

Accommodation Guidelines

*Selecting, Administering, and Evaluating Accommodations for
Instruction and Assessment*



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Introduction

This manual is divided into sections to address the topics of accommodation selection and use in instruction and as they pertain to specific state assessments. The action steps in Section 1 serve as a reference to steer the process of selecting, administering, and evaluating instructional accommodations for use by English Learners (ELs), students with disabilities, and EL students with disabilities. Sections 2 through 4 provide guidance for accommodation selection and use pertaining to eligible students for each state assessment. Included is information on accommodating students with injuries, English Learners, and students with disabilities. While instruction for all Arizona students is guided by Arizona content standards, Section 3 of this document addresses specific assessment guidelines for accommodating students with significant cognitive disabilities whose assessments are developed based on Arizona’s alternate achievement standards.

For the purposes of this manual, the following definitions are used:

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

English Learners (ELs) 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.

English Learners with disabilities (ELs with disabilities) are students whose native language is not English and who do not yet possess sufficient English language proficiency to fully access content that is in English. In addition, these students have disabilities served by IDEA or Section 504.

General education students are those who do not have an identified disability or EL status. Although we understand that students with disabilities, ELs, and ELs with disabilities are also general education students, we use this term as a simple way to refer to students who are not identified in one of the special needs categories.

Section 1

The Five Step Decision-making Process

Audience -- These guidelines have been designed for use by:

- IEP (Individual Education Plan) or ILLP (Individual Language Learning Plan) teams
- EL or SEI Teachers
- Special education teachers
- General education teachers
- Administrators
- Test Coordinators



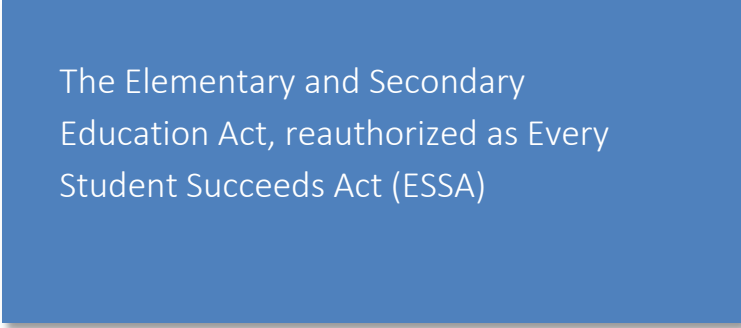
(CCSSO Accessibility Manual, 2016)

The following five step decision-making process will help ensure the consideration of specific needs of the individual student when selecting accommodations for use in a variety of instructional and assessment settings. Accommodations must be employed in instruction prior to being considered for an assessment context.

Step One - Expect EL Students and Students with Disabilities to Achieve Grade-level Academic Content Standards

Rationale

Accountability for the academic progress of *all* students is a core component of the educational reforms sought through passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA, 1965) and its latest reauthorization, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015).



The Elementary and Secondary Education Act, reauthorized as Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

State accountability systems are comprised of academic content standards (**what** students should learn) and academic achievement standards (**how well** students should learn). In Arizona, achievement is assessed annually in Grades 3 through 8, and in high school for end-of-course in the areas of language arts and math. Beginning in 2007-08, Arizona introduced science assessments in Grades 4, 8, and high school. These assessments are administered to ascertain to what degree students have achieved the grade level knowledge and skills as defined by the standards. States hold LEAs accountable, and states in turn are accountable to the U.S. Department of Education where they are required to report annual assessment results. Outcomes for students with disabilities and ELs are counted in the aggregate, but also disaggregated as targeted subgroups to ensure that adequate progress is being made.

Students with disabilities and English Learners work toward grade level content standards with the expectation that they can achieve such standards when included (to the greatest extent possible) and provided meaningful access in order to fully engage in grade level instruction. The academic progress of these students is determined by their participation in the state's general assessment with testing accommodations as identified in individual education plans (IEPs) or individual language learning plans (ILLPs), where applicable. Alternate assessments for students with significant cognitive disabilities, who comprise about 1% of the student population, are developed based on alternate achievement standards. The resulting reports better differentiate performance and provide valuable information for use in instructional planning.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA, 2004) established expectations for the standards-based instruction of students with identified disabilities as well as accountability measures to ensure their progress in the general curriculum.

This legislation deals with educational accountability by requiring the development of an individual education plan (IEP) for those students qualifying for special education services. It requires the participation of students with disabilities in state and local assessments, affording assessment accommodations **to the extent that the changes made do not violate the construct being measured.** The IEP team is responsible for developing a legal written document that details the specific needs of the student and how those needs will be addressed in both instruction and assessment. As part of that process, the team must describe the student's present level of academic and functional performance (PLAAFP) and, based on that information, then determine individual needs. The team selects accommodations that address those needs and provide the student equitable access to grade level instruction. The team must also determine which of those selected accommodations are allowable in standardized assessments. Accommodations that meet the criteria for use in assessments are usually referenced separately in the IEP.

Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act

Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act contains a much broader definition of a student with disabilities than IDEA, protecting students with disabilities who may not have an IEP by guaranteeing access to necessary accommodations during both instruction and assessment. Students with a medical condition such as allergies, asthma, and attention difficulties may receive accommodations through the development of a 504 plan.

English Learners may not have a formal individualized plan (ILLP) detailing specific needs, but are accommodated in instruction and eligible to receive designated testing accommodations during standardized testing. English Learners who also have identified disabilities are eligible for both EL accommodations and those designated for students with disabilities.

The intent of these laws is to make clear the expectation that **all students**, regardless of their degree of language proficiency or identified disabilities, are entitled to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE), and that states and LEAs will be held accountable for the achievement of **all students** with assessments aligned to grade level academic content standards.

Equitable Access

To ensure equitable access to the general education curriculum and grade level instruction, service providers must understand not just the content, but the performance expectations embedded in the standards and how those will be assessed. This understanding will impact the considerations of least restrictive environment (LRE), the model of instruction, supports and accommodations selected, and the degree of collaboration/consultation among team members which may include the general education teachers and specialized instruction provided by SEI, EL, or special education teachers.

