

Implementing RTI: Developing Effective Schedules at the Elementary Level



Today's Agenda

- Things to think about
- The Big Picture
- Scheduling Meeting/Planning time
- Scheduling Core Instruction
- Scheduling Intervention Groups
- Scheduling Progress Monitoring
- Putting it all together
- Questions



Things to Think About

- It is ok to “reinvent the wheel”!
- Prioritize Instruction
- Maximize resources
 - What do we have?
 - Who do we have?
- Be flexible
- Change *is* good!



The Big Picture

- Schedules should be set before the start of the school year
- Create a calendar
 - Benchmark testing
 - Team meetings
 - Progress Monitoring
 - Professional Development
 - Other Testing



September						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2	3 Labor Day – No School	4	5	6	7	
9	10	11	12	13 Teacher Inservice – Swap Day	14	
16	17 Benchmark Data Collection	18 Benchmark Data Collection	19	20 Data-decision making team meeting (students placed in tiers & groups)	21	
23	24	25 7:45am Grade Level Meeting	26 Start intervention groups Start progress Monitoring	27	28	

Scheduling Meeting/ Planning Time

- RTI is a team process
- Everyone needs to be involved
- Teams need time to plan and to assess effectiveness of instruction
- Challenge is to identify time that conforms to contractual guidelines and maintains planning time for teachers.

Possible Solutions

- Grade level/data meetings occur during common planning
- Grade level/ data meetings replace traditional faculty meetings.
- Subs called in- grade level meetings held throughout the day.



Scheduling Core Instruction

- Develop a Master Schedule
- Prioritize Instruction
 - Schedule instructional time first, other activities follow.
- Develop blocks devoted to instructional time
 - 90-120 minutes for reading
 - Uninterrupted time



Example of Instructional Block Master Schedule

	Lunch	Intervention Block	LA Block	Math Block	Specials
K-AM		9:20-9:45			10:15-11:30
1	11:30-12:00	9:20-10:00	9:20-11:30	12:00-1:00	1:00-3:30
2	11:45-12:15	10:55-11:40	9:00-11:40	1:30-2:30	12:30-1:30 2:30-3:30
3	12:15-12:45	10:55-11:40	9:45-12:15	2:30-3:30	9:00-9:45 12:45-2:30
4	12:00-12:30	1:30-2:00	1:30-3:30	9:30-10:30	10:15-12:00 12:30-1:30
5	12:30-1:00	1:30-2:00	1:30-3:30	10:30-11:30	9-10:30 11:30-12:15
K-PM		3:00-3:30			1-2:30



Questions?



Intervention Schedules

- How much time for intervention?
 - 30-60 minutes
 - How many days per week?
- Which interventions?
 - Available?
 - Most effective?
 - Evidence-based!!
- Who will teach interventions?
 - Who is available?
 - Who is qualified?
 - How can we maximize our resources?



Tiered Intervention Blocks

- Kindergarten 9:20 – 9:45 AM/
 3:00 – 3:30 PM
- 1st Grade 9:20 – 9:50
- 2nd & 3rd Grade 10:55 – 11:40
- 4th & 5th Grade 1:30 – 2:00

- Determine number of staff available



Example of Staff Availability

	Classroom Teachers	Support Persons	Maximum Number of Groups
K & 1	K teachers- Ms. H, Ms. S 1 st grade- Mrs. G, Ms. G, Ms. S	1 Reading Specialist 1 Instructional Support Teacher 2 ESL Teachers	9
2 & 3	2 nd grade- Mrs. B, Mrs. D, Mrs. D, Ms. P 3 rd grade- Mr. L, Mrs. M, Mrs. P	1 Reading Specialist 1 Instructional Support Teacher 2 ESL Teachers 1 Special Education Teacher 1 Librarian	13

Scheduling Intervention Time

- Structure
 - Within classroom
 - Within grade
 - Across grades
- Consider what will provide greatest number of students intervention using least number of resources.

