



The Kansas Accessibility Manual:

How to Select, Administer and Evaluate Use of Accessibility Supports for Instruction and Assessment of All Students



The Kansas Accessibility Manual: How to Select, Administer and Evaluate Use of Accessibility Supports for Instruction and Assessment of All Students was developed as a guidance document by the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE). It is not an official statement of policy or procedure. If any portion of this document conflicts with law or regulation, the law or regulation takes precedence. The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position of the United States Department of Education, and no endorsement by the United States Department of Education should be inferred.

Please contact our team if you have questions on Kansas assessments or assessment accommodations:

Phone:

- (800) 203-9462
- (785) 296-7454

Fax:

- (785) 291-3791

Website:

<https://www.ksde.org/Agency/Division-of-Learning-Services/Career-Standards-and-Assessment-Services/CSAS-Home/Assessments>

Assessment Coordinator:

Julie Ewing
(785) 296-4349
jewing@ksde.org

Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) and Accommodations:

Cary Rogers
(785) 296-0916
crogers@ksde.org

Address:

KSDE
Special Education and Title Services
900 SW Jackson St., Suite 102
Topeka, KS 66612-1212

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CCSSO
One Massachusetts Avenue, NW,
Suite 700
Washington, DC 20001-1431
Phone: (202) 336-7000
Fax: (202) 408-8072
www.ccsso.org

Assessing Special Education Students State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (ASES SCASS) English Language Learners State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (ELL SCASS)

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Structure of This Document

- Section I:** Background.
- Section II:** The three-tiered approach to accessibility.
- Section III:** The five-step decision-making process.
- Tools:** Tools that educational stakeholders can use to make instructional and assessment content more accessible for all students.
- Appendices:** Details on federal laws, universal features, designated features, accommodations, and glossary of terms and acronyms.

Section I: Background

The Kansas Accessibility Manual: How to Select, Administer and Evaluate Use of Accessibility Supports for Instruction and Assessment of All Students: How to Select, Administer and Evaluate Use of Accessibility Supports for Instruction and the Assessment of All Students establishes guidelines to use for the selection, administration and evaluation of accessibility supports for instruction and assessment of all students, including students with disabilities, English learners (ELs), ELs with disabilities and students without an identified disability or EL status. **Accessibility supports discussed herein include both embedded (digitally-provided) and nonembedded (nondigitally or locally provided) universal features that are available to all students as they access instructional or assessment content, designated features that are available for those students for whom the need has been identified by an informed educator or team of educators, and accommodations that are generally available for students for whom there is documentation on an Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 or ILP.** Approaches to these supports may vary depending on assessment contexts as well as nature of assessments.

The Kansas Accessibility Manual: How to Select, Administer and Evaluate Use of Accessibility Supports for Instruction and Assessment of All Students represents the most current understanding of best practices up to the point of publication. As understanding and research continue to grow around the effective education of all students, this manual will be updated periodically to reflect major shifts in understanding around accessibility.

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Intended Audience and Recommended Use

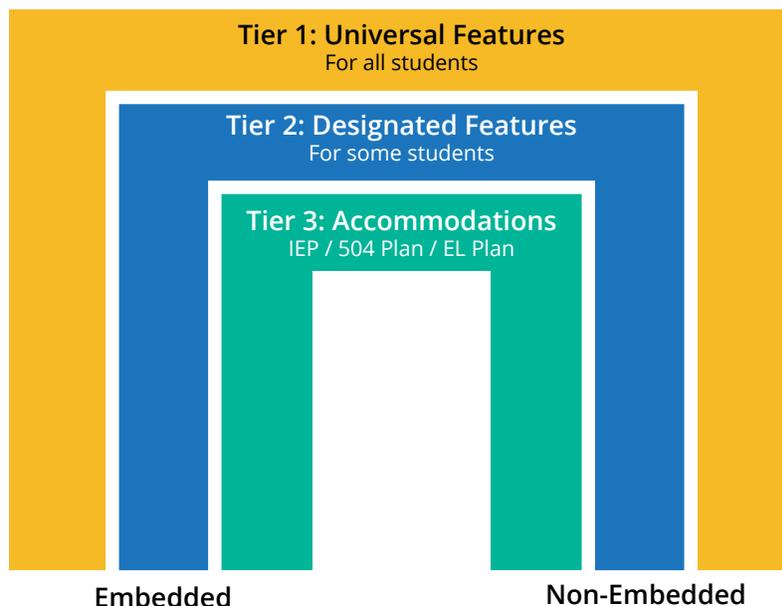
The Kansas Accessibility Manual: How to Select, Administer and Evaluate Use of Accessibility Supports for Instruction and Assessment of All Students is intended for:

- General, English Learner (EL), and special education teachers (e.g., used to find and evaluate instructional and assessment supports for their students).
- School and test administrators, school coordinators and related services personnel (e.g., aid in the effective selection and administration of assessment accessibility supports for each student).
- Assessment staff and administrators (e.g., provide guidance to teachers, test administrators, parents, etc., on options and limitations around specific accessibility supports).
- Parents (e.g., this information may serve as a tool when advocating for accessibility supports and review processes for their student).

The manual emphasizes an individualized approach to the implementation of accessibility practices. It recognizes the critical connection between accessibility supports (features and accommodations) in instruction and during assessments, as well as the iterative nature of reevaluating decisions for more informed decision making as contexts and student needs evolve.

This manual presents a three-tier accessibility framework (see **Figure 1, Tool 1**) of universal features, designated features and accommodations with an understanding that states and other entities may employ different terms for the three tiers. It is important to keep in mind that the same accessibility supports may be considered universal in one assessment and designated as an accommodation in another. This difference usually depends on the construct that is the focus of the assessment or instruction. For example, on an English language proficiency (ELP) assessment, some test items for all ELs might contain a text-to-speech support. Thus, what might be a specific EL support on a content assessment might be part of the default test format on an ELP assessment. Additionally, some accessibility supports allowable on content assessments may be prohibited on ELP or alternate assessments, or vice versa. This manual also includes considerations for students who participate in alternate assessments to assist educators with the process of including this population of students in meaningful educational experiences. The framework is to provide a general understanding of the accessibility supports to consider for instruction in relation to any assessment for the decision-making process.

Figure 1. 3-tier Accessibility Framework



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This manual outlines a five-step decision-making process for administering accessibility supports. Figure 2 highlights the five steps of the process.

Figure 2. 5-Step Decision-Making Process for Administering Accessibility Supports



Recognizing Accessibility Needs for All Students

In the context of new technology-based instruction and assessments, a range of accessibility supports are available to meet their individualized student needs and preferences. These new individualized supports place greater responsibility on educator teams and individuals to make informed decisions about which students need and should receive specific supports among a variety of accessibility choices. Even those features that are universally available for all students may need to be turned off for some students if they have proven to be distracting. Educators need to ensure that students have ample opportunity to practice using accessibility supports or accessing assessment content with only the specified supports that will be available to the student. Accommodation policies for nonstate-run assessments (e.g., ACT) may be developed by the test publishers. Users must adhere to those administration and accommodation policies.

NWEA Accessibility and Accommodations Features and FAQ (MAP) ¹

1 "NWEA (MAP) Accessibility and Accommodations Features and FAQ." KSDE TASN. <https://www.ksdetasn.org/resources/2472>.

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Section II: Three-Tiered Approach to Accessibility

This section highlights the three-tiered approach to accessibility currently employed by many states: universal features, designated features and accommodations. Educators should be mindful that other terms sometimes are used to describe these three tiers (e.g., universal tools, features for all students). It is important to note that certain accessibility supports may belong to different tiers or be prohibited depending on state policies and instructional/assessment implications.



Universal Features

Universal features are accessibility supports that are available to all students as they access instructional or assessment content. They are either embedded and provided digitally through instructional or assessment technology (e.g., answer choice eliminator), or nonembedded and provided nondigitally at the local level (e.g., scratch paper). Tools and Accommodations for the Kansas Assessment Program (KAP) includes universal features currently used on Kansas state assessments as well as their descriptions and recommendations for use.

Making Decisions About Universal Features

Although universal features are available to all students, educators and students may determine that one or more features serve as a distraction and thus decide the feature should be turned off in certain circumstances. Educators need to ensure the appropriate nonembedded universal features are available to meet individual student needs.

Designated Features

Designated features are available for use by any student for whom the need has been indicated by an educator (or team of educators including the parents/guardians and the student if appropriate) who is familiar with the student's characteristics and needs. Embedded designated features (e.g., dictionary) are provided digitally through instructional or assessment technology, while non-embedded designated features (e.g., abacus) are provided locally. Designated features must be assigned using a **consistent process**. Tools and Accommodations for the Kansas Assessment Program (KAP) includes designated features currently used on Kansas state assessments as well as their descriptions and recommendations for use.

