated video is played automatically. Students may view portions of a video as many times as needed.

Special paper

Some students may benefit from having additional paper available to use during instruction or an assessment. This paper may be blank (scratch), lined, graph, or other paper as needed.

E.g., If paper is provided during an assessment, care must be taken not to violate the security of the assessment. All paper should be collected at the end of the assessment.



In a computer-based environment, a content and delivery assessment system could allow for electronic special paper to be accessed as part of the online platform. In some cases, however, students may require access to paper outside of the assessment platform. In these cases, paper must be collected at the end of the assessment.

Spelling/Grammar device/Word prediction software

While responding to instructional or assessment content, some students need assistance constructing narrative text.

- Caution: Often this is not allowed on tasks or assessments measuring spelling and/or grammar skills.

E.g., Spelling and grammar can be checked with pocket spell checkers. Students enter an approximate spelling and then see or hear the correct spelling or correct use of a word.



Students who use a word processor may be allowed to use a spell-check or other electronic spelling device. Spell-check and grammar-checking devices may need to be turned off for writing assessments. Students who have difficulty producing text due either to the speed with which they are able to enter keystrokes or who have difficulty with language recall may benefit from word prediction software. Word prediction software presents students with word options based on the partial input of characters and/or context and can be built in to a computer-based content delivery system.

Adapted from Christensen, et al. 2011, 34-50.

Appendices

Appendix One: Legal Requirements

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) contains four main educational reform pillars:

1. Stronger accountability for results
2. More freedom for states and communities
3. Proven educational methods
4. More choices for parents

Stronger accountability for achievement results is the goal most commonly associated with inclusion of all students in assessment. ESEA explicitly states that high-quality, yearly student academic assessments be the same academic assessments used to measure the achievement of all children (20 USC § 6311 (b) (3) (C) (i)).

ESEA requires that each state allows appropriate accommodations for ELLs on state academic assessments.

From 20 USC § 6311 (b) (3) (C) (ix) (III):

[Such assessments shall provide for] the inclusion of limited English proficient students who shall be assessed in a valid and reliable manner and provided reasonable accommodations on assessments administered to such students under this paragraph, including, to the extent practicable, assessments in the language and form most likely to yield accurate and reliable information on what such students know and can do in academic content areas, until such students have achieved English language proficiency as determined under paragraph (7).

A limited English proficient student or ELL is defined under ESEA as:

From 20 USC § 7801 (25)

...an individual who is aged 3 through 21; who is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary or secondary school; who is not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English; who is a Native American or Alaska Native, or a native resident of the outlying areas and who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English proficiency; or who is migratory, whose native language is a language other than English, and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; and whose difficulty in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual:

- i. The ability to meet the State's proficient level of achievement on State assessments described in section 6311 (b) (3);*
- ii. The ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or*

iii. *The opportunity to participate fully in society.*

ESEA also requires that each state allows appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities.

From 20 USC § 6311 (b) (3) (C) (ix) (II):

[Such assessments shall provide for] the reasonable adaptations and accommodations for students with disabilities (as defined under Section 602 (3) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [20 USC § 1401 (3)]) necessary to measure the academic achievement of such students relative to State academic content and State student academic achievement standards.

In April 2007, the U.S. Department of Education released regulations on alternate assessments based on modified achievement standards. These regulations 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 taking an assessment with an accommodation that invalidates the score would not be reported as a participant under the IDEA (U.S. Department of Education 2007, 17750).

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a federal law governing services to children with disabilities. IDEA defines a student with a disability as a child with:

From 20 USC § 1401 (3) (A):

...intellectual disabilities, hearing impairment (including deafness), speech or language impairments, visual impairments (including blindness), serious emotional disturbance (referred to in this title as 'emotional disturbance'), orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, or specific learning disabilities; and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services.

Accountability of students with disabilities is maintained on an individual basis through individualized education program (IEPs), which are developed for each student's distinct needs. IDEA requires that students with disabilities participate in statewide assessments and that each student's IEP state which accommodations the student shall receive for those assessments.

From 20 USC § 1412 (a) (16) (A):

All children with disabilities are included in all general State and district-wide assessment programs, including assessments described under section 6311 of this title, with appropriate accommodations and alternate assessments where necessary and as indicated in their respective individualized education programs.