Intervention Schedules

- Skill groups conducted by grade
 - Each grade had a daily skill group time
 - All available teachers and support staff teach a skill group
 - Allowed for 9-12 groups to be implemented for each time block



Intervention Schedule Example

Fall Intervention Schedule Grade K & 1 (Days 1-4) 9:20-9:50

Activity: Road/Ladders	Activity:	Activity:	Activity: Project Read	Activity: Project Read	Activity: Project Read
Teacher: Ms. S	Teacher: Ms. C	Teacher: Ms. P	Teacher: Ms. G	Teacher: Ms. S	Teacher: Ms. W
Group: Benchmark K	Group: Benchmark 1	Group: Benchmark 1	Group: Strategic 1	Group: Strategic 1	Group: Intensive
armyn Jacqueline Nicholas Dale Mauricette rendan Samantha Prince ack Dillon urrell Megan nathan Abby lexis Chayla	Lauren Austin Madeline Amya Joshua David Anthony Alvaro Misha Darryl Carson Ariana Makenna Camden Tia Julian	Rachel Rinesa Brooke Nicole Antonio Jacob Dominick Samantha Victoria Nadia Cole Matthew Michael Jose Chanise Jalen	M a t t h e w Samantha T y l e r Rachael Christopher Michael Mariarae Makayla	F a b i a n Madison M i c h a e l Argyle Kenneth Shelby Emalee Zeliana Tyler	Jared Jonathan Logan Kevin Elvyn

Progress Monitoring

- Need to schedule monitoring to ensure it gets done
 - How often?
 - Who will do it?
 - How do we fit it in to the day?
 - Schedule PM time
 - A few students each day
- Responsibilities need to be assigned



Scheduling Progress Monitoring

- Students performing significantly below peers should be monitored at least once per week to determine intervention effectiveness (Stecker, Fuchs, & Fuchs, 2008)
 - Students receiving intervention at Tier 2 monitored every other week
 - Students receiving intervention at Tier 3 monitored on a weekly basis



An example of Progress Monitoring schedule

- Interventions conducted 4 days/week
- PM on 5th day
- Each teacher assigned a support person
 - Worked together to complete PM in time allotted.
- All teachers who conduct PM need to be trained



Example

Teacher: Mrs. S		Progress Monitoring Record Sheet							
Support: Mrs. F									
Student	Level	18-Oct	25-Oct	1-Nov	9-Nov	18-Nov	26-Nov	5-Dec	12-Dec
Ted	3rd								
Shane	3rd								
Andy	3rd								
Jake	3rd								
Hannah	3rd								
Isiah	3rd								
Laura	4th								
Britana	4th								
Daniel	4th								
Dion	4th								



Pulling it all together

- Look at the Big Picture First
 - Prioritize Instruction
- Develop calendars & schedules ahead
- Team process, there will need to compromise
- Don't be afraid to make changes
 - Change is not bad, just different!



Questions?
Table Talk....
**What Does RTI Look Like
at your school?**



AMP Personal Needs & Preferences Profile (PNP) Process

ASD's process for documenting and activating embedded AMP Accessibility Tools via the PNP.

Steps for an IEP, 504 or ELL Student

1. The Special Education case-manager, 504 Coordinator and/or ELL staff member reviews the accommodations listed in the student's plan.
2. If an accommodation is listed that falls in the category of embedded AMP Accessibility Tools or Accommodations, the educator completes a *Personal Needs & Preferences Profile (PNP)* form indicating which embedded tool(s) need to be activated for the student. A list of embedded AMP Accessibility Tools and Accommodations can be found in the State of Alaska *Participation Guidelines*, dated December 2014.
 - a. Complete the top informational section as well as the section titled 'Accessibility Tools Available for Students with an IEP, 504 or ELL Plan'.
 - b. If there is a tool that is being used in daily instruction and on classroom assessments but is not included on the student's plan, please make an amendment and/or follow the required steps to add the tool to the student's plan.
3. Provide the completed *PNP* to your Principal or Building Test Coordinator. They will facilitate the activation of the indicated tools using the KITE Educator Portal.
 - a. The *PNP* will become part of the building-level AMP testing records and should be kept with the other testing documents at the school.
 - b. A video tutorial providing step-by-step directions for editing the *PNP* in KITE Educator Portal can be found at: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/rkom91a0e7wjda3/PNP%20Tutorial.mp4>

Steps for Students with a Documented Need

For students who do NOT have an IEP, 504 or ELL plan, educators should review the *Personal Needs & Preferences Profile (PNP)* form which provides ASD's definition of documented need, including decision rules.