Achieving Grade Level Academic Content Standards

As indicated previously, the majority of students, whether ELs or those identified as having specific disabilities, can progress toward grade level content standards given the appropriate conditions for learning:

- Instruction provided by professionals who are knowledgeable in their respective fields, including content and methodologies
- Instruction **intentionally planned** to meet the needs of a diverse group of learners, including a variety of presentation, response, and engagement options
- IEPs or ILLPs that describe specially designed instruction required to meet the specific needs of an individual
- IEPs or ILLPs that include accommodations selected to minimize the effects of a student's disability or language-related barriers

Instructional and Assessment Accommodations

All accommodations selected for a student should be used and evaluated for effectiveness during instruction and in classroom and district testing. **Selection of instructional accommodations should not be guided by or limited to those permitted in large scale assessments, and at no time should an accommodation be introduced for the sole purpose of testing.** There may be some accommodations that, while effective in instruction, cannot be utilized during assessments because they violate the construct being assessed, thus invalidating the results. When tests are standardized, specific guidelines for administration must be followed to ensure the validity of the interpretation of results. Validity, in turn, ensures that claims being made regarding a student's level of proficiency in a particular academic area are accurate. For instance, when foundational reading skills are being evaluated, valid conclusions about the student's ability to decode text cannot be drawn if the selections have been read to the student.

Step Two - Get Familiar with Accommodations for Instruction and Assessment

What are Accommodations?

Accommodations are practices or procedures which, when put into place, are intended to reduce or eliminate barriers to access. **Important distinction: Accommodations do not reduce learning expectations.** They simply change how students perceive and interact with content and how achievement is measured. When well-chosen, accommodations provide neither too much (enabling) nor too little assistance (ineffective) to the student who needs them. The “what” of learning remains intact, including the expected depth of understanding and skill development.

Accommodations are commonly categorized into the areas of:

Presentation	Setting
Response	Timing and Scheduling

Presentation Accommodations

Traditional teaching methods employ a significant amount of verbal and text-delivered information. For many students, including English Learners and those with disabilities, there are far more effective modes of access that may include a more hands-on approach, graphics, virtual experiences, or videos.

English Learners benefit from approaches that target language development in tandem with content. The use of realia (objects or activities used to relate classroom teaching to real life, especially of peoples studied) and multi-media help these students make connections with new content. Some students with disabilities may benefit from such alternative visual presentation options as large print, magnification, or content presented using sign language. Others may require tactile access through braille, or working with materials that have texture or dimension. For students who are unable to effectively access text, a human reader or text-to-speech software may be a viable alternative. Students benefiting from a multi-sensory approach may use a screen reader, graphic organizers or visual representations, or instruction accompanied by supplemental videos.

Who Benefits: Presentation accommodations are most helpful for English Learners or those students with print disabilities who lack the skills to read standard print because of physical, sensory, or cognitive barriers. Students who need visual or tactile/kinesthetic input to support verbal instruction also benefit.

Response Accommodations

Traditional oral and written response options may present barriers that limit or exclude some students, including ELs and students with disabilities, from demonstrating what they know and can do. Response accommodations provide alternate avenues of expression that enable students to complete assignments, activities, and assessments in different ways which may include assistance with translations, an assistive device, a rubric, or an organizer. Examples of devices include a Braille writer, tape recorder, or a calculator. Features or applications such as speech-to-text, word prediction software, spell check, or various types of graphic organizers assist students with responses. When considering the provision of a response accommodation, service providers weigh options that will foster the development of student independence.

Who Benefits: Students learning a second language or those with physical, sensory, or learning disabilities (including challenges with memory, sequencing, directionality, and organization) stand to benefit from the appropriate provision of response accommodations.

Setting Accommodations

These accommodations change the physical location or the conditions under which a student engages with classwork or assessments. Location choices may include a different room, a different seating location within the room, small group instruction, or a study carrel. Conditions may include the use of sound-blocking headphones or allowing “whisper reading” as long as others are not disturbed.

Who Benefits: Those students needing targeted instruction, those who find large group settings distracting, who are unable to effectively filter out background noise, and those who express a preference for small group or individual space to better focus will benefit from setting considerations.

Timing and Scheduling

These accommodations may change the way timing or the order of tasks is organized, perhaps to allow more frequent breaks. They may also include the provision of additional time to complete classwork or assessments.

Who Benefits: Those students with attentional or endurance issues who generally need more than the allotted time to complete activities, assignments and assessments. ELs who must manage the increased cognitive load of learning a new language coupled with challenging academic content may also benefit.

Distinguishing Between Accommodations and Modifications

Accommodations are provisions made that allow a student to access and demonstrate learning. They allow the student equitable access to learning without substantially changing the instructional level, the performance criteria, or the content of the curriculum or assessment. For EL students or a student with an identified disability, accommodations are a required consideration for participation in state and district-wide assessments.

Modifications are substantial changes in what a student is expected to learn and demonstrate. Modifications may change the instructional level, the content, or the performance criteria. Providing modifications during instruction reduces the student's access to critical content, and the cumulative effect over time may result in the student's inability to meet requirements for graduation.

For students with significant cognitive disabilities, modifications may be necessary to provide a student with meaningful and productive learning experiences, environments, and assessments based on individual needs and abilities.

Examples of modifications in instruction:

- Making assignments shorter or limiting to only targeted segments
- Requiring a student to learn less material (working with fewer objectives, shortened units or lessons)

Modifications of classroom assessments:

Modification of classroom assessments reduces the rigor and increases the chances of guessing correctly. This practice defeats the purpose of the assessment. Modifications of classroom assessments may include:

- Offering fewer response choices (presenting two rather than four)
- Limiting assessment items to those requiring recall and reproduction only
- Leading the student by providing hints or clues to correct responses

Modifying state standardized assessments or state standardized assessment administration procedures constitutes a testing irregularity, resulting in invalid scores for the student.

Step Three - Selecting Instruction and Assessment Accommodations for Individual Students

Provision of accommodations does not afford the student an unfair advantage, but simply assists the student in acquiring, retaining, and demonstrating grade level skills and knowledge. Decisions surrounding the appropriate selection of accommodations for individuals begin with a well-developed plan, guided by relevant information gathered on the status of an English Learner, or from information in a PLAAFP (statement of present levels of academic and functional performance) for a student with disabilities. Utilize these sources to identify the student's current strengths and needs. As service providers or teams deliberate options, the objective should be to select accommodations that will minimize the effects of the student's learning challenges - whether with language acquisition or identified disabilities - when engaging with grade level curriculum in instruction and assessment. All service providers must be knowledgeable about the demands of the academic content standards and the design features of the corresponding assessments in order to make **informed** accommodation selections. Information gathering about the types of instructional and assessment task expectations of students to demonstrate proficiency will help guide the team's decision-making.

