ADE Guidelines for Assessment Accessibility: Selecting Accessibility Features and Accommodations for Students with Disabilities and for English Learners

Contents

Preface

This document serves as guidance for Arkansas educators in the selection of accessibility features and accommodations, Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) accommodation policies, and the administration of selected features on state-wide assessments within the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment, and Accountability Program (ACTAAP). Individual assessment vendors provide their own manuals for outlining accessibility and accommodations within their assessment; however, Arkansas policy supersedes vendor policies in the event of any conflict between this guidance document and any vendor-specific accessibility and accommodations manual. Barring such conflict, educators should look to vendor-provided manuals for administration guidance of accessibility features and accommodations within that assessment but should use this guidance document for selection considerations.

Section I: Providing Accessibility

Expecting Students to Achieve Grade-level Standards

Education is a basic right for all children in the United States. With legislation aimed at the inclusion of all students comes the drive to ensure equal access to grade-level standards. Academic standards are educational targets outlining what students are expected to learn at each grade level. Teachers ensure that students work toward grade-level standards by using a range of instructional strategies based on the varied strengths and needs of students. For some students, accessibility supports are provided during instruction and assessments to help promote equal access to grade-level content.

Members of the IEP (Individualized Education Program) team, the 504 plan committee, or the LPAC (Language Proficiency Assessment Committee) who are familiar with all characteristics and needs of students should make instructional and assessment decisions for them. These teams are responsible for developing, implementing, and improving accessibility practices for students. The following are the types of team members who may be involved in making accessibility decisions:

- special education teachers or 504 Plan committee representatives

- EL (English Learner) educators and facilitators (EL teachers, EL administrators, etc.)

- assessment officials (test administrators, test coordinators, guidance counselors, reading specialists)

- general education teachers (classroom/content teachers)

- school administrators (principals, school/district officials)

- parents (parents/guardians)

- students (if appropriate)

To accomplish the goal of equal access in education,

- every educator must be familiar with standards and accountability requirements at the state and district level;

- every educator must know where to locate standards; and

- all general, special, and EL educators, as well as other educational stakeholders must collaborate for successful student access.

All students can work toward grade-level academic content or alternate achievement standards and should be expected to achieve these standards when the following three conditions are met:

1. Instruction is provided by teachers who are qualified to teach in the areas addressed by state standards and who know how to differentiate instruction for the diverse/specific population of students they are serving.

2. Individualized approaches to instruction and assessment are in place, and individualized plans are developed for those students who need them.

3. Appropriate accessibility supports are provided to help students access instructional and assessment content.

College- and Career-ready Standards and common assessments across states that are based on those standards present an unprecedented opportunity for educators to accomplish the goal of meaningful inclusion of all students in academic content.

Including All Students in State Assessment Systems

Federal and most state laws (including Arkansas), legal cases, and federal guidance 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:

- assurance of the provision of accessibility supports to facilitate student access to grade-level instruction and state assessments,

- use of alternate assessments to assess the achievement of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, and

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. These documents are particularly important when serving students with disabilities, ELs, and ELs with disabilities. Several important laws require the participation of these students in standards-based instruction and assessment initiatives. Some of these laws address solely students with disabilities; others regulate educational policies and practices exclusively for ELs. Educators should consider both sets of laws when it comes to instruction and assessment of ELs with disabilities.

Equal Access to Grade-level Content

Inclusion of all students in large-scale assessments and grade-level standards is mandated by both federal and state laws. Educators ensure that students work toward grade-level standards by using a range of instructional strategies based on the varied strengths and needs of students. Accessibility supports are provided for students during instruction and assessments to guarantee equal access to grade-level content. To meet this goal of equal access, educators must be familiar with standards and accountability systems at the state and district levels as well as locations of these standards and their updates.

All students, including students with disabilities, ELs and ELs with disabilities, can work toward grade-level academic content standards. They will be able to achieve these standards when instruction is provided by teachers who are qualified to teach in the content areas addressed by state standards and who know how to differentiate instruction for diverse learners. Meaningful access of grade-level content by diverse students is also made possible by appropriately selected accommodations. Additionally, to secure successful student access to grade-level content, ESL educators, special educators, and their general education counterparts must collaborate when making accessibility decisions.

Use of Accessibility Features & Accommodations

When students have had standards-based instruction, with support provided through services and strategies outlined in an IEP or 504 plan, they need an opportunity to show what they have learned on state assessments – with access that is equal to the access provided to students without disabilities. For some students, this access can be increased through the use of accommodations.

Accommodations are changes in the way a student accesses instruction and assessment, without changing the actual standards a student is working toward. The goal is to find a balance that gives students equal access to instruction and assessment without changing or watering down the content.

Accommodations are tools and procedures in the areas of presentation, response, general test condition supports that provide equitable instructional and assessment access for students with disabilities. Accommodations are intended to *mediate* the effects of a student's disability—they are *not* intended to reduce learning expectations.