Making Decisions About Designated Features

Educators and teams (Individualized Education Program (IEP), 504, or EL), including the student and parents/guardians who are familiar with the student's characteristics and needs, should make decisions about designated features. The Five-Step Decision-Making Process may be used, and all decisions should reflect those supports that the student requires and uses during instruction and for assessments.

Teams might use the PNP planning tool, or other similar tools, to document which designated features and accommodations, if applicable, need to be made available to designated students.

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Accommodations

Accommodations are available to students whose IEP, Section 504 plan, ILP or student improvement plan outlines the need. Accommodations are changes in procedures or materials that ensure equitable access to instructional and assessment content and support valid assessment results for students who require them. They do not reduce expectations for learning. Embedded accommodations (e.g., closed captioning) are provided digitally through instructional or assessment technology, while nonembedded accommodations (e.g., scribe) are provided locally. Tools and Accommodations for the Kansas Assessment Program (KAP) includes accommodation features currently used on Kansas state assessments as well as their descriptions and recommendations for use.

Making Decisions About Designated Features

Educators on a student’s 504, IEP, and/or EL teams, along with parents and the student (if appropriate), make decisions about accommodations. For ELs with disabilities, for example, all teams should come together to provide evidence of the need for accommodations and ensure the needs are noted on the IEP, EL plan and/or 504 plan. A representative from the team should enter information regarding accessibility features and accommodations from the IEP, 504 plan or EL plan into the planning tool ensuring that all needed features and accommodations can be activated for the student. Decisions about tools, supports and accommodations should be part of district, school or classroom processes that prioritize student needs and ensure equity of accessibility for all students.

Consideration for Accessible Educational Materials ²

Tools and Accommodations for the Kansas Assessment Program ³

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2 Consideration for Accessible Educational Materials, TASN (webpage): <https://www.ksdetasn.org/resources/2293>

3 Tools and Accommodations for the Kansas Assessment Program, KSDE (webpage): <https://www.ksde.org/Agency/Division-of-Learning-Services/Career-Standards-and-Assessment-Services/CSAS-Home/Assessments>

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Section III: Five-Step Decision-Making Process

This section describes a five-step process that can be used to make optimal accessibility decisions for students who need accessibility supports for instruction and assessment. The five steps are as follows:

- Step 1: EXPECT** students to Achieve Grade-level Standards.
- Step 2: LEARN** about accessibility supports for instruction and assessment.
- Step 3: SELECT** accessibility supports for instruction and assessment.
- Step 4: ADMINISTER** accessibility supports during instruction and assessment.
- Step 5: EVALUATE** use of accessibility supports in instruction and assessment.

Step 1: **EXPECT** students to Achieve Grade-Level Standards

Academic standards are educational targets outlining what all students are expected to master at each grade level. The expectation of students achieving grade-level standards is reiterated in laws, legal cases, and federal guidelines that require all students be administered assessments intended to hold schools accountable for the academic performance of all students. To provide equal access to grade-level content, some students are provided accessibility supports during instruction and assessment.

Individual educators or teams of educators who are familiar with characteristics and needs of students, along with parents or guardians (and students as appropriate), should make instructional and assessment decisions that prioritize access to grade-level content. Educators are responsible for developing, implementing, and improving accessibility practices for students. Educators serving in the following roles may be involved in making accessibility decisions:

- Special education teachers, IEP or 504 Plan committee representatives, and related service providers.
- English language educators and facilitators
- Assessment officials (test administrators, test coordinators, guidance counselors).
- General education teachers (classroom/content teachers).
- School administrators (principals, school/district officials).

To accomplish the goal of equal access in education, every educator must:

- Know and instruct grade-level standards.
- Be familiar with individual student needs and supports to provide access.
- Collaborate with one another, other educational stakeholders, and parents for successful student access.
- Be familiar with accountability systems at the state and district level.

All students can work toward mastery of grade-level standards, including English language proficiency and should be expected to achieve these standards when the following conditions are met:

1. **Collaboration** between special education teachers, English language teachers and general education teachers results in grade-level differentiated instruction for the diverse/specific population of students they are serving.
2. **Individualized approaches** to instruction and assessment are used, and individualized plans are developed for students who need them.
3. **Appropriate accessibility supports** are provided to ensure all students can access instructional and assessment content.

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INCLUDING ALL STUDENTS IN STATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS

Federal law and guidance, legal cases, and most state laws require that all students be administered assessments intended to hold schools accountable for the academic performance of students. Educators must actively engage in a planning process that addresses:

- Implementation of accessibility supports to facilitate universal student access to grade-level instruction and assessments
- Use of alternate assessments to assess the achievement of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities
- Equitable access to grade-level instruction and English language development services for all EL students.
- Inclusion of ELs in both academic and English language proficiency assessments.

FEDERAL AND STATE LAWS, LEGAL CASES AND FEDERAL GUIDANCE REQUIRING STUDENT PARTICIPATION

To effectively support all students in the classroom, educators should be familiar with federal and state laws, current guidelines and legal cases that regulate student participation in the educational processes. Several important laws require the participation of these students in standards-based instruction and assessment. Some laws solely address students with disabilities; others regulate educational policies and practices exclusively for ELs. Both sets of laws affect the instruction and assessment of ELs with disabilities. [Appendix A](#) highlights federal laws and federal guidance regulating student participation in educational processes.

EQUAL ACCESS TO GRADE-LEVEL CONTENT

All educators must be familiar with current standards and accountability systems at the district and state levels. This knowledge frames a context in which educators are required by law to ensure that all students, including students with disabilities, ELs and ELs with disabilities, work toward grade-level academic content standards; even as ELs are improving their English proficiency. The goal is to provide meaningful differentiated instruction of grade-level content for diverse students through the selection of appropriate accommodations and continual collaboration between EL educators, special educators, and their general education counterparts.

To aid in the goal of equal access to grade-level content, accessibility supports and accommodations must be provided for students during both instruction and assessment. **Accommodations should be used consistently throughout the year in order for accommodations to be used during state assessments.** Only supports utilized throughout instruction should be selected for use in assessments.

CURRENT PRACTICE AND BEYOND

Supported by ongoing educational reform efforts and other initiatives passed by states, the use of assessments for accountability purposes will likely continue in the future.

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Step 2: **LEARN** About Accessibility Supports for Instruction and Assessment

With the evolving development of technology used in instruction and assessment, it is important to learn about supports:

- Find and review your state's policies about appropriate use of supports during assessments.
- Understand the application of Universal Design Principles to instruction and assessment.
- Find and review your state's policies on administrative considerations for state assessments.

Current technology enables computer-based accessibility supports to facilitate individualized educational processes. The purpose is to reduce or eliminate the effects of students' disabilities that prevent them from demonstrating what they know and can do. For a student with a reading disability, a necessary support may be read aloud or text to speech to provide access to grade level text when the instructional objective is focused on comprehension. Read aloud or text to speech would not be an appropriate support when the learning target is decoding text. Accessibility supports provided in the classroom do not reduce expectations for learning. **Accessibility supports empower students with a multitude of choices, enabling them to access instructional and assessment content effectively.**

Accessibility supports provided to a student during state assessments must also be provided during classroom instruction, classroom assessments and district assessments. However, some instructional accessibility supports may not be appropriate for use on certain statewide assessments. In other cases, accessibility supports provided on assessments may be slightly different from those provided in the classroom (e.g., digital note taking on an assessment). **It is important that educators help students become familiar with the supports provided on the assessment so students are not using these tools for the first time on test day.**

It is critical that educators are familiar with state policies about the appropriate use of accessibility supports during assessments. In the age of technology-mediated educational practices, accessibility supports facilitate instruction and assessment of students effectively when they are appropriately selected, used and evaluated for continued effectiveness.

For some individuals, use of accessibility supports may not begin and end in the school setting. Students may utilize similar supports in the library or at home for reading or completing homework. As students become more proficient in areas such as grade-level content or English proficiency, their need for some accessibility supports may decrease. However, all accessibility supports for instruction and assessment are integrally intertwined and should be treated as such.

When determining accessibility supports for state assessments, it is important to remember that ELP, content area and alternate assessments measure different construct knowledge, skills and abilities. For example, a math content area assessment may allow for translation into another language. However, an English language proficiency assessment may not. Therefore, different accessibility supports may be necessary for each assessment. To stay informed, educators should continually research new and existing accessibility support options.

Meaningful collaboration around instruction and accessibility supports among classroom teachers, special education teachers, EL teachers, school administrators, assessment officials, parents, and students will ensure more effective instruction and assessment.