Educational Plan Development

Service providers, whether part of a team or in consultation with the student and his or her parents, may consider the following guidelines in planning for instruction. During plan development, accommodations may be addressed when:

- Considering any services, activities, or academic/behavioral supports a student may need across educational settings to facilitate participation alongside the student's peers in general education **to the maximum extent appropriate**
- Considering accommodations that will facilitate the student's participation in state or district-wide assessments
- Considering the provision of communication and assistive technology supports

Teams select accommodations based on the needs of the individual student, not a particular disability category or simply to “cover all bases”. Selecting accommodations just in case they’re needed is inappropriate. In fact, over-accommodating a student has been shown in studies to actually disadvantage the student.

A range of accommodations may be offered to students for access to instructional content, but not all of the accommodations used for instruction may be permissible on district or state-wide assessments. **This circumstance should not deter teams from offering accommodations that provide access to grade level content during instruction or a means of expressing what’s been learned.**

Fostering student autonomy should be a guiding principle in accommodation selections and their continued use. Ideally, selections should be informed by both the student, who expresses preferences based on use, and by the teacher who has observed positive results associated with the use of one in particular or combination of effective accommodations. The need for many accommodations extends beyond the school setting, so parent voice and support in their selection ensures more global use. Although teams may only meet annually for such discussion, it’s advisable for students and teachers to evaluate the use and effectiveness of current and potential accommodations throughout the year in order to make informed decisions as plans are developed. The student, as part of the team, needs to have a voice in which accommodations are provided to ensure their use across settings and to develop an awareness of what works – thus building a virtual bank of effective tools. In this way, the student learns self-advocacy skills that are beneficial throughout school and on into post-graduation endeavors.

Differentiating Between Instructional and Testing Accommodations:

A range of accommodations may be offered to students for access to instructional content, but not all of the accommodations used for instruction may be permissible on district or state-wide assessments. **This circumstance should not deter teachers from offering instructional accommodations that provide access to grade level content or a means of expressing what’s been learned.** When considering which instructional accommodations may be allowed in testing, service providers and teams must be aware of state accommodations policies set to maintain the validity of the assessment scores. Approved accommodations neither provide an advantage nor a disadvantage to the EL student or student with

disabilities, but allow test results to be interpreted in accordance with the standardized administration procedures as commensurate with the student's peers.

When students are unable to use an instructional accommodation in testing, alternatives should be offered and practiced by the student in preparation for test participation. In addition to designated accommodations, **students should have ample time to explore the test features and tools offered on computer-based tests in order to use them to their full advantage and to ensure that they don't have the unintended effect of creating new barriers.** Regular use of similar tools and features during instruction allows teachers to illustrate their use and versatility, but at minimum students should work with the sample tests provided to become familiar with the testing format and functions in advance of testing. Some students may need guided and repeated exposures to the sample test to master the use of these tools, so preparation should be considered on an individualized basis.

AzMERIT Sample Tests: <http://azmeritportal.org/sample-tests/>

Step Four - Provide Accommodations During Instruction and Assessment

Determine which instructional accommodations are appropriate for use across settings as well as which accommodations must be provided within a particular setting. For instance, text-to-speech might be most appropriate during instruction in language arts, science, and social studies while the provision of certain adaptive equipment may only pertain to Physical Education. Once appropriate settings have been determined for each accommodation, their use is then reflected in instructional planning and implementation, and they are monitored for effectiveness. As part of a student-teacher feedback cycle¹, adjustments may be made to enhance the effectiveness of an accommodation.

1

<http://prekprograms.cmswiki.wikispaces.net/file/view/FA%20What%20do%20teachers%20need%20to%20know%20about%20formatives!.pdf/247610871/FA%20What%20do%20teachers%20need%20to%20know%20about%20formatives!.pdf>

An accommodation may not be used solely for an assessment. If an accommodation is **not** deemed necessary to access content or demonstrate proficiency during instruction, there is no way to justify its use for access in an assessment context.

Thoughtful consideration is necessary when planning to provide testing accommodations. The provision of accommodations involving timing and setting may require additional personnel, alternative settings, or additional breaks. The test administrator must be aware of the needs of individual students and must adhere to standardized test administration conditions and procedures, including the provision of accommodations, to ensure valid test results for these students.

Step Five - Evaluate the Effectiveness of Accommodation Use

The review of instructional accommodations should be ongoing as part of a continual feedback cycle between the teacher and the student to evaluate what works best, under which conditions or settings, in providing the necessary access to instruction. Student choice is critical to buy-in and use, so offering options and providing the student with rationales for using accommodations are important considerations. Students should be encouraged to try out possible alternative accommodations, particularly the many emerging technology options, and to evaluate their effectiveness. This process provides the student and the teacher with evidence to make informed decisions during the development of the IEP or ILLP and in planning for instruction.

Collecting and analyzing data on the effectiveness of testing accommodations is necessary to ensure the meaningful participation of accommodated students in state and district-wide assessments. The validity of claims made regarding student proficiency is based on the *provision and use* of documented accommodations during assessment. Such data will support decision-making about the continued use of a testing accommodation and may reveal questionable patterns of accommodation use. The data may also reveal areas where additional training or support is needed for school personnel such as service providers, test administrators, and IEP or ILLP team members.

The types of data collected may range from recording the test accommodations **provided and used** as well as recording any student reflections on the effectiveness of the accommodations following test administration. Test administrators who take notes on student accommodation usage during the assessment can also contribute valuable information based on their observations.

Sources

The CCSSO Accessibility Manual, published in 2016, guided the development of this manual.

