Testing Accommodations for English Language Learners

For English Language Learners, schools may provide the following testing accommodations:

- **Time Extension**—Schools may extend the test time for English Language Learners taking NYS assessments. Principals may use any reasonable extensions, such as time-and-a-half (the required testing time plus one-half of that amount of time), in accordance with their best judgment about the needs of the English Language Learners. Principals should consult with each student’s classroom teacher when making these determinations.

- **Separate Location**—Schools are encouraged to provide optimal testing environments and facilities for all students. They may administer NYS assessments individually or in small groups in a separate location.

- **Translated Editions**—English Language Learners may be provided with a translated edition of NYS assessments. This accommodation is not permitted for English Language Arts exams. The languages available in can be found in each test’s School Administrator’s Manual. In addition, English Language Learners may use the English and translated edition of NYS assessments simultaneously. However, they should be instructed to record all of their responses in only one of the two editions. The translated edition used by the student should be indicated on the student’s answer sheet.

- **Bilingual Dictionaries and Glossaries**—English Language Learners may use bilingual dictionaries and glossaries when taking NYS assessments. These bilingual dictionaries and glossaries may provide only direct translations of words. Bilingual dictionaries or glossaries that provide definitions or explanations of words, and electronic dictionaries or glossaries with Internet access, are not permitted.

- **Oral Translation for Lower-Incidence Languages**—Schools may provide English Language Learners with oral translations of NYS assessments when there is no translated written edition provided by the Department. This accommodation is not permitted for English Language Arts exams. All translations must be oral, direct translations of the English editions when there is no translated edition provided by the Department. Written translations are not allowed. No clarifications or explanations can be provided. Translators should receive copies of the English edition of the tests one hour prior to administration. The Department’s Office of Bilingual Education and Foreign Language Studies (518-474-8775) and the Regional Bilingual Education Resource Networks (RBE-RNs) can assist schools in locating suitable translators. A list of RBE-RNs can be found at [http://www.nysed.gov/bilingual-ed/schools/regional-supportrberns](http://www.nysed.gov/bilingual-ed/schools/regional-supportrberns).

Writing Responses in Native Language—English Language Learners making use of translated editions or of oral translations of NYS assessments may write their responses to the open-ended questions in their native language. This accommodation is not permitted for English Language Arts exams. Scoring the responses to open-ended questions written in the student’s native language is the responsibility of the school. However, the Department’s Office of Bilingual Education and Foreign Language Studies and the RBE-RNs can assist schools in locating persons who can translate the students’ responses into English to facilitate scoring of the tests.

For each English Language Learner, darken the circles indicating the testing accommodations provided on the answer sheet under the heading “ELL Accommodations.”

Former English Language Learners

Schools may provide the testing accommodations listed to Former English Language Learners who met the exiting criteria specified in Part 154-2 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education and were exited from English Language Learner status following their participation in one of the two most recent administrations of the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT). Such students either achieved an overall level of proficient on the NYSESLAT or, effective October 1, 2014 achieved an overall level of Advanced on the most recent administration of the NYSESLAT and scored at Level 3 or higher on the New York State Common Core Grades 3–8 English Language Arts Test. For each eligible Former English Language Learner, darken the circles indicating the testing accommodations provided on the answer sheet under the heading “ELL Accommodations.”

Changes in Allowable Testing Accommodations
For Students with Disabilities

Beginning with the 2017 administration of the Grades 3-8 English Language Arts (ELA) Assessments and the 2017 administration of the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT), students with disabilities whose Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or Section 504 Accommodations Plans (504 Plans) document that tests be read aloud (by way of human reader or technology) must be provided this testing accommodation in accordance with the specifications in the IEP/504 Plan.

When test items are to be read as a result of a testing accommodation, the entire test must be read including reading passages, questions, multiple-choice items, etc. Such content may be re-read more than once as specified by the individual student’s IEP or 504 Plan. Students who have difficulty with auditory processing may need content read more than once. To accommodate the individual student’s pace, this accommodation is best administered individually rather than in a group setting. Individual or group setting would need to be noted in the student’s IEP or 504 Plan.

When administering the testing accommodation of “tests read,” passages and questions must be read in their entirety, word for word, without any clarification or explanation. If the question and/or the answer choices make reference to part of a reading passage solely as line numbers or paragraph numbers, the reader should reread the specified part(s) of the passage to the student. In addition, passages, parts of passages, questions, and answer choices may be reread to the student upon the student’s request. At the beginning of each test session, Readers should tell the student that he/she may have questions and/or the answer choices reread as many times as he/she requests.

The recommendation to read tests aloud to a student with a disability is a Committee on Special Education (CSE)/Section 504 Committee decision based on the student’s individual disability-related needs. If “tests read” is recommended by a student’s CSE/Section 504 Committee as a testing accommodation for a student with a disability, the student’s IEP/504 Plan must indicate whether or not it is appropriate to provide this accommodation on tests of reading comprehension (such as, the Grades 3-8 ELA Assessments and the Reading section of the NYSESLAT) due to the student’s unique, disability-related needs.

For further guidance, please refer to the following memorandums issued by the New York State Education Department Office of Instructional Support:

- Changes in Allowable Testing Accommodations on the Grade 3-8 NYS ELA Assessments

- Change in Allowable Testing Accommodations on the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT)

Questions regarding the information in the memorandums may be directed to the Office of State Assessment at 518-474-5900 or emscassesinfo@nysed.gov and to the Office of Special Education at 518-473-2878 or speced@nysed.gov.