From 20 USC § 1414 (d) (1) (A) (i) (VI):

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 appropriate accommodations necessary to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the child on State and district-wide assessments.

Section 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a federal law protecting individuals with disabilities from discrimination. Section 504 states:

From 29 USC § 794 (a):

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.

Individuals with disabilities include students with disabilities who attend schools receiving Federal financial assistance. A ‘disability’ with respect to students with disabilities covered under Section 504 means:

From 42 USC § 12102 (1):

- i. a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of such individual;*
- ii. a record of such an impairment; or*
- iii. being regarded as having such an impairment.*

Major life activities include, but are not limited to, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and working (42 USC § 12102 (2) (A)). This definition of a disability is broader than the definition under IDEA, and thus all students covered by IDEA are also covered by Section 504. This also means that not all students covered by Section 504 are covered by IDEA.

Examples of a student who is covered under Section 504 but not IDEA include a student with:

- Communicable diseases
- Allergies or asthma
- Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
- Drug or alcohol addictions, if the student is not currently using illegal drugs
- Temporary disabilities due to an accident

Wisconsin State Statutes

Wisconsin State Statutes oversee how instructional accommodations are used for students with disabilities in the school through IEP regulations. A specific requirement of IEPs in Wisconsin includes:

From s.115.787 (2) (c), Wis. Stats.:

A statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services, based on peer-reviewed research to the extent practicable, to be provided to the child, or on behalf of the child, and a statement of program modifications or supports for school personnel that will be provided for the child to do all of the following:

- 1. Advance appropriately toward attaining the annual goals.*
- 2. Be involved and make progress in the general curriculum in accordance with par. (a) and participate in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities.*
- 3. Be educated and participate with other children with disabilities and nondisabled children in the activities described in this subsection.*

Students with disabilities are defined under Wisconsin State Statute as:

From s.115.76 (3) and s.115.76 (5) (a), Wis. Stats.

...any person who is at least 3 years old but not yet 21 years old and who has not graduated from high school...who, by reason of any of the following, needs special education and related services:

- 1. Cognitive disabilities.*
- 2. Hearing impairments.*
- 3. Speech or language impairments.*
- 4. Visual impairments.*
- 5. Emotional behavioral disability.*
- 6. Orthopedic impairments.*
- 7. Autism.*
- 8. Traumatic brain injury.*
- 9. Other health impairments.*
- 10. Learning disabilities.*

Furthermore, a student with disabilities may also, with the local education agency's approval, be a student who, because of his or her significant developmental delay, requires Special Education and related services (s. 115.76 (5) (b), Wis. Stats.).

Wisconsin State Statutes also regulate how assessment accommodations are used for both ELLs and students with disabilities. State Statute allowing for accommodations on statewide assessments for students with disabilities:

From s.115.77 (1m) (bg), Wis. Stats.:

Includes children with disabilities in statewide and local educational agency-wide assessments, including assessments described in 20 USC § 6311 (b) (3), with appropriate accommodations and alternate assessments where necessary and as indicated in their individualized education programs.

State Statute allowing for accommodations on statewide assessments for English language learners:

From s.118.30 (2) (b) 2, Wis. Stats.:

According to criteria established by the state superintendent by rule, the school board, operator of the charter school under s. 118.40 (2r), or governing body of the private school participating in the program under s. 119.23 may determine not to administer an examination under this section to a limited-English speaking pupil, as defined under s. 115.955 (7), may permit the pupil to be examined in his or her native language or may modify the format and administration of an examination for such pupils.

Wisconsin State Statute defines an ELL or a limited-English proficient pupil as follows:

From s.115.955 (7), Wis. Stats.:

“Limited English proficient pupil” means a pupil whose ability to use the English language is limited because of the use of a non-English language in his or her family or in his or her daily, nonschool surroundings, and who has difficulty, as defined by rule of the state superintendent, in performing ordinary classwork in English as a result of such limited English language proficiency.