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UNIVERSAL DESIGN IMPLICATIONS

Universal design principles improve access to instruction and assessments for all students. Some formats and methods of presenting content unknowingly inhibit students from fully demonstrating what they know and can do and universal design principles help combat this. In contrast to retrofitting, these principles should be applied and integrated consistently during the initial development of instructional and assessment materials. The following principles of universal design are important for planning and developing accessible materials:

- Inclusion of diverse student populations.
- Precisely defined instructional and assessment constructs.
- Maximally accessible, nonbiased content.
- Compatibility with accommodations.
- Simple, clear and intuitive instructions and procedures.
- Maximum readability, comprehensibility and legibility.

Universal design is not synonymous with computer-based instruction nor online assessments. However, with increased technology capabilities and availability, practices around accommodations and universal design may change. Traditionally, universal design comes first, and accommodations are applied during instruction and assessment as needed. Today, some accommodations are embedded into the design and may be included in the online delivery of instructional and assessment content. This dynamic allows for more universal or designated features to be available as accessibility options for a greater number of students.

ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATIONS FOR INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT

Some administrative resources and strategies, such as scheduling teaching and testing at the time most beneficial to a student, should be allowed for all students, and therefore often are not classified as accessibility features or accommodations. These administrative considerations are often addressed in a test administration manual and should be used whenever possible for all students.

Assessment Resources for the KAP and KELPA:

[KAP](#)⁴ website.

[KELPA](#)⁵ information is available on the KAP website.

DLM resources:

[DLM Kansas](#)⁶ webpage.

[KSDE DLM and Essential Elements](#)⁷ webpage.

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4 KAP website: <https://ksassessments.org>

5 KELPA website: <https://ksassessments.org/educators-test-administrators/kelpa>

6 DLM Kansas Resources webpage: <https://dynamiclearningmaps.org/kansas>

7 KSDE DLM and Essential Elements webpage: <https://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=887>

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MODIFICATIONS IN INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT

Accessibility supports meet specific student needs and enable their work to be a more valid measure of what the student knows and can do. Accessibility supports do not reduce or change learning expectations or standards.

Modifications refer to practices or materials that change, lower, or reduce state-required learning expectations. Modifications may change the underlying construct of an assessment. Examples of modifications include:

- Requiring a student to learn less material (e.g., Fewer objectives)
- Reducing or revising assignments and assessments (e.g., Only complete the easiest questions, remove some of the answer options)
- Using an accessibility support that invalidates the intended construct
- Giving a student hints or clues to the correct responses on assignments and assessments

Providing modifications during classroom instruction and classroom assessments may reduce the opportunity to learn critical content and create unintended inequities. Nevertheless, if modifications are deemed necessary in instruction, students and parents must be made aware that these modifications will not be provided on the state assessments. Please note, when students do not have access to critical, assessed content, they are at risk for not meeting state requirements. **Providing a modification during a state accountability assessment constitutes a test irregularity, invalidates test scores, and results in an investigation of the school's or district's testing practices by the state.**

[KSDE Assessments webpage](#) ⁴

[Kansas Assessment Program \(KAP\) Resources and Training - Assessment Resources](#) ⁸

INSTRUCTIONAL ACCESSIBILITY SUPPORTS

Optimizing the student's educational experiences relies upon educators meeting regularly to coordinate instructional approaches for the student and familiarizing themselves with state policies. Educators should consider:

- Student characteristics and needs.
- Criteria for the student to demonstrate grade-level proficiency of state standards.
- Consistency between accessibility supports for instruction and for assessments.

FOUR QUESTIONS EDUCATORS SHOULD ASK:

1. What are the student's specific instructional and assessment needs?
2. How does the student access to curriculum, instruction, and assessment support the goal of developing student independence?
3. Is there a universal feature the student should **not** have?
4. Does the student need any designated features or accommodations?

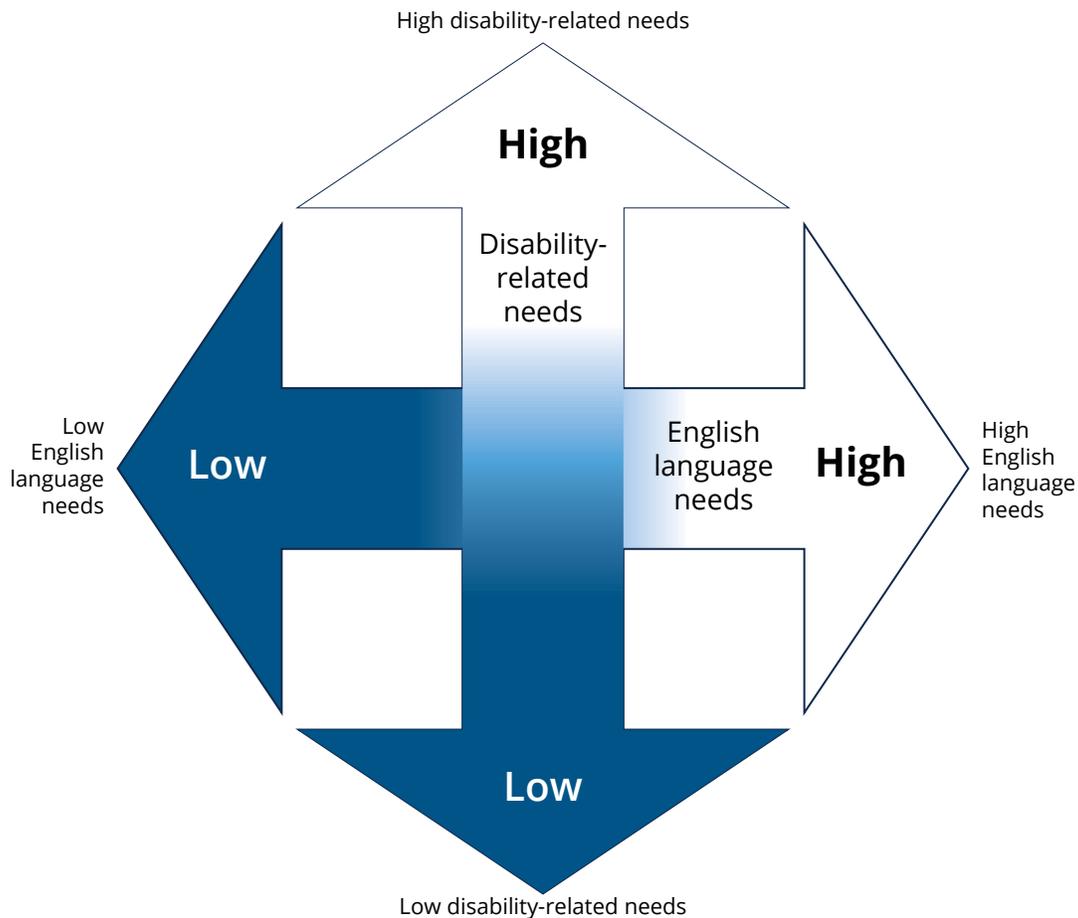
8 KAP Resources (webpage): <https://ksassessments.org/resources>

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The student may not be receiving a needed accessibility support or may be receiving too many. More is not necessarily better. Providing students with unnecessary accessibility supports may negatively impact student performance. A better approach is to focus on the student’s identified needs within the general education curriculum.

One size does not fit all with accessibility supports. To ensure all students are engaged in grade-level instruction, educators should consider individual needs and characteristics when making accessibility decisions. Supports for dually identified students should be approached with both their English language needs and disability needs considered. For example, IEP team members for ELs with disabilities should make individualized accessibility decisions based on the specific language- and disability-related challenges faced by each student (See Figure 3). It is critical to recognize that a student’s needs are not static, but lie on a continuum. Accessibility supports for a student may change as a student’s disability-related or English language needs change.

Figure 3. English Language and Disability-related Needs Affecting Accessibility Decisions



Categories included in this figure are based on Shyyan, Christensen, Touchette, Lightborne, Gholson, and Burton, 2013. Accommodations manual: How to select, administer, and evaluate use of accommodations for instruction and assessment of English language learners with disabilities. Washington, DC: CCSSO.

This approach aims to reiterate that educators should fully account for the complexity of both language and disability implications during the instruction and assessment of ELs with disabilities.

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Step 3: **SELECT** Accessibility Supports for Instruction and Assessment

Effective decision-making around the provision of appropriate accessibility supports begins with appropriate instructional decisions. In turn, optimal instructional decisions are facilitated by gathering and reviewing reliable information about the student's access needs, disability, English language proficiency, and present level of performance in relation to state standards.

Accessibility supports should always be chosen based on distinct individual student characteristics to ensure meaningful and equitable participation in the general curriculum. **Making blanket decisions for groups of students at specific language acquisition levels or with specific disabilities is not appropriate.** When individualized accessibility decisions are made thoughtfully, they can advance equitable opportunities for students to participate in the general education curriculum.