<http://ccsso.ingeniuxondemand.com/DssPreview/Documents/2016/CCSSO%20Accessibility%20Manual.docx>

Section 2



AzMERIT and AIMS Science Testing Conditions, Tools, and Accommodations Guidance for Spring 2018 Assessments

Audience: Test Coordinators, Test Administrators, Service Providers, and IEP and ILLP Team Members

Arizona Revised Statutes, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act mandate that **all students** who are educated with Arizona’s public funds must participate in state assessments. This includes all students with disabilities and all students identified as English Learners. The purpose of this section is to inform all Achievement Test coordinators and administrators of the universal test administration conditions, the testing tools, and the accommodations available on Arizona’s Achievement Tests (AzMERIT and AIMS Science). This section also provides guidance on the use of these conditions, tools, and accommodations.

Achievement tests are standardized, and the correct administration of these tests requires the use of this manual as well as the corresponding *Test Administration Directions* manuals. All test administrators are expected to read and follow the guidance in this document. All test administrators are also expected to read and follow the guidance and scripted directions in the *Test Administration Directions* for the selected grade level.

This section provides guidance for testing ELs and students with disabilities who take the general assessments. Students with significant cognitive disabilities may be eligible to participate in Arizona’s alternate assessments: MSAA and AIMS A Science. Please see **Section 3** of this document for guidance on MSAA and AIMS A Science accommodations, or contact the Alternate Assessment Unit with additional questions or concerns at AssessingSWDs@azed.gov.

Overview of Achievement Tests

AzMERIT is Arizona’s statewide achievement assessment of English language arts (ELA) and math. AzMERIT includes grade level tests for students enrolled in Grades 3-8 and End-of Course tests for students enrolled in courses aligned to the first three English credits required for high school graduation, and for the first three math credits required for high school graduation. AzMERIT tests are available in two modes: computer-based testing (CBT) and paper-based testing (PBT). The two modes, CBT and PBT, will produce comparable student results. AIMS Science is administered to students in Grades 4, 8, and High School. High school students will participate in AIMS Science in the spring of their first or second year of high school. Details regarding when high school students participate in AIMS Science are available from the school or district test coordinator.

To prepare for the assessments, every student should be engaged in instructional programs based on Arizona's Academic Content Standards. These programs should use varied approaches to instruction, offer a range of opportunities that enable students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills, and provide any necessary, appropriate program supports and instructional accommodations to ensure student access to the academic content.

Universal Test Administration Conditions

All *Test Administration Directions* manuals address the need to provide students with an appropriate testing location that is comfortable and free from distractions. Universal Test Administration Conditions are specific testing situations and conditions that may be offered to **any student** in order to provide a comfortable and distraction-free testing environment. Universal Test Administration Conditions are **available for both AzMERIT and AIMS Science**.

Universal Test Administration Conditions include:

- Testing in a small group, testing one-on-one, testing in a separate location or in a study carrel
- Being seated in a specific location within the testing room or being seated at special furniture
- Having the test administered by a familiar test administrator
- Using a special pencil or pencil grip
- Using a place holder
- Read-aloud (text-to-speech or human reader) content of the ELA-writing, math, and AIMS Science assessments
- Using devices that allow the student to see the test: glasses, contacts, magnification, and special lighting
- Using different color choices, reverse contrast (for CBT), or color overlays
- Using devices that allow the student to hear the test directions: hearing aids and amplification
- Wearing noise buffers after the scripted directions have been read
- Signing the scripted directions
- Having the scripted directions repeated
- Having questions about the scripted directions or the directions that students read on their own answered
- Reading the test quietly to himself/herself as long as other students are not disrupted
- Individual students may take a stretch break (1 or 2 minutes) during test session (students cannot talk, use electronic devices, or leave the testing room)
- Students may use the restroom during test (only 1 student may leave room at a time)
 - Test Administrator must collect paper test booklet/answer document
 - CBT must be in "Pause" status
- Extended time (Testing session must be completed in the same school day it was started)
- The use of scratch paper (plain, lined, or graph; schools provide). Scratch paper must be securely shredded at the conclusion of testing.

While some of the items listed as Universal Test Administration Conditions might be included in an IEP or ILLP as an accommodation, for achievement testing purposes these are not considered testing accommodations and are available to any student who needs them.

Universal Testing Tools for AzMERIT (CBT)

The AzMERIT computer-based testing platform offers numerous testing tools. **Test features and tools are available for exploration in the AzMERIT Sample Tests.** Students who will participate in the computer-based AzMERIT are advised to practice with the AzMERIT Sample Tests and try out all of the available tools.

The following Universal Test Tools are available to **all students** taking the AzMERIT CBT tests and cannot be disabled.

AzMERIT Universal Testing Tools for CBT - Available to All Students	
Area Boundaries	Allows student to click anywhere on the selected response text or button for multiple choice options.
Expand/Collapse Passage	Expand a passage for easier readability. Expanded passages can also be collapsed.
Help	View the on-screen <i>Test Instructions and Help</i> .
Highlighter	Highlight text in a passage or item.
Line Reader	Allows student to track the line he or she is reading.
Mark (Flag) for Review	Mark an item for review so that it can be easily found later.
Notes/Comments	Allows student to open an on-screen notepad and take notes or make comments. In ELA, notes are available globally and available throughout the session. In math, comments are attached to a specific test item and available throughout the session.
Pause and Restart	Allows the session to be paused at any time and restarted and taken over a one day period.
Review Test	Allows student to review the test before ending it.
Strikethrough	Cross out answer options for multiple-choice and multi-select items.
System Settings	Adjust audio (volume) during the test.
Text-to-Speech	Text-to-Speech for instructions and content of AzMerit Math, Writing, and Aims Science.
Tutorial	View a short video about each item type and how to respond.
Writing Tools	Editing tools (cut, copy, and paste) and basic text formatting tools (bold, underline, and italic) for extended response items.
Zoom In/Zoom Out	Enlarge the font and images in the test. Undo zoom in and return the font and images in the test to original size.

Text-to-Speech or Human Reader **are limited to scripted directions** for the **Reading** section of ELA on AzMERIT.

Additional Subject Area Tools for AzMERIT (CBT and PBT)

AzMERIT testing requires specific subject area tools or resources for certain portions of the assessment.