Appendix Two: Benchmark or Interim Assessments, ACCESS for ELLs[®], and NAEP

Benchmark or Interim Assessments

Districts are responsible for following a student's educational plan when making accommodation decisions for district benchmark or interim assessments. This process should follow the decision-making steps for instructional accommodations as outlined in Section Two. Educators should be cognizant that depending on the purpose of the assessment, format, and vendor each assessment may have accommodation limitations.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), also known as the Nation's Report Card, is the only nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America's students know and can do in school. Since 1969, NAEP has provided valuable information on student achievement to policymakers, educators, and the general public. The National Center for Education Statistics in the U.S. Department of Education is responsible by law for carrying out the NAEP project. The National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB), appointed by the Secretary of Education but independent of the Department, sets policy for NAEP and is responsible for developing the frameworks and test specifications that serve as the blueprint for the assessments.

NAEP is a survey assessment. It provides results for populations and groups of students. It is not a testing program designed to provide individual student, school or district results (except for a number of districts participating in NAEP's Trial Urban District Assessment program).

There are two types of NAEP assessments that are administered on alternating years: Main NAEP and Long-Term Trend/Special Studies.

The current policy of NAEP is described as follows:

The NAEP program has always endeavored to assess all students selected as a part of its sampling process. In all NAEP schools, accommodations will be provided as necessary for students with disabilities (SD) and/or English language learners (ELL) or limited English proficient (LEP) students. (ELL is the term used since the NAEP 2005 reports; LEP was used before 2005.) The accommodations are available to students whose Individualized Education Program (IEP) specifically requires them. Because some ELL students do not have an IEP, decisions about accommodations for these students are typically made by knowledgeable school staff (U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics 2010).

For specific NAEP accommodation information please visit:
<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/inclusion.asp>.

ACCESS for ELLs®

ACCESS for ELLs® stands for Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners. It is a large-scale test that first and foremost addresses the English language development standards that form the core of Wisconsin's approach to instructing and testing English language learners. These standards incorporate a set of model performance indicators (PIs) that describe the expectations educators have of ELL students at five different grade level clusters and in five different content areas.

ACCESS for ELLs® assesses language proficiency and does not assess content area knowledge, unlike the WKCE which assesses a student's comprehension in the content area.

The grade level clusters include K, 1-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. There are five content areas of the standards. The first is called social and instructional language (SI), which incorporates proficiencies needed to deal with the general language of the classroom and the school. The others are English language arts (LA), mathematics (MA), science (SC), and social studies (SS).

For each grade cluster, then, the standards specify one or more performance indicators for each content area within each of the four language domains: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. The continuum of language development within the five proficiency levels is:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Entering	Beginning	Developing	Expanding	Bridging

These levels describe the spectrum of a learner's progression from knowing little to no English to acquiring the English skills necessary to be successful in an English-only mainstream classroom without extra support. This final, exit stage for ELL status is designated Level 6 (formerly ELL). Level 7 is used for students who are native English speakers or who have never been designated as ELL. Within each combination of grade level, content area, and language domain, there is a PI at each of the five points on the proficiency ladder, and the sequence of these five PIs together describe a logical progression and accumulation of skills on the path to full proficiency.

The goal of the ACCESS for ELLs® test is to allow students to demonstrate their level of language proficiency.

ACCESS for ELLs Guidelines for Accommodating English Language Learners with Disabilities can be found at

<http://www.wida.us/assessment/ACCESS/accommodations.aspx>.

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Glossary

Accommodations are practices and procedures that provide equitable access to grade-level content. Accommodations are intended to reduce or eliminate the effects of a student’s disability or level of language acquisition; they do not reduce learning expectations. Accommodations are for students with disabilities and students who are English language learners; they do not change the content or the required skill level of a lesson, activity or test.

Allowable test practices increase the accessibility of assessments for all students, as needed, and provide additional supports during instruction. As with accommodations, allowable test practices do not alter the content being measured.

Alternate assessment is a substitute way of gathering information on the performance and progress of students who cannot participate, even with accommodations, in general state or district assessment programs. Alternate assessments provide a mechanism for all students to be included in the accountability system (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction 2010a, 46).