Students' needs, characteristics and even preferences are important criteria to consider when making optimal accessibility decisions. However, other criteria, literacy levels in native language, education received before coming to the U.S. (e.g., evidence of limited or interrupted formal education), time spent in English-speaking schools, resources available in their native language, cultural background, etc., may help educators determine which accessibility supports should be used. It is important to research all accessibility support options but some options may **not** be allowed on certain assessments. For example, a glossary may be allowed on a math assessment but prohibited on an ELP assessment because it has the potential to alter the construct being tested and therefore invalidate the results.

DOCUMENTING ACCESSIBILITY SUPPORTS FOR ALL STUDENTS

To ensure continuous monitoring and improvement of accessibility approaches, educators should both review notes from other educators and document how students use accessibility supports (**Tools 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10**). Educators should also document what universal features (if any) are turned off and which designated features and accommodations are available. This will enable other educators to make more informed decisions based on longitudinal data. Use or create an after-test exit survey (e.g., **Tool 7**) to collect information on the use of accessibility supports to inform instruction and assessment practices.

DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Many factors must be considered when making decisions about providing accessibility supports. Minimally, the following two factors should be considered:

1. Student characteristics (disabilities, language proficiency, previously used accessibility supports, student preferences, etc.).
2. Inclusion needs to access state assessments.
 - a. Knowledge about the type of tasks required so they can be replicated in classroom instruction and assessments.
 - b. Ways to remove barriers to a student's ability to perform those tasks.

If multiple accessibility supports are employed for a student, educators should be aware of possible unintended consequences. For example, the highlighter might change color if the color contrast is turned on.

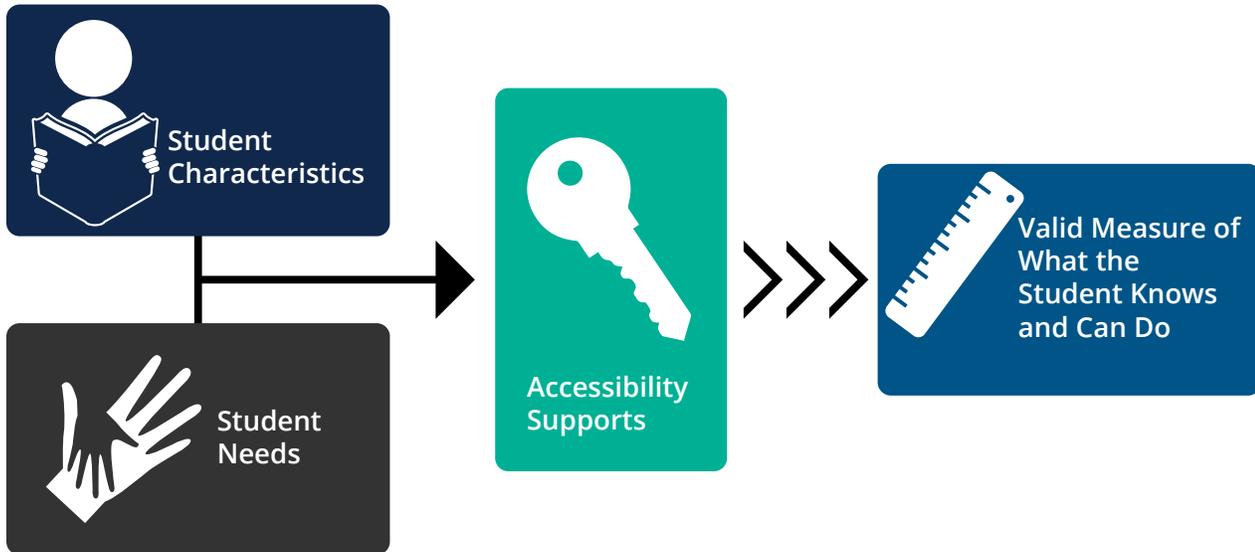
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ACCESSIBILITY SELECTION

Accessibility supports for instruction should be selected based on the individual student's characteristics and student needs (See Figure 4 below). The selected accessibility supports must be used as planned by the team of educators to allow the student to equitably access content during instruction.

Assessment accessibility supports are based on instructional supports as well as specific assessment policies. These work together to allow for a valid measure of what the student knows and can do.

Figure 4. Accessibility Selection



When matching accessibility supports with students' characteristics, educators should consider:

- The student's willingness to learn to use the accessibility support.
- Opportunities to learn to use the accessibility support in classroom settings.
- Conditions for use on district and state assessments.

After considering student characteristics, it is important to examine the inclusion needs during instruction and testing, as well as the types of tasks students are asked to do in the classroom and on state or district assessments. When matching accessibility supports with inclusion needs, educators should consider how the support interacts with:

- The construct of the material for which the student will use the accessibility support.
- Content exposure with varying cognitive complexities and range of difficulty.
- The opportunity to show mastery (according to the achievement or performance level descriptors for the assessment).

Tool 5 is a list of questions that can be used to guide the selection of appropriate accessibility supports for students assigned such supports for the first time and for students currently using such supports. These questions address student characteristics and inclusion needs that may influence which accessibility supports to consider for an individual student.

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INVOLVING STUDENTS IN SELECTING, USING AND EVALUATING ACCESSIBILITY SUPPORTS

It is critical students learn to self-advocate and understand their needs. Informing others of their preferences, particularly in the presence of “*authority figures*,” may be a new task for students. Educators and parents play a key role in developing self-advocacy in the context of selecting, using and evaluating accessibility supports and their combinations by providing guidance and feedback.

Student involvement in the selection process of their accessibility supports provides opportunities to learn self-advocacy skills and independence. Students need these opportunities to learn how to make certain the accessibility supports they need are provided, both in and out of school. Even students with significant cognitive disabilities, many of whom do not have sophisticated expressive communication systems, can show teachers their preferences. For example, when shown two versions of an accommodated graph, students could gesture to the one they like or understand better. It is important to not limit but rather expand feedback options and self-advocacy opportunities for students, especially those who cannot communicate preferences in traditional ways.

PRIOR USE OF ACCESSIBILITY SUPPORTS

Students are most successful with accessibility supports when they have used the supports and are comfortable with them prior to the test. **Accessibility supports should not be used for the first time on a state test.** Educators are encouraged to implement accessibility supports during instruction and local assessments before the state assessment is administered. Plan time for:

- Students to learn and investigate new accessibility supports.
- Students to learn how to use and practice embedded and non-embedded accessibility supports. For embedded supports, there may be practice or sample items or tutorials for students to experience prior to test administration.

[KAP Practice Test Guide for Educators](#) ⁹

[DLM Guide to Practice and Released Testlets](#) ¹⁰

- Evaluation and improvement of the use of accessibility supports both before and after the state assessment (**Tools 6 and 7**).

ACCESSIBILITY SUPPORTS FOR INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT

On some assessments, accessibility supports may be presented differently from their variations used during instruction. Teachers should make sure students are informed of these differences and provide opportunities to practice the different accessibility supports prior to the test. This is particularly important for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who may need extra preparation for taking online assessments.

If the accessibility support is considered a necessary step in scaffolding grade-level content instruction, practicing classroom work without the support helps gauge student progress independent of the support. This provides students with opportunities to practice not using the support before the state assessment. If the instructional accessibility support is more permanent in nature and not permitted on a state or district assessment, the educator team should consider whether the accessibility support alters what the test measures.

9 KAP Practice Test Guide for Educators (PDF):
https://ksassessments.org/sites/default/files/documents/Kite/Practice_Test_Guide_for_Educators.pdf

10 DLM Guide to Practice Activities and Released Testlets: English Language Arts, Mathematics and Science (PDF):
<https://dynamiclearningmaps.org/node/757>

STRUCTURE OF THIS DOCUMENT

VALID MEASURE OF WHAT THE STUDENT KNOWS AND CAN DO

When selecting accessibility supports for state assessments, it is important to understand the accessibility policies that maintain the validity of the results of an assessment and to know the consequences of support selection and use decisions. If educators determine that a student should use an allowed accessibility support during an assessment but the student refuses to use the support, the validity of the measurement results about what the student knows and can do may be compromised. For example, educators should also be aware that validity implications are different for ELP assessments than for content assessments such as providing a translation of the test content versus providing a translation of test directions. Accessibility supports, therefore, should be selected in accordance with whether language proficiency or content area knowledge is being tested.

Consideration of longer-term consequences is important as well. For example, as students begin to make postsecondary choices, the accessibility supports used may factor into the accessibility options that best prepare them for their future. Educators may want to discuss whether or how this affects decisions about accessibility for instruction and assessments. The team (educators, parents, and students) should plan how and when the student will learn to use each new accessibility support and ensure ample time for practice before an assessment takes place. They should also plan for the ongoing evaluation of the student's use of accessibility features and, if applicable, how and when the student is to become independent of the support.

The following tools provide additional information on this step.