AzMERIT Subject Area Tools/Resources - Available to All Students		
Dictionary/Thesaurus	Writing	CBT – Students have access to the dictionary/thesaurus tool. Students may opt to use a published, paper dictionary or thesaurus instead of using this tool. PBT – Schools must make published, paper dictionaries and thesauruses available to students. Students with a visual impairment may use an electronic dictionary and thesaurus with other features turned-off.
Writing Guide	Writing	CBT – Students have access to the writing guide tool. PBT – The writing guide is included within the test booklet.
Calculator Grades 7-8 (Part 1 only): scientific calculators are acceptable EOC (entire test): graphing calculators are acceptable	Math	CBT – Students have access to the calculator tool when calculator use is permitted. Students may opt to use an acceptable handheld calculator instead of this tool when calculator use is permitted. PBT – Students may use an acceptable handheld calculator when calculator use is permitted. Schools should provide students with an appropriate handheld calculator.

Assessment Accommodations

Administering Achievement Tests with Testing Accommodations

To ensure valid assessment results, it is not permissible to simplify, paraphrase, explain, or eliminate any test item, writing prompt, or answer option. If a student’s IEP calls for a testing accommodation that is not listed below, contact ADE at AzMERIT@azed.gov or AIMSScience@azed.gov for guidance.

Prior to the day of a test, test administrators must know what accommodations each student will be using and how to administer them properly. Testing accommodations provided for one student may not impede or impact other students in the testing room. It is the responsibility of the Test Administrator to see that each student who qualifies for testing accommodations receives appropriate accommodations while also ensuring that other students who do not receive accommodations are not affected. Designated accommodations are recorded differently for AzMERIT CBT, AzMERIT PBT, and AIMS Science testing. Refer to the appropriate *Test Administration Directions* on how to properly record accommodations for each test.

Accommodations for an Injured Student

A student with an injury, such as a broken hand or arm that would make it difficult to participate in AzMERIT, may use as appropriate any of the universal test administration conditions listed above and any of the following accommodations. There are no specific CBT tools to support these accommodations. If the injured student requires an accommodation not listed, *contact ADE at AzMERIT@azed.gov or AIMSScience@azed.gov for guidance.*

AzMERIT and AIMS Science Accommodations for a Student with an Injury	
Adult Transcription	An adult marks selected response items on CBT test form or PBT test booklet based on student answers provided orally or using gestures. An adult transfers student responses produced using Assistive Technology on CBT test form or PBT test booklet.
Assistive Technology	Use of assistive technology for the writing response and/or other open response items. Grammar check, spell check, encyclopedia, word predictive functions, and internet access must be turned off. Speech-to-Text is not permitted. An adult must transfer the student's responses exactly as written into the Direct Entry Interface (DEI) or PBT test booklet. Any print copy must be shredded. Any electronic copy must be deleted. This accommodation also requires Adult Transcription.
Rest/Breaks	Student may take breaks during testing sessions to rest.
Paper Accommodation	CBT schools may allow an injured student to use paper accommodation. This accommodation must be used for all parts of the ELA test or Math test. Students that receive this accommodation must have their responses entered into the Direct Entry Interface (DEI) by a Test Administrator.

Only accommodations used regularly during instruction should be considered for assessment use. It is inappropriate to introduce an accommodation for the sole purpose of assessment and doing so may negatively impact student performance.

Accommodations for English Learners (ELs) and Fluent English Proficient (FEP) Students

For an English Learner or a Fluent English Proficient Year 1 or Year 2 student, accommodations are intended to allow the student the opportunity to demonstrate content knowledge even though the student may not be functioning at grade level in English.

Students who are not proficient in English, as determined by the Arizona English Language Learner Assessment (AZELLA), may use, as appropriate, any of the Universal Test Administration Conditions and any of the EL accommodations listed below. (This includes English Learner (EL) students withdrawn from English language services at parent request.)

Reclassified Fluent English Proficient (FEP) students are monitored for two school years. These FEP Year 1 and FEP Year 2 students may use, as appropriate, any of the Universal Test Administration Conditions and any of the following EL accommodations.

If directions are read aloud, simplified, or translated as an accommodation, administration must take place in a setting that does not disturb other students (such as in a one-on-one or very small group setting).

If an EL student requires an accommodation that is not listed, *contact ADE at AzMERIT@azed.gov or AIMSScience@azed.gov for guidance.*

AzMERIT and AIMS Science Accommodations for EL and FEP Students	
Rest/Breaks	Student may take breaks during testing sessions to rest.
Simplified Directions	Provide verbal directions in simplified English for the scripted directions or the directions that students read on their own as needed.
Translate Directions	Exact oral translation, in the student’s native language, of the scripted directions or the directions that students read on their own as needed. Translations that paraphrase, simplify, or clarify directions are not permitted. Written translations are not permitted. Translation of the test content is not permitted.
Translation Dictionary	Provide a word-for-word published, paper translation dictionary. Students with a visual impairment may use an electronic word-for-word Translation dictionary with other features turned off.

Text-to-Speech or Human Reader **are limited to scripted directions** for the **Reading** section of ELA on AzMERIT.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

For **AzMERIT and AIMS Science**, students with disabilities may use, as appropriate, any of the Universal Test Administration Conditions and testing tools listed above and any of the following accommodations as designated in their IEP or 504 plan. If a student with a disability requires an accommodation not listed, *contact ADE at AzMERIT@azed.gov or AIMSScience@azed.gov for guidance.*