All accommodations requested for use by the students for statewide testing must be documented in the student's current IEP, 504, or LPAC plan, and be an allowable accommodation. The same accommodations requested for testing **must also be used with the student in the classroom**.

Available accommodations for state-mandated testing vary by test. Educators must be familiar with what accommodations and accessibility features are available for each test. However, it is important to note that **no accommodation listed on a test vendor's list of available accommodations may be assigned if that accommodation conflicts with ADE assessment policy concerning accommodations**. It is very important that the educators responsible for selecting accommodations for students with disabilities are familiar with ADE accommodation policies. If unsure about a specific accommodation, test coordinators are directed to contact the ADE assessment unit for clarification. Additionally, some accommodations may not be listed by a test vendor, yet may be allowable by ADE policy. These accommodations may be requested by submitting a Special Accommodation Request form to the ADE Assessment Unit for review.

Educators must adhere to the directives found in IDEA when making selections. According to IDEA, Sec. 300.160 (b), under "Accommodation Guidelines," a state must develop guidelines for the provision of appropriate accommodations. The state guidelines must identify only those accommodations for each assessment that do not invalidate the score, and instruct IEP teams to select, for each assessment, only those accommodations that do not invalidate the score. In keeping with this mandate, the Consideration of Special Factors page contained in all student IEPs instructs IEP team members to list any assessment accommodations needed (if any) that are consistent with IEP and test administration guidelines.

Accommodation use needs to be linked or matched to classroom instruction, classroom testing, and state tests. Most accommodation use does not begin and end in school. Students who use accommodations will generally also need them at home, in the community, and, as they get older, in postsecondary education and at work.

Students who require accommodations need to have opportunities to learn to use an accommodation in classroom settings, and they also need to be able to take classroom tests using needed accommodations. Testing conditions in the classroom should be as close as possible to the state testing situations to increase the student's comfort level and allow for his/her enhanced performance.

Accommodations for assessment and instruction are integrally intertwined. There are some accommodations that are appropriate for classroom use that would NOT be appropriate, or permitted, in testing situations. Some accommodations may provide an unfair advantage, or even disadvantage, in assessment situations. **No accommodation should be recommended for an assessment that a student has not had a thorough opportunity to learn to use comfortably and effectively during classroom activities.**

Accommodations are commonly categorized in three ways: (1) Presentation, (2) Response, (3) General Test Condition

PRESENTATION SUPPORTS—Allow students to access information in ways that do not require them to visually read standard print. These alternate modes of access include visual, auditory and a combination of visual and auditory.

RESPONSE SUPPORTS—Allow students to complete assignments, tests and activities in different ways or to solve or organize problems using some type of assistive device.

GENERAL TEST CONDITION SUPPORTS—Change the allowable length of a test or assignment and may also change the way the time is structured due to the individual/physical needs of some students, or change the location or conditions in which an assessment is administered.

In a broader sense, an accommodation provides students with access, or as some have referred to it, as "leveling the playing field." This is an important point, because it reflects one of the most fundamental beliefs we have about our educational system—that ALL individuals should be provided with equal opportunity—including the opportunity to achieve grade level content standards. This is why the right to appropriate and reasonable accommodations have been codified in such major federal laws as IDEA, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

When choosing an assessment accommodation for a particular student, it is important to consider state guidelines to determine whether the accommodations are considered acceptable or unacceptable to use. Unacceptable assessment accommodations are commonly referred to as modifications, adaptations, alterations, and nonstandard, non-allowable, or non-approved accommodations. The use of these unacceptable accommodations could invalidate the test, change the construct of the test, or in some way provide unfair advantage to the student.

Some assessment changes are never acceptable. For example, helping students in any way does not give a true picture of what students know. Helping includes coaching, editing student work, answering questions, or giving cues in any way, including gestures, facial expressions, or encouragement to change an answer. It is important to simply encourage students to do their best. Changing the content of a test to make it easier for students who have not learned the content being tested invalidates a test, especially if the test is designed to be used for accountability. These changes might include allowing a student to answer fewer questions, reducing the number of responses required or changing the content

by paraphrasing or offering additional information. Accommodations are intended to promote access, not give students with disabilities an unfair advantage.

Effective decision-making about the provision of appropriate accommodations begins with making good instructional decisions. In turn, making good instructional decisions is facilitated by gathering and reviewing good information about the student's present level of performance in relation to the state academic standards. In essence, the process of making decisions about accommodations is one in which members of the IEP team attempt to provide access to the instruction and assessment that would be hindered or not possible without the accommodation, so that students with disabilities can participate in the general education curriculum. IEP meetings that simply engage people in checking boxes on the compliance document are not conducive to sound decision-making practices, nor do they advance equal opportunities for students to participate in the general education curriculum.