- Tool 2:** Questions to Ask When Selecting Accessibility Supports
- Tool 3:** Accessibility Supports from the Student's Perspective
- Tool 4:** Parent Input on Accessibility Supports
- Tool 5:** Accessibility Selection Questions for Teams
- Tool 6:** Accessibility Supports in the Classroom for Teams
- Tool 7:** After-Test Accessibility Questions for Teacher-Student Discussion

STRUCTURE OF THIS DOCUMENT

Step 4: **ADMINISTER** Accessibility Supports During Instruction and Assessment

ACCESSIBILITY DURING INSTRUCTION

Accessibility supports should **not** be used solely during assessments. Students who need and benefit from accessibility supports such as universal features, designated features, and accommodations should be provided the supports during instruction until they are no longer needed or beneficial. Tracking the use and effectiveness of supports during instruction facilitates both equitable accesses to material and transitioning away from a specific accessibility support (**See Tool 7**).

Since many assessments and aspects of instruction can now be administered via technology-based platforms, educators must provide ample opportunity for students to familiarize themselves with both the technology and the administration process. This includes taking practice tests using the testing platform and providing all students with opportunities to use technology for learning to help students become familiar and comfortable with technology they will use on test day. In addition to student interaction with technology in instruction, teachers must also be aware of the range of accessibility supports available for their students and use these supports appropriately and consistently in instruction and assessment.

ACCESSIBILITY DURING ASSESSMENT

Once decisions about how to meet individual student needs using instructional accessibility supports have been made, the logistics of providing the accessibility supports during assessments (e.g. district and state) must be mapped out. It is important to keep in mind that the same accessibility supports may not be allowed on every type of assessment (content assessments, ELP assessments, alternate assessments). For instance, translation supports may be appropriate on content or alternate assessments but would invalidate the measured construct on ELP assessments.

All accessibility decisions should be discussed and documented in alignment with local and state policies, including citations for where the policies can be found. It is essential for all educators to know and understand how to effectively implement accessibility supports and related technologies, as well as what the requirements and consequences are for district and state assessments. Staff administering accessibility supports, such as reading aloud to a student or scribing student responses, must adhere to specific guidelines so that student scores are valid. When providing nonembedded supports, providers must review all applicable state test security policies to protect student and assessment confidentiality. **Prior to the day of a test, teachers should ensure that test administrators and proctors know what accessibility supports each student will be using and how to administer them properly.**

[Kansas Assessment Examiner's Manual](#) ¹¹

[DLM Accessibility Manual](#)

ETHICAL TESTING PRACTICES

Ethical testing practices must be maintained before, during and after the administration of a test. Unethical testing practices include disclosing or discussing secure information with others (including colleagues, parents, and students) and inappropriate interactions between test administrators and students taking the test. These interactions include, but are not limited to, offering additional information, coaching students during testing, editing student responses, suggesting a student review an answer, or giving clues in any other way. Educators should refer to a state's integrity or ethical practices guides and test administration manual.

[KAP Resources](#) ⁵

11 "Resources." Kansas Assessment Program. https://ksassessments.org/resources?field_assessment_s_target_id=9.

STRUCTURE OF THIS DOCUMENT

STANDARDIZATION

Standardization is an essential feature of assessments and is necessary to produce accurate information about student learning. Strict adherence to guidelines detailing instructions and procedures for the administration of accessibility supports is necessary to ensure that test results reflect a comparable measure of knowledge for all students.

Using supports embedded in the testing platform provides better standardization. However, teachers should be in constant communication with assessment coordinators to ensure the assessment is properly programmed and enabled with the appropriate accessibility supports for each student. Test administrators and proctors must carefully adhere to state policies that lay out what to do when selected accessibility supports do not work as intended.

Tools that provide additional information on completing this step:

Tool 6: Accessibility Supports in the Classroom for Teams

Step 5: **EVALUATE** Use of Accessibility Supports in Instruction and Assessment

Accessibility supports must be selected based on the individual student’s needs, be used consistently for instruction and assessment, and phased out at the appropriate time to promote independence. Collecting and analyzing data on the use and effectiveness of accessibility supports are necessary to ensure the meaningful participation of students in districtwide and statewide assessments. This data may reveal questionable patterns of the use of some accessibility supports and inform decisions about the continued use of those supports.

Examination of the data may also indicate areas in which teachers and test administrators need additional training and support. In addition to collecting information about the use of accessibility supports within the classroom, information needs to be gathered on the implementation of accessibility supports during assessment from test administrators and possibly even the test vendor. Observations conducted during test administration, interviews with test administrators and talking with students after testing sessions will likely yield data that can be used to guide the ongoing evaluation process at the school, district and student levels.

Gathering information on accessibility supports may be easier in a technology-based assessment platform when these supports are programmed into the system. However, just because information can be collected does not automatically indicate if it should be collected. Educators, schools, and districts should decide in advance what questions they want to answer and which accessibility data will be most meaningful (**See Tools 7, 8, 9, and 10 for examples**).

STRUCTURE OF THIS DOCUMENT

POSTSECONDARY IMPLICATIONS

As students plan for their transition to postsecondary settings, it is important for educators, students and parents to plan which accessibility supports to continue using and in what capacities, as well as which to phase out. It is important that educators document students' use of accessibility supports so that, if appropriate, students can continue to use them as needed in their college and career settings. Colleges and universities traditionally allow fewer accessibility supports than are available in K-12 settings, so the documentation will help students who need to use accessibility supports advocate for themselves. This may also be true for students who transition into vocational and other workplace settings. Students should be encouraged to research their accessibility needs within the context of each education institution or place of employment.

Tools that provide additional information on completing this step are:

Tool 7: After-test Accessibility Questions for Teacher-Student Discussion

Tool 8: Questions to Guide Evaluation of Use of Accessibility Supports at the School or District Level

Tool 9: Questions to Guide Formative Evaluation at the Student Level

Tool 10: Teacher Evaluation of Classroom Accessibility Features and Accommodations

Tools

Tool 1: Three-Tiered Approach to Accessibility



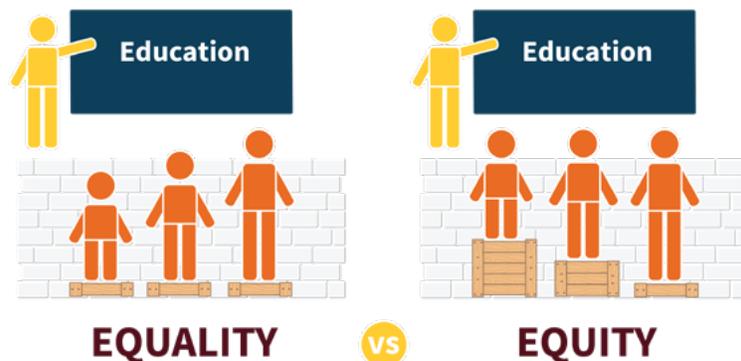
This tool is a general framework of accessibility supports for the KAP.

	TIER 1: Universal Features	TIER 2: Designated Features	TIER 3: Accommodations
	For all students	For some students	IEP 504 Plan ILP
Embedded	Calculator Basic or TI-108 Grades 6-8, 10 Periodic Table Calculator TI-Graphing Grade 10 Calculator TI-Scientific Grades 6-8 Search Eraser Striker Guideline Tags Highlighter Text-to-Speech (TTS) TTS directions TTS science Help Pointer Mark for review Whole screen magnification Notes Sketch pad	Magnification (2x, 3x, 4x, 5x) Masking (answer masking, custom masking) Overlay color Contrast color Invert color choice Audio background	Keyword translation display (Spanish) Signing – ASL Spoken audio – TTS Text only Text and Graphics TTS for ELA passages (nonvisual) must be approved by KSDE
Non-Embedded	Separate, quiet or individual setting		Sign interpretation Braille (UEB) Single switches Two-switch system Test administrator enters responses for student

Tool 2: Questions to Ask When Selecting Accessibility Supports

The following questions can be used to guide the initial selection of appropriate accessibility supports and revisiting the usefulness of current supports:

Questions	Yes	No	Comments
Are accessibility decisions based on individualized student needs (e.g., amount of time in the U.S., English language proficiency, disability needs) rather than what is easiest, what other students are using or providing students with a potential advantage?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do the supports reduce the effect of the disability and/or a language barrier to access content and demonstrate learning?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are the instructional and assessment accommodation(s) documented in the IEP, 504 plan or EL plan, and is it ensured that only documented supports are used?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have universal features been previously tried, if allowable, and have those that are distracting been turned off?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are selected designated features and accommodations based on multiple stakeholders' input instead of unilateral or blanket decisions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are decisions about designated features and accommodations made prior to the assessment day to ensure that the various combinations of supports will work effectively?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have specific questions been answered about "Where, When, Who, and How" regarding providing supports to ensure their appropriate use on assessments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have current state accessibility policies been reviewed and implications of selections understood and not simply indicated to be provided "as appropriate" or "as necessary"?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have supports used by the student been evaluated instead of selecting every support possible on a checklist simply to be "safe" or assume the same supports remain appropriate year after year?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have supports provided for assessments used for classroom instruction to ensure that students practice each support sufficiently and not provided for the first time on the day of a test?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



Tool 3: Accessibility Supports from the Student’s Perspective

Use this questionnaire to collect information about needed accessibility supports from the student’s perspective. The questions can be completed independently or as part of an interview process. Be certain that the student understands the concept of “*accessibility supports*” (universal features, designated features and accommodations), and provide examples as necessary. Also, provide a list of possible accessibility supports to give the student a good understanding of the range of supports that may be available.