1. After determining that the student is eligible to utilize an Accessibility Tool(s), the educator completes a *Personal Needs & Preferences Profile (PNP)* form indicating which embedded tool(s) need to be activated for the student.
 - a. Complete the top informational section as well as the section titled 'Accessibility Tools Available for Students with a Documented Need'.
2. Provide the completed *PNP* to your Principal or Building Test Coordinator. They will facilitate the activation of the indicated tools using the KITE Educator Portal.
 - a. The *PNP* will become part of the building-level AMP testing records and should be kept with the other testing documents at the school.
 - b. A video tutorial providing step-by-step directions for editing the *PNP* in KITE Educator Portal can be found at: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/rkom91a0e7wjda3/PNP%20Tutorial.mp4>

Once tools are activated for a student, they become part of the student's profile in KITE Educator Portal and are active for all AMP assessments including testlets and the summative assessment. Updates to a student's profile can be made at any time throughout the school year and should occur when tools need to be deactivated/activated based on changes to a student's characteristics.

AMP Personal Needs & Preferences Profile (PNP)

Anchorage School District 2014-2015

Student Last Name	AK ID Number	Grade Level	Educator(s) Completing PNP
Student First Name	ASD ID Number	School Name	

Accessibility Tools Available for Students with an IEP, 504 or ELL Plan

Please check all that apply: ☐ IEP ☐ 504 ☐ ELL

<input type="checkbox"/> Masking: Allows the student to hide parts of the test, either the answers or custom areas of the screen.	<input type="checkbox"/> Auditory Calming: Provides relaxing, peaceful music that can play while testing.	<input type="checkbox"/> Text-to-Speech MATH: Allows students to start, stop or replay computer synthesized audio representation of the text associated with the content on the screen: directions, embedded directions and math items.
<input type="checkbox"/> Text-to-Speech ELA: Allows students to start, stop or replay computer synthesized audio representation of the text associated with the content on the screen: directions, embedded directions and writing items. Passages are NOT read.		

For students who utilize other display enhancement options including: Braille, Large Print, Magnification, Color Overlay, Invert Color or Contrast Color please contact the Assessment & Evaluation Department at 742-4420 for further information on activating these tools.

Accessibility Tools Available for Students with a Documented Need

Please specify the document used to indicate student need:

Examples include: TIFF, Reading Intervention Plan and/or other site-based student support team documentation.

Educators must have on file, and if asked, be able to provide documentation of the following:

- 1. For daily classroom instruction and assessment, the student utilizes the accessibility tool or comparable support.**
- 2. The student has practiced using the selected AMP Accessibility Tool(s) in the KITE system using Technology Practice Tests and/or Testlets.**
- 3. The parent has been notified of the selected AMP Accessibility Tool(s). Please specify Parent Notification Date and Method:**

<input type="checkbox"/> Masking: Allows the student to hide parts of the test, either the answers or custom areas of the screen.	<input type="checkbox"/> Auditory Calming: Provides relaxing, peaceful music that can play while testing.
<input type="checkbox"/> **Text-to-Speech MATH: Allows students to start, stop or replay computer synthesized audio representation of the text associated with the content on the screen: directions, embedded directions and math items.	

**USE OF BELOW ADDITIONAL CRITERIA REQUIRED

In addition to the above decision rules, students must meet one or more of the following criteria to use Text-to-Speech MATH:

<input type="checkbox"/> The student's score is ≤25th percentile on AIMSweb RCBM (gr 3-5).	<input type="checkbox"/> The student's score is ≤25th percentile on AIMSweb MAZE (gr 6-8).	<input type="checkbox"/> The student's Reading SBA proficiency level is Far Below.	<input type="checkbox"/> The student's Lexile score is ≤510.
<input type="checkbox"/> The student is enrolled in a reading intervention support course.		<input type="checkbox"/> In absence of the above scores, the student has comparable scores from another state or district.	