The process of deciding which accommodations a student with disabilities needs or will use is not a one shot or episodic event. There are times when a decision is not too difficult—as in the case of a student whose accommodations have been well documented and shown to be effective over time. There are other times, however, when making decisions about accommodations is very challenging, particularly for students with disabilities who demonstrate highly varied learning styles and preferences. The tendency may be to recommend the use of a variety of accommodations, with the assumption that "the more accommodations, the better," or "at least something will help" a student to do his or her best. Unfortunately, this hit-or-miss approach does not necessarily enhance a student's access to learning or test performance and may actually hurt the performance of some students who feel overwhelmed with the assignment of any unnecessary accommodations or accessibility features.

It is advisable to work with and observe a student prior to the IEP meeting using a variety of accommodations in the classroom in order to figure out what works best. Every student with a disability does not need an accommodation, nor do all students with the same disability need the same accommodations. The ultimate effectiveness of the use of an accommodation depends on a student's familiarity with it and opportunity to practice using it in everyday life—in the classroom, at home, and in the community.

Selecting accommodations for instruction and assessment is the role of each student's IEP or 504 team.

Consider these questions in the selection process:

• What are the student's strengths and needs?

• How do the student's needs affect the achievement of grade level content standards?

• What specialized instruction does the student need to achieve grade level content standards?

• What accommodations will increase the student's access to instruction and assessment?

Begin discussions of accommodations use with a review of an evaluation of accommodations the student has already experienced.

Discuss these points:

• Accommodations used by the student in the classroom and on tests.

• Test and assignment results when accommodations were used and not used.

• Student's perception of how well an accommodation worked.

• Effective combinations of accommodations.

• Difficulties of accommodations use.

• Perceptions of parents, teachers, and specialists about how the accommodation appears to have worked.

Based on a review of the key points above, decide if the student should continue using an accommodation as is, if changes are needed, or if the accommodation should be discontinued.

Consider possible new accommodations (especially if the student is receiving special education or 504 services for the first time). All members of the IEP or 504 team should help gather a list of the student's needs and possible accommodations to try.

Of the accommodations that match the student's needs, consider:

• Student's willingness to learn to use the accommodations.

• Opportunities to learn how to use the accommodations in classroom settings.

• Conditions under which assessments will be given.

• How and when the student will learn to use each new accommodation.

• Appropriate time span to learn to use an assessment accommodation before test day.

• Plan for the ongoing evaluation and improvement of accommodations use.

Involving Students in Choosing and Using Accessibility Features & Accommodations

It is critical for students with disabilities to understand their disabilities and learn self-advocacy strategies for success in school and throughout life. Some students have had limited experience expressing personal preferences and advocating for themselves. Speaking out about preferences, particularly in the presence of authority figures may be a new role for some students. They may need guidance and feedback in this area. Teachers and other IEP team members can play a key role in working with students to advocate for themselves in the context of choosing and using accommodations.

The more students are involved in the selection process, the more likely it is that the accommodations will be used—especially as students reach adolescence and desire to be more independent. Self-

advocacy skills become critical here. Students need opportunities to learn which accommodations are most helpful for them, and to make sure those accommodations are provided in their classes and wherever they need them outside of school.

Choosing, using, and evaluating the effectiveness of accommodations are skills that can be valuable throughout a student's daily life, and into postsecondary education, career, and community life. These are critical skills for students to learn while still in school.

Accommodations and the Student's IEP/504

For students with disabilities served under IDEA, determining appropriate instructional and assessment accommodations should not pose any particular problems for the IEP teams that follow good IEP practices. With information obtained from the required summary of the student's present level of educational performance, the process of identifying and documenting accommodations should be a fairly straightforward event. Describing the student's present level of educational performance is a federal requirement. IEP 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" (34 CFR (§300.346).

Once the IEP team has selected appropriate accommodations, those accommodations must be addressed in the IEP. The area where accommodations selected for use on state- and district-level assessments is found where communication and assistive technology supports are considered.

Information obtained from the most recent reevaluation, results on state assessments, input from special and regular education teachers, and information obtained from the student and parents should serve as a solid foundation for making consistent, coherent, and legally defensible decisions about the identification and use of appropriate instructional and assessment accommodations for students with disabilities.

Administering Accessibility Features & Accommodations on Arkansas Assessments

Once decisions have been made about providing accommodations to students, the logistics of providing the accommodations must be considered. In this case, logistics simply refers to how the accommodations will be provided. It is not uncommon for members of the IEP team, most often special education teachers, to be given the responsibility for arranging, coordinating, and providing assessment accommodations for all students who need them. It is essential that EVERYONE involved in this process knows and understands the requirements and consequences of using accommodations for statewide assessments.

Accommodation Monitoring

Prior to state-level testing, the test administrator must be aware of what accommodations the student will be using. This is the responsibility of the special education teacher and testing coordinator. Don't assume the person assigned to give the test knows how and what accommodations to administer. A test administrator, particularly those unfamiliar with the student, will need to know details; for example, whether extra time will be allowed for a student and, if so, how much.