Benchmark assessment or **interim assessment** occurs within, between, and among instructional units. Information is used to identify strengths and gaps in curriculum and instruction. Grade-level curriculum may be refined, and teachers may modify instruction for student groups based on their performance or progress. These assessments might be teacher-developed products, or they may be purchased commercially. When using a commercial product, it is important to examine the types of questions used and the links to state standards. Examples of benchmark assessments include midterm and end-of-unit assessments, district-wide assessments such as 6-Trait® writing, specific reading inventories, or products such as MAP®, SCANTRON®, or ThinkLink™. The focus of benchmark assessment is to determine how student groups are progressing or how well a program is working (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Office of Educational Accountability 2009, 1).

Construct is the concept or the characteristic that a test is designed to measure (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction 2010a, 46).

Content standard is a statement describing the knowledge and skills in a content area (e.g., Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, or Social Studies) that should be met at a specified time (e.g., end of grade). National content standards are published by groups such as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and the International Reading Association/National Council of Teachers of English. Wisconsin’s content standards are titled “Wisconsin Model Academic Standards” (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction 2010a, 47).

Differentiated instruction is culturally and linguistically appropriate instruction and reflects a dynamic adjustment to student needs such as readiness, interest, or learning style. It is an instructional concept that maximizes learning for *all* students, regardless of

skill level or background. When additional supports are necessary due to a student's disability-related needs or linguistic needs, adding accommodations can provide improved access for that student (Staff Development for Educators 2010 and Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction 2010c, 16).

Formative assessment occurs continuously in the classroom, both within and between lessons. Information is used to adjust teaching strategies. Students receive frequent and meaningful feedback on their performances. Examples of formative assessment strategies include teacher observation, discussion, questioning, and non-graded class work. The focus of formative assessment is to determine what learning comes next for a student (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Office of Educational Accountability 2009, 1).

Individualized education program (IEP) ensures that a student with a disability receives a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE). The IEP is an important legal document written for students with disabilities; developed together through discussion at an IEP team meeting; a communication tool for parents, school, and others; an opportunity for parents and school personnel to work together as equals; and a vehicle for joint planning, problem solving, and decision-making (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction 2010b, iv).

Large-scale assessment typically occurs annually or less-frequently. Information is used to develop strategic, long-term evaluation of curriculum and programming based on trends over time, and to monitor state, district, and school progress. Assessment instruments and procedures are standardized so that comparisons can be made across student groups. Examples of large-scale assessment include the WKCE®, WAA-SwD®, ACT®, SAT®, NAEP™, and AP® exams. The focus of large-scale assessment is to determine how schools, districts, and states are progressing (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Office of Educational Accountability 2009, 1).

Modifications are changes in the content or instructional level of an academic subject or test, possibly changing what is being measured. Modifications are *not* allowed for any student during Wisconsin Student Assessment System (WSAS) testing.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a federal law designed to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive Federal Financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education (ED). Section 504 provides: "No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States...shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance...". (U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights 2009).

Section 504 services are provided to students with disabilities and are appropriate educational services designed to meet the individual needs of such students to the same extent as the needs of students without disabilities are met. An appropriate education for a student with a disability under the Section 504 regulations could consist

of education in regular classrooms, education in regular classes with supplementary services, and/or special education and related services (U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights 2009).

Student with disability means a child with intellectual disabilities, hearing impairment (including deafness), speech or language impairments, visual impairments (including blindness), serious emotional disturbance (referred to in this title as 'emotional disturbance'), orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, or specific learning disabilities; and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services (20 USC § 1401 (3) (A)).

Students protected under Section 504 covers qualified students with disabilities who attend schools receiving federal financial assistance. To be protected under Section 504, a student must be determined to: (1) have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; or (2) have a record of such impairment; or (3) be regarded as having such an impairment (U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights 2009).

Summative assessment refer to large-scale assessment.

Acronyms

ACCESS for ELLS Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners

CCSS Common Core State Standards

CCSSO Council of Chief State School Officers

DPI Department of Public Instruction

ELL English Language Learners

ELP English Language Proficiency

ESL English as a second language

ESEA Elementary and Secondary Education Act

IDEA Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

IEP Individualized Education Program

LEP Limited English Proficient

NAEP National Assessment of Educational Progress

UDL Universal Design for Learning

WSAS Wisconsin Student Assessment System

WKCE Wisconsin's Knowledge Concepts Examination

WAA-SwD Wisconsin Alternate Assessment for Students with Disabilities