Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations

Connecticut Interim Assessments homepage

To support online testing, a variety of built-in **universal tools** delivered through the online computer platform are available to ALL students. Tools include built-in DESMOS calculators (for calculator-allowed items), the ability to cross out item responses, online note pads, or the ability to enlarge the text on the screen.

More specialized supports, known as designated supports, are also available to students when a need is determined by the student, parent/guardian, and teacher. These might include text-to-speech of test items or the Translated Glossary for mathematics for English learners.

Accommodations are only available for students with special needs, as determined by an IEP or a Section 504 Plan. The use of designated supports and accommodations should be consistent with those that are used by the student during instruction.

Students may also need certain supports that cannot be provided through the online computer platform. In such cases, non-embedded supports and accommodations may be appropriate and should be provided to the student by the teacher. These might include the provision of scrap paper, a hand-held calculator (for calculator-allowed items) or the NGSS Periodic Table in English or Spanish for students in Grades 8 and 11.

Both embedded and non-embedded designated supports and accommodations must be entered in TIDE prior to testing.

See a list of universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations that are available on the NGSS and Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments. Note that petitions for Special Documented Accommodations are not needed for use on interim assessments, only the summative assessments.

Accommodations and Supports for English Learners

Accommodations are also available for those English learners also identified as a student with a disability. These students would require an active IEP or 504 Plan documenting their needs for instruction and assessment as an English learner as well as a student with disabilities. Testing accommodations should generally reflect those accommodations used during instruction and should be documented in the IEP or 504 Plan. Additionally, a variety of supports are available for English learners when taking the interim assessments. Refer to the Smarter Balanced Braille Options for information on refreshable braille display and embossing items.

Embedded and Non-Embedded Designated Supports for English Learners

Translation (Glossary) – Embedded Designated Support

Read Aloud Guidelines in Spanish

For detailed information about entering designated supports and accommodations for interim use in the beginning of the school year, please refer to the Manually Entering Designated Supports and Accommodations brochure.

More guidance regarding testing special student populations on the Smarter Balanced and NGSS Interim Assessments is included in the Assessment Guidelines. We've also included easy access to the Assistive Technology Manual for those students who need embedded and non-embedded assistive technology tools when taking interim assessments.

It is important that any test administrator providing a student with a scribe or read-aloud accommodation review test protocols carefully before administering an interim assessment. (Note that these accommodations do not require the submission of a special documented petition for the use on the interims, but they do need to be delivered in an in-person and individual test setting.)

If teachers are going to provide a read-aloud accommodation, they should review these documents to follow appropriate test administration procedures.

Guidelines for Choosing Text-to-Speech or Read Aloud for Smarter Balanced ELA Summative and Interim Assessment Reading Passages for Students with Disabilities in Grades 3-8

Contact Deirdre Ducharme (deirdre.ducharme@ct.gov) or Janet Stuck (janet.stuck@ct.gov) at the Connecticut State Department of Education Office of Student Assessment with any questions.