Similarly, the test administrator may not be familiar with some of the less conventional response formats—like allowing the student to write responses directly on the test booklet. If alternative response formats are considered for a student, it is critical that those administering the test are aware of the general parameters within which the accommodation can be provided. Even the most creative and well thought-out accommodations will mean little if they are poorly implemented—so logistical considerations are vitally important.

During testing, **all accommodations must be implemented by an ADE-licensed teacher**. All teachers administering exams should be familiar with the accommodations given to the student, as well as the general administration of the test.

Practices to avoid when planning for the implementation of accommodations and/or accessibility features during testing:

• Making "on the spot" decisions about what accommodations and/or accessibility features a student needs for testing,

• Making an accommodation and/or accessibility feature available to **everyone** simply because of convenience, and

• Not considering an accommodation and/or accessibility feature as essential because only one student needs it.

Strict adherence to the accommodation guidelines is necessary to ensure that the test results reflect actual student learning. If accommodations are administered inconsistently, the results will not be comparable across examinees. For example, if the directions given to students vary, some students may receive too little assistance from the teacher administering the test and some may receive too much. The use of detailed guidelines not only ensures that the efforts of students and teachers will yield meaningful information, but it also makes the test administration easier.

Universal Design

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, Public Law 108-446 Section 612 (E), indicates that "the State educational agency shall, to the extent feasible, use universal design principles in developing and administering any assessments under this paragraph."

Every effort will be made to employ the concept of universal design in the statewide assessments in Arkansas. Universal test design is a concept which assures that tests are designed and developed to allow participation of the widest possible range of students. Universal test design results in valid inferences about the performance of all students who participate in the assessment. This does not mean that standards should be relaxed or that constructs to be measured should be changed. Items on universally designed standards-based assessments must be aligned to the content and achievement standards with the same depth and breadth of coverage and the same cognitive complexity as the standards specify.

Modification means changing the construct of what is assessed. Modifications are not allowed on any ACTAAP Exams. Examples of **non-allowable** changes **include reading aloud the reading and/or the English tests,** thereby making the reading test a listening test. Additionally, limiting the number of multiple-choice items from which a student selects his/her answer gives an advantage to that student in such a way that guessing counts more than knowledge. Limiting the multiple-choice responses is not an allowable accommodation on ACTAAP exams.

The practice of limiting multiple-choice responses and eliminating short answers and essays in the classroom does not prepare students to take state-mandated assessments. Students must attempt to answer the constructed response items. What the student writes must show minimal understanding of the prompt to receive credit.

Students with disabilities in the State of Arkansas are allowed accommodations that do not change the construct of what is being assessed on ACTAAP exams. The accommodations must be in the student's current IEP or 504 and used regularly in the classroom to be allowed during the assessment. Additionally, language-specific accommodations for ELs must be documented in the student's LPAC and used regularly in the classroom to be allowed during the assessment.

Test Security

In order to administer test accommodations appropriately, teachers and other school personnel must understand the importance of test security, standardization, and ethical testing practices. Adherence to standard procedures and directions for the implementation of accommodations is necessary to preserve the integrity of the test.

In order to ensure test security and confidentially, test administrators need to (1) keep all test materials in a secure place to prevent unauthorized access, (2) keep all test content confidential—refrain from sharing information with or implying test content to anyone, and (3) return all materials as instructed. Accessible format tests (Braille and Large Print) need to be provided to the test administrator under secure and confidential means.

Test administrators must also recognize the importance of ethical testing practices. An important consideration for ethical testing practices during test administration relates to interactions between test administrators and students taking the test. If a student receives extra help during testing, his or her scores may not be valid indicators of what he or she can do. Helping includes coaching, editing student work, answering questions, or giving cues in any way, including gestures, facial expressions, or encouragement to change an answer.

Changing the content of a test to make it easier for students who have not learned the content being tested invalidates a test.

Evaluating the Use of Accommodations

Assessment accommodations should be selected on the basis of an individual student's needs and should be consistent with the accommodations provided during instruction. Evaluating the effectiveness of the use of accommodations is necessary to ensure the meaningful participation of students with disabilities in the statewide assessment. The information from the evaluation can be used in any number of different ways—from identifying questionable patterns of accommodation use to indicating areas in which IEP/504 team members and test administrators need additional training and support.

The purpose of evaluating the use of accommodations is to determine the extent to which students with disabilities are provided with equitable access. The approach can be one that is fairly simple and straightforward by conducting what is known as a "formative" evaluation. This information can include comments, observations, notes, or anecdotal reports from the student's teachers, parents, and other members of the IEP team, including the students themselves.

Formative evaluations are based on the premise that no plan is likely to work perfectly the first time and maybe not even after two or three iterations. Choosing and using accommodations is by nature a dynamic process and one that requires continuous improvement, hence, a formative approach is one that can help members of the IEP planning team to monitor and gauge when changes are necessary.