PNP Activated in Educator Portal Date:

Employee Name:

Participation Guidelines for Alaska Students in State Assessments

*Students identified as Limited English Proficient
and Students with Disabilities*



December 2014

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The Purpose of the Participation Guidelines

Regulatory Guidance for Alaska Districts

The *Participation Guidelines for Alaska Students in State Assessments* is designed to help Alaska fulfill its commitment to include all students in state assessments. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), reauthorized in 2001 as the No Child Left Behind Act, requires assessment of all students, including regular education students, students with IEPs, students with Section 504 plans, and students with limited English proficiency. The *Participation Guidelines* explains the assessment options available to students and is subject to change based on revisions to the comprehensive statewide assessment system.

ESEA requires accommodations (as appropriate) for students with disabilities. Policy also includes accommodations for students with limited English proficiency (LEP). Federal and state laws require accommodations be identified in students' Individual Education Plans (IEPs), Section 504 plans, or LEP plans; test administrators must provide accommodations as documented. The *Participation Guidelines*, as adopted in 4 AAC 06.775, integrates and explains what is required, by law, of schools and districts with regard to providing instruction and assessment accommodations for these students.

Comprehensive Statewide Student Assessment System

Statewide student assessment is one component in an effective education system. The purposes of statewide student assessments, specifically, are as follows:

- Ascertain on a statewide basis the extent to which children of the state are attaining state standards;
- Produce statewide information to facilitate sound decision making by policy makers, parents, educators, and the public; and to
- Provide a basis for instructional improvement.

Accommodations for the following required state assessments are addressed in this booklet:

1. Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP)
2. Alaska Alternate Assessment (AK-AA)
3. Alaska Science Standards Based Assessment (SBA)
4. Early Literacy Screeners
5. National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)
6. English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELP)
7. College- and Career-Ready Assessments (CCRA)
 - a. WorkKeys
 - b. SAT
 - c. American College Test (ACT)

For detailed instructions on the use of accommodations for assessment, refer to the *Handbook for the Participation Guidelines: How to Select, Administer and Evaluate the Use of Student Supports for Assessment* at <http://education.alaska.gov/tls/assessment/accommodations.html>.

Introduction to Participation in Assessments and to Student Supports

Participation

The Alaska Comprehensive System of Student Assessment includes assessments used for a variety of instructional and accountability purposes. Participation in these assessments is required for students who meet the criteria defined by each assessment. This document provides regulatory guidance for both the Comprehensive System of Student Assessment and each assessment within that system. Districts are required to assess students who meet the participation requirements for each assessment. It is essential to provide an experience for each student that results in a fair and accurate measurement of progress and achievement.

This document explains the accommodation options available for each assessment for a student with a disability and the decisions that must be made by the student's IEP or section 504 team. These decisions include choosing which assessments the student is eligible to participate in and which accommodations are most appropriate to provide to the student in order to get an accurate measure of what the student knows and is able to do.

This document also explains the linguistic supports, or accommodations, available for each assessment for a student who is an English language learner.

Student Supports

The Alaska Comprehensive System of Student Assessment is built on a foundation of accessibility for all students, including students with disabilities and English language learners, but not limited to those groups. The validity of the assessment results depends upon all students having appropriate accessibility and/or accommodation supports when needed, based on the constructs being measured in the assessment.

Universal Tools – *Specific to the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP) Assessment*

Universal Tools are supports or preferences that are available to **all** students taking the AMP computer-based assessment or the paper/pencil assessment. Universal Tools are available at all times and their use is based on student choice, need and preference. Universal Tools for computer-based assessments, such as a highlighter or screen magnification, are embedded in the test engine. There are also Universal Tools that are outside of the test engine, such as scratch paper. These tools do not alter the test construct (what the test is measuring) or change the reliability or validity of the assessment. Universal tools do not change score interpretation. Similarly, Universal Tools require no additional test security measures.