AzMERIT and AIMS Science Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Abacus	Students with a visual impairment may use an abacus without restrictions for any AzMERIT math test.
Adult Transcription	An adult marks selected response items onto the CBT test form or into the PBT booklet based on student answers provided orally or using gestures. An adult transfers student responses produced using Assistive Technology into the Direct Entry Interface (DEI) or into the PBT test booklet.
ASL and Closed Captioning	CBT – Available for the listening items on the Reading ELA test.
Assistive Technology	Use of assistive technology*, including a Braille writer, for the writing response and/or other open response items. Internet access, spell check, grammar check, and predict-ahead functions must be turned off. An adult must transfer the student’s responses exactly as written into the Direct Entry Interface (DEI) or into the PBT booklet. Any print copies must be shredded. Any electronic copy must be deleted. This accommodation also requires adult transcription. *The use of speech-to-text is prohibited.
Braille Test Booklet	Provide a paper Braille test booklet. This accommodation also requires Adult Transcription into the Data Entry Interface.
Large Print Test Booklet	CBT – Either increase default zoom settings (up to 3x) or use Zoom Text when the Student participates in CBT or provide a PBT Large Print test booklet. A PBT Large Print test booklet requires Adult Transcription into the Data Entry Interface (DEI). PBT – Provide a large print test booklet. This accommodation also requires Adult Transcription into the Direct Entry Interface (DEI).
Paper Test Booklet	CBT – Provide a regular-sized paper test booklet for a student at a school administering the CBT. If a paper test booklet is ordered as an accommodation for a student at a CBT school, the student must use the paper test booklet and may not participate in computer-based testing. This accommodation also requires Adult Transcription into the Data Entry Interface (DEI).
Rest/Breaks	Student may take breaks during testing sessions to rest.
Sign Test Content	Sign any of the content of the Writing portion of the ELA, the math test, and AIMS Science. Signing the content of the Reading portion of the AzMERIT ELA test is prohibited.
Simplified Directions	Provide verbal directions in simplified English for the scripted directions or the directions that students read on their own.

Text-to-Speech or Human Reader **are limited to scripted directions** for the **Reading** section of ELA on AzMERIT.

Section 3



The Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA) and AIMS A Science Optimal Testing Conditions, Assessment Features, and Accommodations

Guidance for spring 2018 Assessments

Audience: Test Coordinators, Test Administrators, Service Providers, and IEP and ILLP Team Members

The Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA) is a comprehensive assessment system designed to promote increasingly higher academic outcomes for students with significant cognitive disabilities in preparation for a broader array of post-secondary outcomes. The MSAA is designed to assess students with significant cognitive disability and measures academic content that is aligned to and derived from Arizona’s academic content standards. This test contains many built-in supports that allow students to take the test using materials they are most familiar with and to communicate what they know and can do as independently as possible. The MSAA is administered in the areas of ELA and Mathematics in grades 3-8 and 11.

This assessment was developed through the research and development done by the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) and is being carried forward by the MSAA State Partners. MSAA is currently being administered by ten participating members: Arizona, Arkansas, the District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Montana, the Pacific Assessment Consortium (PAC-6)^[1], the U.S. Virgin Islands, South Dakota, and Tennessee.

The MSAA is an online assessment, administered individually by a trained test administrator. The *Test Administration Manual* (TAM) contains detailed directions which include embedded accommodations tied to each item throughout the assessment. In addition to embedded accommodations, examples of the types of instructional accommodations which may be documented in the IEP for presentation, response, conditions, and timing are listed below. For important details on test preparation and administration, please consult the *MSAA Test Administration Manual* (TAM). If you have questions about using a routine instructional accommodation during testing, please contact AssessingSWDs@azed.gov

^[1] The Pacific Assessment Consortium (including the entities of American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Republic of Palau, and Republic of the Marshall Islands) are collectively considered one state, led by the University of Guam Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service (CEDDERS).

MSAA and AIMS A Science: Creating a Comfortable and Secure Testing Environment

TAs must provide each student with a comfortable and secure testing environment during every testing session. TAs can ensure an appropriate testing environment by providing:

Optimal testing conditions, appropriate assessment features, the accommodations in a student's IEP that are consistent with MSAA and AIMS A Science accommodations policies and those found in the *Procedures for Assessing Students Who Are Blind, Deaf, or Deaf-Blind: Additional Directions for Test Administration*.

These procedures support student access to the test so that students can demonstrate their knowledge. Each of these is discussed in detail in the individual *Test Administration Manuals* (TAMs). Implementation of these practices **must be planned for prior to testing the student**.

A secure testing environment includes but is not limited to the following:

- Restricting student access to resources that are explicitly identified in the DTA
- Viewing of test items only by the student taking the test and the certified, licensed, and trained TA administering the test
- Removing any devices or materials that could jeopardize test content in the test-taking environment or that may distract the student
- Ensuring a quiet test-taking environment, void of distractions, and one that does not permit other students to hear the responses to the items of the student being tested. This does not need to be a separate room or location in the school building if the student is unfamiliar with that space. Students are often comfortable in a routine, and disrupting this routine could have consequences on their ability to focus on the test. A secure and comfortable space could be a corner of the classroom where the TA and the student can work uninterrupted and in privacy. Other students may remain in the classroom but cannot interfere when testing is taking place. Additional staff may be required in order for the TA to focus on the student being tested.
- Reviewing the assessment features and accommodations the student may need
- Making sure the same computer (if using a computer administration), laptop, tablet, or other device is available for testing. This ensures that security of materials is maintained.
- Providing scratch paper for students to make notes or solve math items. Following testing, all scratch paper must be submitted to the TC for secure shredding.
- Providing appropriate student positioning, appropriate assessment features, and the accommodations in the student's IEP that are consistent with MSAA and AIMS A accommodations policies
- Providing encouragement to support student engagement and focus. TAs may use phrases that do not indicate either the correct or incorrect response. Examples of acceptable encouraging phrases include:
 - "Just five minutes until a break!"
 - "I like the way you are listening and following directions."
 - "Only one more to go!"
 - "Keep working!"

MSAA Features

Assessment features support student access to the test. Assessment features are either built into the MSAA System or are typically available on a computer. Assessment features may be enabled by the student or TA at the time of testing. The test is designed to have all passages, items and response options read to the student, either by the Audio Player or the TA. Refer to the MSAA System User Guide for Test Administrators for descriptions of the assessment features and the directions to enable the assessment features. Students and TAs should become familiar with the assessment features and may practice using them with the sample items prior to administration of the test.

