District Name

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Assistive Technology Team:

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Practice AT at Home

Magnify

Magnify words for easier access using apps.

C-Pen

Use scanning pen to read words aloud.

Text-to-Speech

Provide spoken version of exam questions.

AT and Assessment

AT Access for Testing

Assistive technology (AT) helps advance quality and equity in educational assessment by providing students with disabilities the ability to demonstrate knowledge and skills on required tests. Federal law requires that state and districtwide assessments be accessible to students with disabilities. Consideration of AT is required for all students with Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs).

AT Tools for Testing

The law mandates that computer-based testing (CBT) programs develop accessibility features and possibly offer alternate assessments for students with disabilities. Accessibility features are increasingly being built into online assessments. In addition, there are a variety of AT tools that can be suggested for students by IEP teams based on individual student needs, testing tasks and the academic environment. Tools include such items as magnifiers of text for ease of reading, a text-to-speech tool that provides a spoken version of exam questions, highlighters to help focus attention, and a speech recognition tool that is an alternative to handwritten/ typed answers. AT used for testing should be documented in student IEPs. To be used on a statewide assessment, AT must also be used on a regular basis by students at school.

Accommodation/Modification

AT used for testing is identified as either an accommodation or a modification. An AT tool that does not change the rigor of standard of a test is identified as an accommodation. An example of an accommodation is a text-to-speech feature on a science test that is available to all students. A modification is an adjustment to a test that changes the testing standard or rigor for a student. An example of a modification is the use of word prediction on an exam requiring spelling. Different rules exist for use of modifications on district, statewide and college prep assessments.

To learn more about how your child might benefit from AT to support reading, contact your child's IEP case manager.

Parent Question

For what kinds of tests can AT be used in schools?

There are three types of tests given in the schools, state standardized tests, districtwide tests and classroom tests. Available assistive supports depend upon tests given.

State standardized tests are given to all students in the state. They permit students to use only a limited number of assistive supports. The MCA, MTAS and ACT are examples of state standardized tests.

Districtwide tests are those selected by individual districts to assess all district students at identified grades. These include such tests as the DIBELS, AimsWeb, MAP and FAST. Permitted assistive supports are also limited for districtwide tests.

Classroom tests are non-standardized tests that are administered to defined groups of students to measure specific content knowledge. There are a wide variety of assistive supports available to students for classroom tests. Assistive supports for these tests are determined by IEP teams and documented in the program modifications/adaptations/accommodations section of the IEP.

Preparation for MN Standardized Testing Digital text:

The MN Dept. of Education (MDE) has online test samplers so that students and parents can see the format and type of questions asked on state tests. Samplers can be found on the PearsonAccess Next website at http://minnesota.pearsonaccessnext.com/item-samplers/.

On this website, students can practice answering questions with accommodations.

Answers to frequently asked questions about MDE's standardized tests are available at https://education.mn.gov/MDE /fam/tests/. Scroll down on link for parent fact/prep sheets.

There are apps and commercially available web supports that help prepare students for both the SAT and ACT tests.

For additional information regarding the testing process, parents can also contact the District Assessment Coordinator (DAC) for the district.

Parent Question

What AT supports are available for standardized and districtwide tests?

On the MN Comprehensive Assessment (MDA), all subtests (math, science, writing and reading) are presented online. On the math, science and writing tests, all students can read AND listen to both the questions and answer choices, if they choose. On the reading test, audio is not available to any students for listening to reading passages because decoding of text with comprehension is specifically being measured by the test.

Available AT supports for districtwide tests is at the discretion of the district. Supports that are made available do not change the rigor of the test.

AT supports for testing should not be put in place for the first time during administration of a test. It is important that students have practice with the specific tools they will be using before the test so that they become very familiar with their use. Lack of practice may have a negative effect on student testing performance.