Student name: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

Educator name: _____ Role: _____

Question	Activity (e.g., vocabulary, grammar, reading, writing, listening, drawing, homework, subject, recall, group work)	Accessibility Support Used for Individual or Independent Activity	Helpfulness of the Accessibility Support		Action Step (Keep, Remove, Change support)	Reason for Action Step
			Yes	No		
What parts of learning are easiest for you?	Example: Class discussion in history	Questions translated	Yes		Keep it.	It helps me know what other students are talking about.
What is something in class that you do well?	Example: Listening					
What parts of learning are hardest for you?	Example: Organizing	Folders		No	Change to colored notebooks	Loses folders
What is something you do in class that is hard?	Example: Spelling	Word prediction	Yes		Keep	It helps me learn the words.

This questionnaire was adapted from A Student’s Guide to the IEP by the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities.

Tool 4: Parent input on Accessibility

About Instruction	About Assessments (Tests)
Is the need for each support recorded in my child’s IEP, 504 plan, or English language plan? How do all people who work with my child know which supports to use and when there are changes?	Are the tests my child takes and the supports my child uses recorded in all planning tools? Who records this information?
What supports does my child like to use and need to perform their grade-level work?	What are the tests, such as the English language proficiency or alternate assessment, my child needs to take? What is the purpose of each test? What is tested and counted?
How can my child and I make sure to be given not too many and not too few supports? Is there a parent group or mentor available?	What supports are available on state, district, and other school and class tests?
What supports does my child use at home but does not have in the classroom?	How can I support my child at home to be sure that my child can perform on the tests?
How long will my child be given the supports? What is the plan to help decide when to stop using the supports?	How can my child take an assessment with or without certain supports? Why is one support allowed on one test and not on another?
How do all the people who work with my child make supports available throughout the day and in different settings?	What can happen if changes are allowed to how my child takes a test? What will changes do to my child’s test scores and how they are counted?
What is the type of program support my child receives in different classes (like math intervention, science or English language learning)?	How do the results of using supports compare with the different types of tests?
If a support used during instruction is not allowed on a test, how is my child learning to work without the support before the test? What record is there to know if my child was able to perform well without the support?	If a support is given on a test but not used during instruction or is not given in the same way (for example, an online calculator compared to a hand-held calculator) how will my child practice using the support?

Adapted from the *Minnesota Manual for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities in Instruction and Assessment*. Questions are based in part on questions and content from *NCLD’s Parent Advocacy Brief, NCLB: Determining Appropriate Assessment Accommodations for Students with Disabilities, and Testing Students with Disabilities: Practical Strategies for Complying with District and State Requirements*, 2nd ed. (2003) by Martha Thurlow, Judy Elliott, and James Ysseldyke.

Tool 5: Accessibility Selection Questions for Teams

Teams can use the following questions to guide the initial selection of appropriate accessibility supports and for revisiting supports students are currently using:

Questions	Comments
1. What are the student’s language learning strengths and areas of further improvement (applicable to all students, not just ELs)?	
2. How do the student’s learning needs affect the achievement of grade-level standards?	
3. What specialized instruction (e.g., learning strategies, organizational skills, reading skills) does the student need to achieve grade-level standards?	
4. What accessibility supports will increase the student’s access to instruction and assessment by addressing the student’s learning needs?	
5. What accessibility supports are regularly used by the student during instruction, assessments, and at home?	
6. How do the results compare for assignments and assessments when accessibility supports are used and not used?	
7. What supports are used at home to complete homework?	
8. What difficulties does the student experience when using accessibility supports?	
9. What are the perceptions of the student, parents, teachers and other specialists of how well the accessibility support “worked”?	

TOOLS

Questions	Comments
<p>10. Should the student continue to use an accessibility support, are changes needed or should the use of the accessibility support be discontinued?</p>	
<p>11. When matching accessibility supports with students' characteristics, have educators ensured the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The student's willingness to learn to use the accessibility support. ● Opportunities to learn to use the accessibility support in classroom settings. ● Conditions for use on state assessments. 	
<p>12. What are the characteristics of the test? Consider grade-level content standards, cognitive complexity (look at the test blueprint), proficiency level, performance level descriptors, etc.</p>	
<p>13. Are the test tasks similar to classroom assessment tasks? Do classroom tasks expose the student to the same cognitive complexities, level of mastery (based on achievement or performance level descriptors) and range of difficulty for each content standard as the test?</p>	
<p>14. Is there ample opportunity to practice similar tasks prior to testing?</p>	
<p>15. Does the student use an accessibility support for a classroom task that is allowed on the district or state tests?</p>	
<p>16. Does the student use an accessibility support in the classroom that could compromise the construct being assessed?</p>	
<p>17. Are there other barriers that could be removed by using an accessibility support that is different from what is already offered or in use (e.g., scheduling accommodation or universal feature)?</p>	

Tool 6: Accessibility Supports in the Classroom Questions for Teams

Use this chart to track different aspects of how a student uses accessibility supports (universal features, designated features, and accommodations) in each classroom setting. This will help inform consistent decision-making on accessibility supports.

Student name: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

Disability: _____ Languages: _____

Accessibility support: _____

Each team member answers questions about the implementation of the accessibility support the student uses in their class.

Accessibility Support:

Team Members (e.g., teacher, parent, specialist, paraprofessional)

Question	Special Ed. Teacher		Content
1. Is it noted in student's planning tool (PNP) and/or EL, IEP or 504 plan?			
2. For what types of task(s) is it used?			
3. Does the student use it for that task every time? Note how often.			
4. Does the student use it alone or with assistance? (e.g., aide, peers?)			
5. If more than one support is available, how do these supports interact? For example, does one accessibility support seem more effective when used with another on a task?			
6. If the accessibility support is presented differently on the test (e.g., an online calculator), how can you give the student opportunities to practice using it?			
7. Does the student's individualized plan (e.g., EL, IEP, 504) need to be updated?			

Tool 7: After-test Accessibility Questions for Teacher-Student Discussion

Use this form after a test to interview a student about the accessibility supports (universal features, designated features, and accommodations) provided, used, whether they were useful and whether they should be used again. Also note any adjustments or difficulties experienced by the student in either how the accessibility support was administered or in using the accessibility support during the assessment. Some students may do this independently, or filling out this form could be facilitated through a discussion between a teacher and a student.

Student name: _____ Assessment: _____ Date: _____

Accessibility supports used: _____

Questions	Supports Available (list)			
	1.	2.	3.	4.
Was the accessibility support used?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Why?			
Was the accessibility support useful?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Why?			
Were there any difficulties with the accessibility support (are adjustments needed)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Why?			
Should the accessibility support be used again?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Why?			

Tool 8: Questions to Guide Evaluation of the Use of Accessibility Supports at the School or District Level

Accessibility information can be analyzed in different ways. Use these questions to guide data analysis at the teacher team, school and district levels:

1. Were current policies reviewed to ensure ethical testing practices, the standardized administration of assessments, and adherence to test security practices before, during and after the day of the test? Was a formal professional development training on accessibility supports conducted for educators?
2. Are students receiving accessibility supports as documented in their planning tools (e.g., PNP) or IEP, 504, and EL plans?
3. How many students are receiving certain accessibility supports?
4. What types of accessibility supports are provided and are some used more than others?
5. How well do students who receive certain accessibility supports perform on state and local assessments? If students are not meeting the expected level of performance, is it because the student not having had access to the necessary instruction, not receiving the accessibility support or using ineffective supports?
6. What procedures need to be in place to ensure test administrators adhere to directions for the administration of assessment accessibility supports (universal features, designated features and accommodations)?
7. In what ways can you use assessment data and accessibility data to ensure appropriate accessibility supports are being used?
8. What does the accessibility supports data indicate about provision of accessibility supports to students?
9. In what ways are you collecting and reviewing accessibility data on the use of accessibility supports?
10. In what ways are you currently evaluating the methods of students receiving accessibility supports? How can you improve these methods?

Tool 9: Questions to Guide Formative Evaluation at the Student Level

Use these questions to evaluate the effectiveness of individualized accessibility supports provided during instruction and/or assessment at the student level, inform the team decision-making process and identify needed changes in the accessibility supports.