Accessibility Tools – *Specific to the AMP and Alternate Assessments*

Accessibility tools or features provide all students with a documented need the opportunity to access the content being measured in the assessment. The use of the tool does not change what is being measured. Accessibility tools are selected for the student based on the student's needs and should generally be the same for classroom instruction and for assessments. Accessibility tools are only available when a teacher or team provides them for a student. Accessibility tools are embedded in a computer-based assessment (e.g., masking tool). Refer to the *Handbook for the Participation Guidelines: How to Select, Administer and Evaluate the Use of Student Supports for Assessment* at <http://education.alaska.gov/tls/assessment/accommodations.html>.

Accommodations – *Applies to all assessments*

Accommodations must be made available to students with disabilities on an IEP or 504 Plan, students with transitory impairments, and limited English proficient students as documented in student files. Accommodations are changes in

practices and procedures that provide equitable access to grade level content during instruction and assessment that do not alter the validity of the assessment, score interpretation, reliability, or security of the assessment.

Accommodations are intended to reduce or even eliminate the effects of a student's disability; they do not reduce learning expectations. The accommodations provided to a student should generally be the same for classroom instruction and for assessments. It is critical to note that although some accommodations may be appropriate for instructional use, they may not be appropriate for use on a standardized assessment. For example, providing spell-check for classroom assignments is appropriate; providing spell-check on an English Language Arts subtest would change what the test items are measuring and is not allowed.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities on an IEP or 504 Plan

It is important for educators to become familiar with state policies regarding accommodations during assessments. Because of the close link between assessment and instruction, the IEP or 504 plan must describe how the accommodations for assessment are provided routinely for classroom instruction. The IEP or 504 team should select appropriate accommodations based on the student's need, and must provide documentation and the rationale for the accommodations in the IEP or 504 plan.

Research shows that an unfamiliar test accommodation given to a student with a disability may negatively impact performance. Accordingly, an IEP or 504 team should be cautious about adding an accommodation shortly before an assessment. In general, a good practice is to make sure an accommodation has been used in the student's regular or special education classes for instruction and classroom assessments for at least three months or 90 days before testing. This will ensure that the student has experience with the accommodation and that the accommodation is appropriate for the student.

When accommodations are provided as part of a computer-based assessment, the IEP team must take care to ensure that students have opportunities to become familiar with the technological aspects of the accommodations. In addition to using the accommodation in instruction, students should have the opportunity to use the computer-based practice tests to be familiar with how accommodations will be made available on computer-based assessments.

Accommodations for English Language Learners (ELLs) for Content Assessments

All students identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP) must participate in statewide academic assessments. An LEP student is an individual whose first language is not English, or a student who is an American Indian, Alaska Native, or native resident 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. See Regulation 4 AAC 34.090(a)(2) for a full definition of an LEP student. For details on the process for identification of LEP students refer to the *Guidance for Limited English Proficient Student Identification, Assessment and Data Reporting* on the department website at <http://education.alaska.gov/tls/assessment/elp.html>.

For the purpose of this guide, the term **English language learner (ELL)** refers to currently identified LEP students, not former LEP students.

ELL students must be provided reasonable accommodations on state academic assessments, to the extent practicable. Accommodations are allowed for students who are ELLs when testing for academic content knowledge and skills, but not when testing for English language proficiency.

The research-based ELL accommodations in Table 8 are ELL-responsive; they have been shown to support ELLs linguistically in order to more accurately assess their academic content knowledge. Careful selection of ELL-

responsive accommodations allows for meaningful participation in content assessments and ensures information obtained from the assessment is an accurate reflection of what the assessment is meant to measure, rather than a measure of the students' English proficiency level. For detailed instructions on the use of ELL accommodations, refer to the *Handbook for the Participation Guidelines: How to Select, Administer and Evaluate the Use of Student Supports for Assessment* at <http://education.alaska.gov/tls/assessment/accommodations.html>.

