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Public School Administrators  
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Members of Committees on Special Education  
Organizations, Parents and Individuals Concerned with Special Education

Melissa Infante-Green

Changes in Allowable Testing Accommodations on the Grades 3-8  
New York State English Language Arts Assessments

This memorandum is to inform you of updates to New York State Education  
Department (NYSED) procedures on the permissibility of the testing accommodation “tests  
with disabilities on the Grades 3-8 New York State English Language  
Arts Assessments (Grades 3-8 ELA Assessments). This memorandum replaces guidance  
issued by NYSED on testing accommodations for students with disabilities.

For the 2017 administration of the Grades 3-8 English Language Arts (ELA)  
Assessments, students with disabilities whose Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or  
504 Accommodations Plans (504 Plans) document that tests be read aloud (by  
teacher or technology) must be provided this testing accommodation in  
accordance with the specifications in the IEP/504 Plan. In previous years, only directions  
were provided to students on the Grades 3-8 ELA Assessments; no other portion of the  
test was read aloud regardless of the circumstances. Additionally, this testing  
accommodation will be provided to students upon declassification with documentation  
that the accommodation will continue.

## **Background**

on any





annually and revised as necessary to meet the changing needs of each student. It is critical that a student’s testing accommodations are recommended based on current information related to his or her present levels of performance.

The following examples, although not exhaustive, illustrate how “tests read” may be documented on an IEP/504 Plan for individual students with disabilities in grades 3-8 based on the unique needs of each student.

**Sample** documentation of testing conditions appropriate for a student with a disability that **severely limits or precludes** the ability to decode print who **would** receive the “tests read” accommodation on the Grades 3-8 ELA Assessments:

Testing Accommodation	Testing Conditions	Implementation Specifications
Tests read	For all State and local tests, <b>including</b> tests of reading comprehension	Text-to-speech software may be used to provide this accommodation.

**Sample** documentation of testing conditions appropriate for a student with a disability that **moderately** impacts the ability to decode print who **would not** receive the “tests read” accommodation on the Grades 3-8 ELA Assessments:

Testing Accommodation	Testing Conditions	Implementation Specifications
Tests read	For all State and local tests, <b>except</b> tests of reading comprehension	Human reader

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. Questions regarding this memorandum may be directed to the Office of Special Education Policy Unit at (518) 473-2878 or [speced@nysed.gov](mailto:speced@nysed.gov).

**Attachment**  
**Testing Accommodation Decision-Making Tool for “Tests Read”**

The chart below may be used by school personnel to facilitate collaborative decision-making related to the recommendation of “tests read” (via human reader or technology) as a testing accommodation for students with disabilities in grades 3 through 8. The questions in this tool should be considered each time a student’s individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 Accommodations Plan (504 Plan) is reviewed to determine the appropriateness of this accommodation. After completing the chart, check the box below indicating the recommended testing accommodation for the Committee on Special Education (CSE) or Section 504 Committee to review and consider when developing the student’s IEP/504 Plan. This tool is for local use, only. Do **not** submit this form to the New York State Education Department (NYSED).

**Student:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Persons Involved in Decision-Making:** \_\_\_\_\_

Questions	YES	NO	N/A	Comments/Evidence
Is there evaluative information indicating that, even after explicit and systematic reading instruction, the student’s disability <b>precludes or severely limits</b> the student’s ability to decode print?				
Has the student been provided systematic, explicit, research-based reading intervention(s) to improve decoding skills?				
If the student is blind or visually impaired, is he or she learning to read braille?				
If the student is blind or visually impaired, has it been determined that his or her disability <b>precludes or severely limits</b> the ability to access and/or develop proficiency in braille? If the student is deaf or hard of hearing, is there evidence demonstrating that the student’s disability <b>precludes or severely limits</b> his or her ability to decode printed text (possibly due to other co-occurring disabilities or long-term language deprivation in early childhood)?				