Dos and Don'ts When Selecting Accessibility Supports

Dos	Don'ts
Do…make accommodation decisions based on individualized needs.	Don't…make accommodation decisions based on whatever is "easiest" to do (e.g., preferential seating).
Do…document instructional and assessment accommodation(s) on the IEP.	Don't…use an accommodation that has not been documented on an IEP.
Do…be familiar with the types of accommodations that can be used as both instructional and assessment accommodations.	Don't…assume that all instructional accommodations can be used for assessment.
Do…be specific about the "Where, When, Who, and How" accommodations will be provided.	Don't…just indicate that an accommodation(s) will be provided "as appropriate" or "as necessary."
Do …refer to state-allowable accommodations list and understand implications of selections.	Don't…check every accommodation possible on a checklist just to be "safe."
Do…evaluate whether instruction and assessment accommodations are used by the student.	Don't…assume that the same accommodations should remain appropriate year after year.
Do…get input about accommodations from general educators, parents, and students, and use to make decisions at IEP meetings.	Don't…make decisions about instructional and assessment accommodations alone.
Do…provide allowable accommodations for assessments that are routinely used for classroom instruction and assessment.	Don't…provide an assessment accommodation for the first time on the day of the test or shortly before the testing window.
Do mediate the effect of the disability, or language accessibility, to access instruction and demonstrate learning.	Don't…select accommodations that are unrelated to documented student learning needs, or are intended to give students an unfair advantage.

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Section II: Allowable Accessibility Features and Accommodations for Arkansas Assessments

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General (Content) Assessment, grades 3-10 [ACT Aspire]

Strict adherence to these accommodations is necessary to ensure that the test results reflect actual student learning. If accommodations are administered inconsistently, the results will not be comparable for all students. Accessibility for the state-mandated tests in grades 3-10 are divided into four levels:

- LEVEL ONE: Features that are available to **all** students;
- LEVEL TWO: Features that are available to **all** students but must be identified in advance and documented in a Personal Needs Profile (PNP);
- LEVEL THREE: Accommodations, which are **reserved** only for those students with an IEP, 504 plan, or LPAC; and
- LEVEL FOUR: Modifications, which as previously mentioned, are **not allowed** on ACTAAP exams.

For complete details about delivery of accessibility features and accommodations, please see the current *ACT Aspire Accessibility User's Guide*. The following information lists available features. It is important to note that ACT Aspire's accessibility and accommodations policies differ from Arkansas' policies in a few areas. Be aware that Arkansas policy supersedes the testing policies of any and all tests that make up the ACTAAP program. If you are unsure about a specific policy, please contact the ADE Office of Student Assessment.

ACT Aspire

Level One: Default Embedded System Tools

Default embedded system tools meet the common, routine accessibility needs of the most typical test takers. All students are provided these tools, as appropriate, even students who have no documented Personal Needs Profile (PNP). Default embedded system tools include but are not limited to the following examples:

- Computer keyboard
- Computer screen display
- Mouse
- Cut, copy, paste functions in a text entry box
- Browser zoom magnification
- Answer eliminator
- Scratch paper
- Personal calculators for Mathematics tests (for grades 6-10 only)
- Mark items for review

The previous examples are for online testing. All students in Arkansas are required to take the ACT Aspire online. For those students with a disability that prevents physical access to the online platform, a paper copy of the test may be requested via a special accommodation request. If approved, the student may test via a paper copy of the test and may be provided comparable default embedded system tools, where applicable, as outlined in the *ACT Aspire Accessibility User's Guide*.

Level Two: Open Access Tools

Open Access tools are available to all users but must be identified in advance in the PNP, planned for, and then selected from the pull-down menu inside the test to be activated. The majority of students' unique sensory and communication needs are predictable and can be met through a set of accessibility features designed into the underlying structure and delivery format of test items. Rather than overwhelm the user with all the possible tools, Open Access tools provide just the tools needed by individual users. Per Arkansas policy, although features at this level are available to all students, they must be selected to meet **individual** student needs are not to be selected *en masse* and delivered to students at the class, school, or district level.

Note, not all Open Access tools listed in the ACT Aspire Accessibility User's Guide *are available for use in Arkansas. Additionally, not all Open Access tools listed in the* ACT Aspire Accessibility User's Guide *are available for use at this level in Arkansas and are restricted to the accommodation level.*