1. What accessibility supports are used by the student during instruction and assessments?
2. What are the results of classroom assignments and assessments when accessibility supports are used versus when they are not used?

If a student did not meet the expected level of performance, is it because of not having access to the necessary instruction, not receiving the accessibility supports or using accessibility supports that were ineffective?

3. What is the student's perception of how well the accessibility support worked?
4. What combinations of accessibility supports seem to be effective?
5. What are the difficulties encountered in the use of accessibility supports?
6. What are the perceptions of teachers and others about how the accessibility support appears to be working?
7. How have the characteristics of the student changed over time to warrant a plan or accessibility support change?

School- and district-level questions can be addressed by a committee responsible for continuous improvement efforts, while the student-level questions need to be considered by educators working directly with the student. It is critical to stress that formative evaluation is not the responsibility of just one individual. Teams of educators should contribute to the information gathering and decision-making processes.

Tool 10: Team Evaluation of Classroom Accessibility Features and Accommodations

SUPPORT RATING BY TEAM MEMBERS						
Accessibility Support	Parent	Special Ed	EL	Classroom	Specialist	Student Assistant
	<input type="checkbox"/> Not effective <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat effective <input type="checkbox"/> Very effective	<input type="checkbox"/> Not effective <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat effective <input type="checkbox"/> Very effective	<input type="checkbox"/> Not effective <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat effective <input type="checkbox"/> Very effective	<input type="checkbox"/> Not effective <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat effective <input type="checkbox"/> Very effective	<input type="checkbox"/> Not effective <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat effective <input type="checkbox"/> Very effective	<input type="checkbox"/> Not effective <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat effective <input type="checkbox"/> Very effective
	<input type="checkbox"/> Not effective <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat effective <input type="checkbox"/> Very effective	<input type="checkbox"/> Not effective <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat effective <input type="checkbox"/> Very effective	<input type="checkbox"/> Not effective <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat effective <input type="checkbox"/> Very effective	<input type="checkbox"/> Not effective <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat effective <input type="checkbox"/> Very effective	<input type="checkbox"/> Not effective <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat effective <input type="checkbox"/> Very effective	<input type="checkbox"/> Not effective <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat effective <input type="checkbox"/> Very effective
	<input type="checkbox"/> Not effective <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat effective <input type="checkbox"/> Very effective	<input type="checkbox"/> Not effective <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat effective <input type="checkbox"/> Very effective	<input type="checkbox"/> Not effective <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat effective <input type="checkbox"/> Very effective	<input type="checkbox"/> Not effective <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat effective <input type="checkbox"/> Very effective	<input type="checkbox"/> Not effective <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat effective <input type="checkbox"/> Very effective	<input type="checkbox"/> Not effective <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat effective <input type="checkbox"/> Very effective
	<input type="checkbox"/> Not effective <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat effective <input type="checkbox"/> Very effective	<input type="checkbox"/> Not effective <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat effective <input type="checkbox"/> Very effective	<input type="checkbox"/> Not effective <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat effective <input type="checkbox"/> Very effective	<input type="checkbox"/> Not effective <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat effective <input type="checkbox"/> Very effective	<input type="checkbox"/> Not effective <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat effective <input type="checkbox"/> Very effective	<input type="checkbox"/> Not effective <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat effective <input type="checkbox"/> Very effective

How effective was the accessibility supports for a class activity, assignment and test?

Which accessibility supports did the student use, prefer or decline to use? Why?

What changes, if any, need to be made to improve the effectiveness of the accessibility supports?

Other Comments:

Tool 11: Five-Step Decision-Making Process

5. EVALUATE: Which supports will stay the same and which should change for next time?

1. EXPECT: How are educators ensuring that the expectation of the student is to achieve mastery of grade-level standards?



2. LEARN: How did educators learn about new and existing accessibility supports?

4. ADMINISTER: How effective was the administration and use of the selected supports during ...
INSTRUCTION?

ASSESSMENT?

3. SELECT: Which accessibility supports were selected for ...

INSTRUCTION?

ASSESSMENT?

Appendices

- 36 Appendix A: Federal Laws
- 40 Appendix B: Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Federal Laws

Documenting Accessibility Supports Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

The Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) is a federal requirement in which collaborative team members must state *“how the child’s disability affects the child’s involvement and progress in the general education curriculum—the same curriculum as non-disabled children”* [Sec. 614 (d) (1) (A) (i) (I)]. Depending on the design and overall format of a typical IEP, there are potentially three areas in which accessibility supports can be addressed:

1. *“Consideration of Special Factors”* [Sec. 614 (d) (3) (B)]. This is where communication and assistive technology supports are considered.
2. *“Supplementary Aids and Services”* [Sec. 602 (33) and Sec. 614 (d) (1) (A) (i)]. This area of the IEP includes *“aids, services, and other supports that are provided in regular education classes or other education-related settings to enable children with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled children to the maximum extent appropriate.”*
3. *“Participation in Assessments”* [Sec. 612 (a) (16)]. This section of the IEP documents accommodations needed to facilitate the participation of students with disabilities in general state and district-wide assessments.

[Documenting Frequency, Location, and Duration of Accommodations and Modifications on the IEP during the 2020-21 school year \(PDF\)](#) ¹

Documenting Accessibility Supports on a Student’s 504 Plan

[Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#) ² requires public schools to provide certain accessibility supports to students with disabilities even if they do not qualify for special education services under IDEA. All IDEA students are also covered by Section 504, but not all Section 504 students are eligible for services under IDEA. Section 504 states:

No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. [[29 U.S.C. Sec. 794](#)] ³

Examples of students who may receive designated features or accommodations based on their 504 accommodation plan include students with:

- Allergies or asthma.
- Attention difficulties.
- Communicable diseases (e.g., Hepatitis).
- Drug or alcoholic addictions, but not currently using illegal drugs.
- Temporary disabilities from accidents.

.....
¹ Documenting Frequency, Location, and Duration of Accommodations and Modifications on the IEP during the 2020-21 school year (PDF): <https://www.ksde.org/Portals/0/ECSETS/Announcements/COVID-DocumentingFreqLocDur.pdf>

² Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (webpage): <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid:USC-prelim-title29-section794&num=0&edition=prelim>

Federal Laws and Federal Guidance on Student Participation

ESSA

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)³ was issued on December 10, 2015. It reauthorizes the 50-year-old Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the national education law and commitment to equal opportunity for all students. The bill mandates annual reporting of disaggregated data of groups of students, generating information about whether all students are achieving and whether schools are meeting the needs of low-income students, students of color, students with disabilities, and English learners. Specific ESSA requirements include provisions for:

- (I) The participation in such assessments of all students.
- (II) The appropriate accommodations, such as interoperability with, and ability to use, assistive technology, for children with disabilities (as defined in section 602(3) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1401(3))), including students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, and students with a disability who are provided accommodations under an act other than the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.), necessary to measure the academic achievement of such children relative to the challenging State academic standards or alternate academic achievement standards described in paragraph (1)(E).
- (III) The inclusion of English learners, who shall be assessed in a valid and reliable manner and provided appropriate 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 data on what such students know and can do in academic content areas, until such students have achieved English language proficiency.

IDEA

IDEA⁴ specifically governs services provided to students with disabilities. Accountability at the individual level is provided through IEPs developed on the basis of each child's unique needs. IDEA requires the participation of students with disabilities in statewide and districtwide assessments. Specific IDEA requirements include:

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

For the small group of students with significant cognitive disabilities who are also English learners, these assessments will be an important tool to measure their progress in learning English.

IDEA, 34 CFR §§300.160(b)(2)(i) and (ii)

- (2) The state's (or, in the case of a districtwide assessment, the LEA's) guidelines must:
 - (i) Identify only those accommodations for each assessment that do not invalidate the score.
 - (ii) Instruct IEP teams to select, for each assessment, only those accommodations that do not invalidate the score.

3 ESSA (PDF): <https://www.congress.gov/114/crpt/hrpt354/CRPT-114hrpt354.pdf>

4 IDEA (PDF): <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/leg/idea/idea.pdf>

APPENDICES - APPENDIX A: FEDERAL LAWS

Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act

Section 504³ provides individuals with disabilities with certain rights and protects individuals with disabilities against discrimination in federally funded programs and activities. Section 504 states: *No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States, as defined in section 705(20) of this title, 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 or under any program or activity conducted by any executive agency ... In school settings, 504 legislation guarantees and protects students with disabilities who may not otherwise have an IEP, but are still considered an individual with disabilities. The definition of a student with disabilities is much broader under 504 than it is under IDEA. An important part of the 504 plans developed by schools for students with disabilities is often the lists of accommodations that the student can use on assessments.*

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) ensure a level playing field for students with disabilities in a wide range of settings, including testing, and, similarly to IDEA, provide for reasonable testing accommodations to be given to students with disabilities as outlined/as needed. Title III of the ADA requires equal access and participation. The IEP/504 team is charged with making accommodations decisions for all IDEA/504 eligible students every year, as part of the annual IEP/504 process.