MSAA Accessibility Features – Computer, Laptop, or Tablet Administration	
Answer Masking Tool	The embedded Answer Masking tool allows students and TAs to electronically cover and reveal individual answer options as needed
Line Reader Tool	The embedded Line Reader tool allows the entire item to be shaded, and an adjustable box allows attention to be focused on one line or a few lines at a time. The box can be adjusted by the student or the TA.
Alternate Color Theme Tool	The student or the TA can change the onscreen background color and/or text color based on need or preference. The options are: White background with black text Light blue background with black text Black background with white text Cream background with black text Light magenta background with black text Dark blue background with light blue text
Audio Player Tool	The embedded Audio Player reads each line automatically and can be paused, resumed, and made to repeat segments as needed. The pace of reading can be controlled by the student or TA so that reading of the text may be slowed or sped up depending on student needs.
Read Aloud by TA	The TA may read the directions, answer options, or passage as often as is reasonable to obtain a student’s response to an item. All text must be read to students exactly as written, with no paraphrasing or word substitution.
Alternative Text Read Aloud by TA	Alternative text includes descriptive statements for graphics (e.g., tables, charts, graphs, timelines, etc.) that may need to be described verbally in order for the student to understand. <i>Alternative text can be read by the embedded Audio Player or the TA. If the TA will read the alternative text, it is included in the DTA and should be read as indicated.</i>
Increase Volume	To increase the volume on the computer, laptop, or tablet, use the built-in volume control options. Students may need headphones depending on testing location.
Magnification Tool	The embedded magnification tool increases the size of the text and graphics only in the selected area. The magnification tool is attached to the cursor so it will highlight any section the mouse hovers over.
Increase/Decrease Size of Text and Graphics	Computers, laptops, and tablets provide zoom-in and zoom-out functions. Projection systems, video magnifiers, and smart boards may also be used to increase the size of the text and graphics in order to view more item information on one page.

MSAA Accessibility Features – Computer, Laptop, or Tablet Administration

Tactile Graphics	<p>Tactile graphics are raised versions of print graphics that are adapted for the sense of touch (<i>Guidelines and Standards for Tactile Graphics, 2010, Braille Authority of North America</i>). An example is the raised lines on a simplified image of the parts of a flower or on a mathematical graph.</p> <p>Tactile graphics may be used during the test if they are already used by the student on a regular basis. Review the vocabulary lists for ELA and mathematics prior to testing to ensure that students have time to learn and become familiar with any new tactile graphics. TAs are responsible for creating any tactile graphics the student may require. Refer to page 23 of the TAM for guidance.</p>
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MSAA Accessibility Features – Paper Administration

Answer Masking	For students who require answer masking on the paper version of the test, TAs should use paper or cards to cover and reveal individual answer options as needed.
Line Reader	The TA or student can use two pieces of paper to limit attention to one or a few illuminated lines at a time, while blocking out the rest of the test item.
Alternate Color Themes	Acetate overlays in the color preferred by the student should be used. Another option is to print the test on paper that is the color preferred by the student.
Increase/Decrease Size of Text and Graphics	Paper versions of the test can be projected by document projection devices or interactive whiteboards as needed by the student.
Increase Volume	TAs can adjust the volume of their voice as necessary.
Magnification	Any hand-held magnification device normally used by the student is acceptable.
Read Aloud by TA	The TA may read the directions, answer options, or passage as often as is reasonable to obtain a student’s response to an item. All text must be read to students exactly as written, with no paraphrasing or word substitution.
Read Aloud by TA – Alternative Text	Alternative text includes descriptive statements for graphics (e.g., tables, charts, graphs, timelines, etc.) that may need to be described verbally in order for the student to understand. <i>Alternative text is included in the DTA and should be read aloud by the TA as needed.</i>
Manipulatives for Mathematics	<p>Directions for the use of manipulatives are described in the DTA; to the extent possible, these should be the tools the student uses during instruction. Manipulatives are not provided by MSAA because not all students use the same tools. Possible manipulatives and tools required for testing include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ruler, thermometer, clock, abacus, talking calculator, raised line graph/grid paper, tiles, blocks, etc. • Calculator. Each item includes information for the TA on whether a calculator is allowable. Most items do allow the use of a calculator, but it is important to note which ones do not.
Tactile Graphics	<p>Tactile graphics are raised versions of print graphics that are adapted for the sense of touch (<i>Guidelines and Standards for Tactile Graphics, 2010, Braille Authority of North America</i>). An example is the raised lines on a simplified image of the parts of a flower or on a mathematical graph.</p> <p>Tactile graphics may be used during the test if they are already used by the student on a regular basis. Review the vocabulary lists for ELA and Mathematics prior to testing to ensure that students have time to learn and become familiar with any new tactile graphics. TAs are responsible for creating any tactile graphics the student may require. Refer to page 23 of the TAM for guidance.</p>
Tactile Symbols	Tactile Symbols may be used during the test if they are already used by the student on a regular basis. Review the vocabulary lists for ELA and Mathematics prior to testing to ensure that students have time to learn and become familiar with any new

MSAA Accessibility Features – Paper Administration	
	symbols. TAs are responsible for creating any tactile symbols the student may require. Refer to page 23 of the TAM for guidance.
Object Replacement	<p>An object or part of an object may be used to represent a person, place, object, or activity. For example, a silk flower petal, leaf, and stem may represent parts of a flower or interlocking centimeter blocks may represent graphed numbers.</p> <p>Object replacement may be used during the test if it is already used by the student on a regular basis. Please review the vocabulary lists for ELA and Mathematics prior to testing to ensure that students have time to learn and become familiar with any new objects. TAs are responsible for creating any objects the student may require. Refer to page 23 of the TAM for guidance on Tactile Graphics and Object Replacement.</p>

MSAA Accommodations

Accommodations are changes in the materials or procedures of the assessment that **do not alter the construct being measured**. For the assessments, a student may use the accommodations that are in his/her IEP that are consistent with the MSAA and AIMS A Science accommodations policies.

Note: The use of any physical prompting, including hand over hand, **invalidates the results** of the test for the student. The use of physical prompting is considered to be a modification or change to the *Directions for Test Administration*. Physical prompting is not permitted, and it is considered to be an inappropriate test practice and a test irregularity.