Table 1			Content Area		
Open Access Supports	**Reading**	**English**	**Writing**	**Math**	**Science**
Answer Masking	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes
Magnifier Tool	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Line Reader	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Color Contrast	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Respond on Separate Paper	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dictate Responses	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
AAC + Local Print	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Breaks: Supervised within Each Day	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Special Seating/Grouping	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Location for Movement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Individual Administration	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Home Administration (requires paper test)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Other Setting	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Audio Environment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Visual Environment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Physical/Motor Equipment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Level Three: Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Accommodations are high-level accessibility tools needed by relatively few students. Accommodation-level supports must be entered into the online PNP to allow any needed resources to be assigned and documented for the student. Per Arkansas policy, accommodation-level supports for students with a disability are reserved only for students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plan in place. Selected accommodations must be listed in the student's IEP or 504 and have been in use the classroom prior to testing in order to allow students time to become familiar with the accommodation. **No accommodation should be recommended for an assessment that a student has not had a thorough opportunity to learn to use comfortably and effectively during classroom activities.**

Table 2			Content Area		
Accommodation Supports	**Reading**	**English**	**Writing**	**Math**	**Science**
Text-to-Speech (English)	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
Text-to-Speech (English) with Orienting Description	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
Braille, Contracted, Includes Tactile Graphics	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Braille, Uncontracted, Includes Tactile Graphics	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Abacus	-	-	-	Yes	-
Large Print	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Extra Time	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
American Sign Language (ASL) Directions Only	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Signed Exact English (SEE) Directions Only	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
External Electronic Speller	-	-	Yes	-	-
Paper Test*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Human Reader (English)	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
Human Reader (English) with Orienting Description	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
American Sign Language (ASL) Test Items†	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
Signed Exact English (SEE) Test Items†	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cued Speech Test Items†	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
Respond in Test Booklet (OA feature)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Again, there are accommodations listed in the table above that are listed as Open Access features in the *ACT Aspire Accessibility User's Guide*, but are reserved as accommodation-level supports in Arkansas and require an IEP or 504 to use (e.g. Large Print, paper test).

Extra time means that (up to) the end of the instructional school day may be used for the portion of the test that is scheduled for that day. When extra time is allowed, students must complete each session in the order scheduled before moving on to the next session. Students who are at different points in the test schedule must be isolated from students on the regular schedule for testing, during breaks, and

during lunch. Extra time does not allow students to go back into a session at a later time in the day to continue working or to complete unfinished items.

Arkansas policy does not allow for any one session to be completed over multiple days. The accommodation listed in the *ACT Aspire Accessibility User's Guide* for this is not allowed in Arkansas.

If a student with an IEP or 504 has an accommodation need that is not listed, the school may submit a special accommodation request to the Office of Student Assessment for consideration.

** Paper Test is a special accommodation requiring a special accommodation request and approval by the ADE. This accommodation is reserved for students with an IEP or 504 whose disability **physically** prevents them from online testing. Simply marking "paper test" in a student's IEP or 504 does not mean that a student will receive a paper copy of the ACT Aspire if the student does not have a disability that physically prevents access to the online test.*

All accommodations listed below "Paper Test" in Table 2 are associated with that test, but do not require a special accommodation request once the need for a paper test has been established and approved.

† Sign language accommodations require paper testing per ACT Aspire policy, therefore do not require submission of a special accommodation request. Likewise, the selection of large print or braille does not require a special accommodation request. Selection of any of these must be made based on the student's IEP or 504 and used in the classroom for instruction and assessment.

Level Three: Accommodations for English Learners

Accommodations are high-level accessibility tools needed by relatively few students. Accommodation-level supports must be entered into the online PNP to allow any needed resources to be assigned and documented for the student. Per Arkansas policy, selected accommodations must be listed in the student's LPAC and have been in use the classroom prior to testing in order to allow students time to become familiar with the accommodation.

Table 3			Content Area		
Accommodation Supports	**Reading**	**English**	**Writing**	**Math**	**Science**
Text-to-Speech (English)	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
Extra Time	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Translated Directions	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Word-to-Word Dictionary, ACT Approved	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes

Students who are English Learners, of course, have access to all the Default Embedded Tools and Open Access features that all students may use, but they only have access to the **accommodation-level features** listed in Table 3. Students who are English Learners with a disability have access to all accommodation-level features listed in the two previous tables.

Per Arkansas assessment policy, testing is only allowed in English. Therefore, any accommodation listed in the *ACT Aspire Accessibility User's Guide* regarding foreign language translation of any test items is not allowed in Arkansas.

Arkansas' Translated Directions Policy

From the *ACT Aspire Accessibility User's Guide*: "It is acceptable to have the standard English test directions translated into languages other than Spanish; however, all locally provided translation of directions must be prepared in writing ahead of time and based as precisely as possible on the exact standard English directions. Slight adaptations may be used as necessary to communicate the same meaning as that found in the standard form; however, the same instructions for reading the directions are the same as those for English administrations."

The ADE will allow Arkansas schools the option of translating the English test directions into another language.   This is a local decision and the district will be responsible for contracting and funding the written translation of directions to be given to the student. Contracted translators must be certified in the target language and proficient in English. Districts are responsible for ensuring the translation communicates the same meaning as that found in the standard form and must keep all documentation related to the qualifications of the translator. The ADE will not allow the use of electronic translators, either external or web-based.