[Parent and Educator Resource Guide to Section 504 in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools⁵](#)

[Rehabilitation Act of 1973⁶](#)

[Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: Prohibiting Discrimination Against Individuals with Disabilities in Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Assistance⁷](#)

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5 Parent and Educator Resource Guide to Section 504 in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools, USDE (PDF): <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/504-resource-guide-201612.pdf>

6 Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (PDF): <https://rsa.ed.gov/statute-legislation-and-policy/legislation>

7 Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: Prohibiting Discrimination Against Individuals with Disabilities in Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Assistance, Congressional Research Service (PDF): <https://www.llsdc.org/assets/sourcebook/crs-rl34041.pdf>

APPENDICES - APPENDIX A: FEDERAL LAWS

Questions and Answers Regarding Inclusion of English Learners with Disabilities in English Language Proficiency Assessments and Title III Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives

This joint guidance document developed by the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) and the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) was released on July 18, 2014, to help states and local educational agencies understand how Part B of the IDEA and Titles I and III of the ESEA address the inclusion of ELs with disabilities in annual state ELP assessments.

Retrieved Oct. 6, 2020, from <https://oese.ed.gov/files/2020/07/q-and-a-on-elp-swd.pdf>

The 2014 guidance was amended by the July 2015 Addendum. The two documents address states' general obligations around including ELs with disabilities in ELP assessments, responsibilities of IEP teams, accommodations and alternate assessments, exit from EL status, annual measurable achievement objectives, initial identification and other considerations.

Retrieved Oct. 6, 2020, from <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/idea-files/qa-regarding-inclusion-of-english-learners-with-disabilities-in-english-language-proficiency-assessments-and-title-iii-annual-measurable-achievement-objectives/>

Dear Colleague Letter on FAPE/IEP Alignment

Issued on Nov. 16, 2015, by the U.S. Department of Education (the Office of Special and Rehabilitative Services), this document addresses the entitlement of each eligible child with a disability to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) aligned with the child's individualized education program (IEP).

Retrieved Oct. 6, 2020, from https://archive.ada.gov/regs2014/testing_accommodations.html

Americans with Disabilities Act Requirements: Testing Accommodations

Issued in September 2015 by the Department of Justice, this is the department's response to questions and complaints about excessive and burdensome documentation demands, failures to provide needed accommodations and failures to respond to requests for testing accommodations in a timely manner. The guidance applies to testing entities (private, state, local) that have exams related to applications, licensing, certification or credentialing for secondary, postsecondary, professional or trade purposes.

Retrieved Oct. 6, 2020, from http://www.ada.gov/regs2014/testing_accommodations.html.

English Learner Tool Kit

This document was jointly developed by the Department of Education and Department of Justice and issued in September 2015 to help state and local education agencies help ELs by fulfilling the obligations in the Dear Colleague Letter of Jan. 7, 2015. The toolkit includes 10 chapters, one for each of the "common civil rights issues" discussed in the Jan. 7, 2015, Dear Colleague Letter.

Retrieved Oct. 6, 2020, from <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/index.html>

APPENDICES

APPENDIX B: Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

The following list contains terms and acronyms along with their definitions found throughout this document.

504 Plan: Sometimes called a 504 accommodation plan, comes from section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requiring public schools to provide certain accessibility supports to students with disabilities even if they do not qualify for special education services under IDEA.

Accessibility: The reduction or elimination of barriers that prevent students from demonstrating what they know and can do.

Accessibility supports: Supports do not reduce or change learning expectations but rather meet specific needs of students and enable a student's work to be a valid measure of what the student knows and can do.

Accommodations: Changes in procedures or materials that ensure equitable access to instructional and assessment content and generate valid assessment results for students who need them. They do not reduce expectations for learning.

Alternate assessment: A test designed for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities with a reduced depth and breadth from the general assessment.

Assessment: An evaluation or test of what a person knows and can do in regard to a specific content area or used to estimate a specific quality about a person.

Construct: A construct is a hypothesized, non-material, cause of an observable behavior. It is not a physical thing that has length, mass, depth, etc., that can be directly measured. For example, grade 3 math knowledge is the hypothetical cause for a student answering grade 3 math questions correctly.

Content: The material covered in class (e.g., math, reading, art, etc.).

Designated feature: Features that are available for use by any student for whom the need has been indicated by an educator (or team of educators including the parents/guardians and the student when appropriate) who is familiar with the student's characteristics and needs.

DLM: Dynamic Learning Maps is the alternate assessment used in Kansas for students with a most significant cognitive disability.

EL(s): English Learner(s) are students whose native language is not English and who do not yet possess sufficient English language proficiency to fully access curriculum that is in English.

ELP: English language proficiency

ELs with disabilities: Students whose native language is not English, who do not yet possess sufficient English language proficiency to fully access content that is in English, and who have disabilities served by IDEA or Section 504.

Embedded feature: A feature that is part of the technology delivery of the instruction or assessment.

General education students: Students who do not have an identified disability or EL status. Although students with disabilities, ELs and ELs with disabilities are also general education students, within this document this term is a simple way to refer to students who do not have a disability, are not identified as an EL or who are not identified as an EL with a disability.

IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

IEP: Individualized Education Program - A federally required document for any student with a disability that outlines the resources and services a student needs in order to access the curriculum.

ILP: Individualized Learning Plan All ELs will have an Individual Learning Plan (ILP). This plan documents how the student scored on the proficiency assessment and lays out steps for ensuring the student is making progress throughout the year in attaining English proficiency

KAP: Kansas Assessment Program

KELPA: Kansas English Language Proficiency Assessment

Modifications: Changes in practices or materials that lower or reduce state-required learning expectations.

Non-embedded feature: A support that is provided locally and not through the technology delivery of the instruction or assessment.

PLAAPF: Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance; a federal requirement in which collaborative team members must state *“how the child’s disability affects the child’s involvement and progress in the general education curriculum - the same curriculum as nondisabled children”* [Sec. 614 (d) (1) (A) (i) (I)].

PNP: Personal Needs Profile - A generic term used to reference documented accessibility needs for any student.

Significant cognitive disabilities: Students with significant cognitive disabilities cannot be identified by looking at disability categorical labels that were identified by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Generally, the primary disability categories of many students with significant cognitive disabilities are intellectual disabilities, autism and multiple disabilities. Not all students in any of these categories have significant cognitive disabilities. Additionally, some students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are in other categories such as deaf-blindness. Students with most significant cognitive disabilities participate in the alternate assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS).

Standardized: The uniform administration procedures and conditions during an event such as an assessment to produce comparable information about student learning.

Standards: Educational targets outlining what all students are expected to master at each grade level.

Students with disabilities: Students who are eligible to receive services identified through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Universal design: Policies and practices that are intended to improve access to learning and assessments for all students and reduce the need for accommodations.

Universal feature: Accessibility supports that are available to all students as they access instructional or assessment content.

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- Cognitive preparation,
- Technical skills,
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- Civic engagement

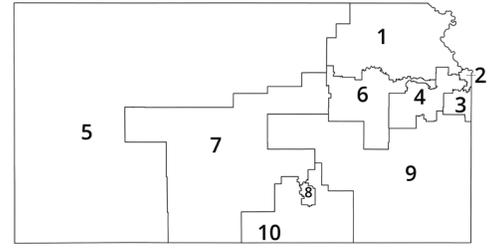
to be successful in postsecondary education, in the attainment of an industry recognized certification or in the workforce, without the need for remediation.

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900 S.W. Jackson Street, Suite 600
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1212
(785) 296-3203
www.ksde.org/board



DISTRICT 1



Danny Zeck
dzeck@ksde.org

DISTRICT 2



Melanie Haas
Chair
mhaas@ksde.org

DISTRICT 3



Michelle Dombrosky
mdombrosky@ksde.org

DISTRICT 4



Ann E. Mah
Legislative Liaison
amah@ksde.org

DISTRICT 5



Cathy Hopkins
chopkins@ksde.org

DISTRICT 6



Dr. Deena Horst
Legislative Liaison
dhorst@ksde.org

DISTRICT 7



Dennis Hershberger
dhershberger@ksde.org

DISTRICT 8



Betty Arnold
barnold@ksde.org

DISTRICT 9



Jim Porter
Vice Chair
jporter@ksde.org

DISTRICT 10



Jim McNiece
jmcniece@ksde.org



900 S.W. Jackson Street, Suite 102
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1212
(785) 296-3201
www.ksde.org

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(800) 203-9462
specialeducation@ksde.org



Kansas State Department of Education
900 S.W. Jackson Street, Suite 102
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1212

www.ksde.org