MSAA Testing Accommodations	
Assistive Technology	Students may use assistive technology devices for viewing, responding to, or interacting with the test. The student and the TA should use the AT device with the sample items to ensure that it functions properly with the MSAA Online Assessment System. Refer to the MSAA Online Assessment System User Guide for Test Administrators for information about compatibility of the MSAA Online Assessment System with assessment features.
Paper Version	<p>A paper version of the test may be downloaded and printed from the MSAA Online Assessment System in PDF format. After testing, all printed assessment materials must be given to the TC for secure shredding, and all downloaded files must be deleted from any computer or laptop used for testing.</p> <p>A TA may record student responses for all or part of the test, including the writing prompt. Anyone performing as a scribe for the student must read and follow the MSAA Scribe Accommodation Protocol in Appendix A of the TAM. Here are three ways a scribe can support the student’s independence during testing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A student is able to use a mouse to select a response to the selected response items but cannot use the keyboard to type a response to the writing prompt. In this case, the scribe can type the student’s writing response, but may not need to help with any other part of the test. • A student is able to use the mouse but becomes physically fatigued easily. The scribe can select the response the student indicates as needed. The scribe can assist with recording and typing the student’s writing response. • A student is able to complete the Paper Version of the test that the TA printed. The TA enters the student’s responses into the MSAA Online Assessment System when the student has completed the test, after each testing session, or after several items are completed.

MSAA Testing Accommodations	
	Note: All student responses must be entered for Session 1 before an assignment in Session 2 may be determined.
Sign Language	For students who use American Sign Language (ASL), Pidgin Sign English (PSE), or Sign Exact English (SEE), the TA may translate passages, items, answer options, and directions. Review the vocabulary lists for ELA and Mathematics to determine which words the student may need practice with prior to testing. Required Documents: It is important to adhere to the Sign Language Protocol in Appendix C of the TAM as it will help signers avoid cueing the student.

AIMS A Science

Arizona’s Instrument to Measure Standards Alternate (AIMS A) is a standards-based assessment, aligned with Arizona’s Alternate Academic Standards, that measures what students know and are able to do in the content area of Science. Students are assessed in Grades 4, 8, and high school and a report detailing the student’s progress toward meeting the grade level science standards is generated for teachers and parents.

Features, tools, and accommodations for AIMS A Science are listed in the table below. If a student requires an additional accommodation that is not listed below, please contact ADE Alternate Assessment (AssessingSWDs@azed.gov)

AIMS A Science Testing Features, Tools, and Accommodations		
Time/Setting	Presentation	Response
Testing over multiple days	Oral reading by Test Administrator	Augmentative devices or other Assistive Technology
Extended time	Large print or magnification device	Adaptive calculators
Multiple or frequent breaks	Sign language	Number or alphabet lines
Change in schedule	Tactile graphics	Manipulatives
One-on-one or small group	Manipulatives	Visual/verbal/physical cues
Noise buffers	Audio amplification devices	
Adjusted lighting	Visual/verbal/physical cues	

Section 4



Arizona's English Language Learner Assessment (AZELLA)

Audience: Test Coordinators, Test Administrators, Service Providers, and IEP and ILLP Team Members

Arizona's English Language Learner Assessment (AZELLA) is a standards-based assessment that measures a student's English language proficiency based on the Arizona English Language Proficiency Standards. AZELLA meets both state and federal requirements in assessing the language proficiency of students identified as second language learners. It is used to determine student placement for appropriate English language instruction as well as for periodic reassessment purposes.

The Test Administration Directions (TAD) that accompany each form of the AZELLA provide guidance and scripted directions to ensure a standardized administration of the assessment. The following Universal Test Administration Conditions may be offered to **any student** to provide him/her with a comfortable, distraction-free environment during testing.

Universal Test Administration Conditions include:

- Testing in a small group, one-on-one, or in a separate location (e.g., another room), or in a study carrel
- Being seated in a specific location within the testing room or being seated at special furniture
- Having the test administered by a familiar Test Administrator
- Using a special pencil or grip
- Using devices (e.g., glasses, contacts, magnification, special lighting, and color overlays) that allow the student to see the test
- Using devices (e.g., hearing aid, amplification apparatus) that allow the student to hear the test administration
- Wearing noise buffers after the scripted directions have been read (for the Reading and Writing sections)
- Repeating scripted directions from the Test Administration Directions as needed
- Answering questions about the scripted directions from the Test Administration Directions and/or the directions that students read on their own as needed
- The use of scratch paper (to be securely shredded at the conclusion of testing)

Students who are unable to respond due to an injury may receive additional considerations. Contact AZELLA@azed.gov for further information.

Test Accommodations for EL Students with Disabilities

All students who have been identified as having an EL need are required to take the AZELLA until they are determined to be proficient in English. This section is designed to provide guidance in the use of accommodations for EL students with disabilities.

Students with disabilities are those with special needs who have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) as determined by the Individual with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) and/or a 504 Plan as determined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Accommodations are changes in the presentation (e.g., read the extended writing prompts aloud) and/or the response options (e.g., scribe assisting with bubbling answers) in the administration of the assessment that **do not alter the item and what is being measured**, but still allow students to demonstrate their proficiency in English. The “Universal Test Administration Conditions” are available to all students and may also be included in a student’s IEP or 504 Plan.

The following AZELLA Test Accommodations for Students with Disabilities are **only available** to those students who have a current IEP or 504 Plan. They are listed by Domain (L= Listening, R= Reading, W= Writing, and S= Speaking) as they relate to the format of the AZELLA.

AZELLA Accommodations	Acceptable	Not Acceptable or Not Applicable
Allow Frequent Breaks	L, R, W	S
Provide verbal directions in simplified English for the directions that students read on their own	L, W	R, S
Allow the Test Administrator to read the test content aloud	W	L, R, S
Allow a scribe to assist in bubbling answers for multiple choice items	L, R, W	S
Allow the use of assistive technology* for the extended writing prompt response with spell check, grammar check, and word prediction functions turned off <i>Contact AZELLA@azed.gov before providing this accommodation</i> * Speech-to-Text is prohibited.	W	L, R, S
Allow the enlargement of test materials <i>Contact AZELLA@azed.gov before providing this accommodation</i>	L, R, W, S	
Allow the test to be administered over multiple days. <i>Contact AZELLA@azed.gov before providing this accommodation</i>	L, R, W	S

The translation of the test by the Test Administrator into another language is not allowed. The use of dictionaries, word lists, or glossaries is not allowed in the administration of the AZELLA. Some students may be provided with accommodations during instruction that are not appropriate for use during a standardized state assessment. Accommodations routinely provided to students during classroom instruction or for classroom assessments based on an IEP or 504 Plan that are not listed above must be approved by ADE prior to their use during AZELLA administration. Send e-mail questions to AZELLA@azed.gov regarding the administration of AZELLA to students with disabilities.