Spanish translation of directions is provided by ACT Aspire.

As for those providing a live reading of the prepared directions translation, the process is detailed in the *Accessibility User's Guide*. In addition, Arkansas policy is that the person providing the live reading of the prepared directions translation must be an ADE-licensed educator.

General (Content) Assessment, grade 11 [The ACT]

Arkansas students in grade 11 will take The ACT, and the score they earn is college-reportable. All accommodations for the ACT must be approved by ACT through the ACT review process. Information on accommodations for The ACT can be found in the *TAA User's Guide* (Test Accessibility and Accommodations System).

The online Test Accessibility and Accommodations System (TAA) is used for ACT-approved accommodations management. The test coordinator (TC), and/or test accommodations coordinator (TAC) use TAA for:

- submitting requests for ACT-approved accommodations to ACT,
- checking the status of requests,
- reviewing decision notifications,
- requesting reconsideration of requests that were not approved initially, if applicable, and
- viewing examinee information for planning purposes, as needed.

Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program (AAAP)

The Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program (AAAP) is a way for students with a significant cognitive disability, and for whom the general state-level assessment would be inappropriate, to demonstrate his or her academic progress. Participation in the AAAP is only for those students who meet the criteria established by the Arkansas Department of Education. (These criteria can be found in *Guidance for IEP Teams on Participation Decisions for the Arkansas Alternate Assessments, 2015-2016.*)

Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program, grades 3-8 and 11 for ELA and Math [MSAA]

The MSAA (Multi-State Alternate Assessment) is developed to ensure that all students with significant cognitive disabilities are able to participate in an assessment that is a measure of what they know and can do in relation to the grade-level State Content Standards. The MSAA is a component of a system of curriculum, instruction, and professional development that allows students with the most significant cognitive disabilities to access grade-level content aligned to the State Content Standards.

MSAA's long-term goal is to ensure that students with the most significant cognitive disabilities achieve increasingly higher academic outcomes and leave high school capable of pursuing post-secondary options. A well-designed summative assessment alone is insufficient to achieve this goal.

The MSAA is designed to meet the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). These laws mandate that all students participate in assessments that measure student achievement on grade-level content standards.

The test provides eligible students in grades 3–8 and 11 the opportunity to demonstrate what they know in English Language Arts (ELA) - reading and writing, and mathematics.

Table 4 (Features available to all students on the MSAA)

Assessment Features
Answer Masking
Audio Player
Alternate Color Themes
Increase/Decrease Size of Text/Graphics
Increase Volume
Line Reader Tool
Read Aloud/Reread item directions, response options, passages

Table 5 (Features that must be listed in the student's IEP)

Accommodations
Assistive Technology (AT) for viewing, responding, or interacting with test items
Paper version of item/s*
Scribe
Sign Language

** Although Paper Testing is a special accommodation on the ACT Aspire and the ELPA21, given the unique nature of the MSAA and the population assessed, a special accommodation request is not necessary for this test. However, the student's performance data as listed in the IEP should be evaluated to determine if a student **needs** a paper copy of the MSAA. If a paper test is needed, it must be listed under the accommodations section of the IEP.*

Arkansas Alternate Portfolio Assessment, grades 5, 7, and 10 for Science [AAPA]

The Arkansas Alternate Portfolio Assessment in science (AAPA) is designed to evaluate the performance of students with significant cognitive disabilities for whom the Arkansas general (content) assessments are not appropriate. (Participation criteria can be found in *Guidance for IEP Teams on Participation Decisions for the Arkansas Alternate Assessments, 2015-2016.*)

The science standards are the same for all students in Arkansas, the difference for students with significant cognitive disabilities is in the manner in which student learning expectations are accessed and in the way progress toward standards is measured. The portfolios of students with significant cognitive disabilities will show progress toward the Arkansas science standards.

To that end, students who are assessed using the AAPA will be provided with accommodations that are outlined in the student's IEP during the classroom activities that make up the entries within the portfolio.

English Language Proficiency Assessment, grades k-12 [ELPA21]

Both Titles I and III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) require states and local education agencies to annually assess the English language proficiency of all ELs in the state enrolled in public schools in grades kindergarten through twelve in the domains of Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing (Sections 1111(b)(7) and 1123(b)(3)(D) of the ESEA).

The ELPA21 assessments are designed for all ELs, including those who have disabilities. To better understand student populations served by ELPA21 assessments, educators should consider the following two definitions:

1) English Learners (ELs) are students who meet the following federal definition: the term "limited English proficient," when used with respect to an individual, means an individual –

   (A) who is aged 3 through 21;

   (B) who is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary school or secondary school;

(C)   (i) who was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English;

(ii) (I) who is a Native American or Alaska Native, or a native resident of the outlying areas; and

(II) who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency; or

(iii) who is migratory, whose native language is a language other than English, and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; and

(D) whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual —

(i) the ability to meet the State's proficient level of achievement on State assessments described in Section 1111(b)(3);

(ii) the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or

(iii) the opportunity to participate fully in society.

2) English Learners (ELs) with disabilities are ELs who have a 504 accommodation plan or an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Those with an IEP may be identified as having one or more categories of disability (autism, deaf blind, developmental delay, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment and deafness, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, other health impairment, orthopedic impairment, specific learning disability, speech language impairment, traumatic brain injury, and visual impairment and blindness).

According to guidance released by the U.S. Department of Education (July 18, 2014), all ELs with disabilities are required to participate in annual state ELP assessments. If needed, students must be provided individual appropriate accommodations in accordance with a student's IEP team. The IEP team for an EL with a disability should include at least one person who is an expert in English language acquisition. The IEP team is responsible for deciding how an EL with a disability should participate in ELP assessments – in regular ELP assessments without accommodations or in regular ELP assessments with accommodations that do not invalidate the test constructs.

To ensure that ELs with disabilities are receiving appropriate accessibility features and accommodations, IEP team members should consider the degree of each student's language- and disability-related needs. Accessibility and accommodation decisions should be individualized based on the particular language- and disability-related challenges faced by ELs with disabilities. Students with high English language needs and low disability-related needs will require more language-based supports while their counterparts with high disability-related needs and low English language needs will require more supports that remove disability-related barriers. At the same time, students with high English language needs and high disability-related needs will benefit from more intensive language- and disability-related supports while students with low English language needs and low disability-related needs will require fewer supports that alleviate linguistic and disability-related assessment challenges.

Accessibility on the ELPA21 is outlined using a three tier system: Universal Features (available to all students), Designated Features (available to all students, but must be identified in advance for those with need), and Accommodations (available to students with disabilities and an IEP or 504 plan).

(Please see the *ELPA21 Accessibility and Accommodations Manual* for detailed descriptions of features.)

Level One: Universal Features

The ELPA21 digitally-delivered assessments include a wide range of embedded universal features. These features are available to all students as part of the technology platform.

Some universal features may need to be provided locally outside of the computer administration system. These features are shown in the second table. They can be made available to any student.

Table 6a (Embedded features available to all students on the ELPA21)

Universal Features
Amplification
Answer Choice Eliminator
Audio Support
Digital Notepad
Expandable Passages (on the roadmap, uncertain if it will be available for 2016-2017 SY)
Flag for Review
Highlighter
Keyboard Navigation
Writing Tools
Zoom (Item-Level)

Table 6b (Non-embedded features available to all students on the ELPA21)

Universal Features
Scratch Paper

Level Two: Designated Features

Designated features for the ELPA21 assessments are those features (embedded and non-embedded) that are available for use by any student for whom the need has been indicated by an educator (or team of educators including the parent/guardian and student). Designated features must be assigned to a student in advance of test administration by trained educators or teams using a consistent process. These features must be listed in the online Personal Needs Profile (PNP) for documentation, and activation in the case of the embedded features.

Table 7a (Embedded features available to all students on the ELPA21, but requiring a PNP)

Designated Features
Answer Masking
Color Contrast
General Masking
Line Reader
Turn Off Universal Features
Zoom (Test-Level)

Table 7b (Non-embedded features available to all students on the ELPA21, but requiring a PNP)

Designated Features
Color Overlay
Magnification Device
Native Language Translation of Directions
Noise Buffer
Paper-and-Pencil Test*
Read Aloud
Student Reads Test Aloud

** Paper Test is a special accommodation requiring a special accommodation request and approval by the ADE. This accommodation is reserved for students with an IEP or 504 whose disability **physically prevents them from online testing**. Simply marking "paper test" in a student's IEP or 504 does not mean that an EL student with a disability will receive a paper copy of the ELPA21 if the student does not have a disability that physically prevents access to the online test.*

Level Three: Accommodations

Accommodations are changes in procedures or materials that increase equitable access during the ELPA21 assessments and generate valid assessment results for students who need them. Accommodations are for students for whom there is documentation of need on an IEP or 504 accommodation plan so that these students show what they know and can do on the ELPA21 assessments.

Table 8a (Embedded accommodations)

Accommodations
Unlimited Re-recordings
Unlimited Replays

Table 8b (Non-embedded accommodations)

Accommodations
Assistive Technology
Braille
Large Print Test Booklet
Scribe
Speech-to-Text

Assessment, grades 1-2 [IOWA]   *tbd*

Kindergarten Screener, grade K [QELI]

The Qualls Early Learning Inventory (QELI) is an assessment tool for the use in primary grades to identify student development in six behavioral characteristics related to school learning. It is a "snapshot" of the child's skills entering kindergarten and early first grade.

QELI is administered at the beginning of the school year to all kindergarten students and to any first grade student who did not attend kindergarten.

Students receiving accommodations in classroom instruction and assessment will have access to those accommodations while being screened with the QELI.

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