Teams of people (teachers, administrators, etc.) who know the educational needs of the ELL student should make decisions concerning appropriate ELL accommodations to be used during statewide content assessments. Teams should include a teacher or administrator, when available, who has specialized training or experience with limited English speaking students and instruction. Because of the close link between assessment and instruction, the accommodations provided for the assessment should reflect those provided in classroom instruction and assessment. Research shows ELL students gain in language acquisition yearly; therefore, accommodations should be reviewed accordingly to reflect growth. Once a decision is made, it is essential to document the accommodations in the ELL student's file.

Accommodations for Students with a Transitory Impairment

Students with a transitory impairment are not regarded as individuals with disabilities if the impairment is transitory and minor (Americans with Disabilities Act, Amendments Act of 2008, Section 3 (3)(B)). A transitory impairment is an impairment with an actual or expected duration of six months or less. A transitory impairment does not constitute a disability for purposes of Section 504 unless its severity is such that it results in a substantial limitation of one or more major life activities for an extended period of time. On a case-by-case basis, where appropriate documentation exists, students who are identified with a transitory impairment may receive testing accommodations. The need for accommodations must be made by a school committee and documented prior to testing. Copies of this documentation must be kept at the school or district.

Modifications

A modification is a change in the content, format, and/or administration of a test that alters what the test is designed to measure or the comparability of scores. Modifications may be used for instruction but not for assessment. A **modification makes an assessment invalid**. The following chart provides examples of accommodations and modifications.

Accommodation	Modification (Not Allowed for Assessments)
Text-to-speech/read aloud in math or science tests	Read aloud of the passages in the English language arts test
Clarification of test directions	Clarification of test question/item

Determining if an Adaptation is a Modification or Accommodation

An adaptation is any change from standardized administration provided to a student for testing. Examples might include additional breaks, preferential seating, or a special chair. Most adaptations are common and are listed in the accessibility tables, accommodation tables, or in Appendix A of this document. However, sometimes a student needs an adaptation that is not listed in this resource. Any list of accommodations will be incomplete because of the unique needs of each individual child. In addition, advances in the technology of adaptive and assistive devices will lead to new accommodations. Accordingly, the accommodations listed in the following tables and in the appendix are examples of some of the acceptable accommodations. When an adaptation for a content assessment is *not* listed in

either resource, the student's IEP team should use the following guidance to determine if the accommodation is appropriate to use for content assessments.

When evaluating an adaptation that is not included in the accommodations table, an IEP team or 504 team should answer the following questions.

First, the two threshold questions:

1. Would the adaptation help the student demonstrate proficiency by reducing the effect of the disability on the student's performance?
2. Would the student use the adaptation in the classroom, including during regular classroom assessments?

If the answer to either 1 or 2 is no, then the adaptation is probably not a reasonable or appropriate accommodation for the assessment.

If the answer to both is yes, then the next step is to determine whether the adaptation is an accommodation or a modification. To help make this distinction, the IEP or 504 team should answer the following questions:

3. Does the adaptation impede the measuring of the skill that is being tested? This question is often difficult to answer, and the following questions might help:
 - a. Would the adaptation give the student an unfair advantage over a student who has the same proficiency level, but who is not eligible to use the adaptation?
 - b. Does any research support the conclusion that this adaptation does not alter the ability of the test to measure the student's skill level? (IEP or 504 teams may consult with the department at any time.)

Next, the team should consider questions that relate to whether the test could still be administered:

4. Would use of the adaptation cause a breach of test security? Before rejecting an adaptation for security reasons, an IEP or 504 team member or other school or district official should consult with the department. In special cases, security can be bolstered to accommodate special needs.
5. Would use of the adaptation make it impossible to score the test? Before rejecting an adaptation because it changes or alters the test answer sheet, an IEP or 504 team member or other school or district official should consult with the department. In many cases, the adaptation may still be allowed if a test proctor can transfer the student's answers to another answer sheet after the student completes the test.

If the answer to questions 3, 4, or 5, is yes, then the adaptation is a modification, and is **not** allowed on state assessments. The use of a modification on the state assessments results in an invalid score.

If the answers to questions 3, 4, and 5 are no, then the adaptation is an allowable accommodation, and it may be used on regular academic assessments. This is particularly true if research supports the use of the accommodation.

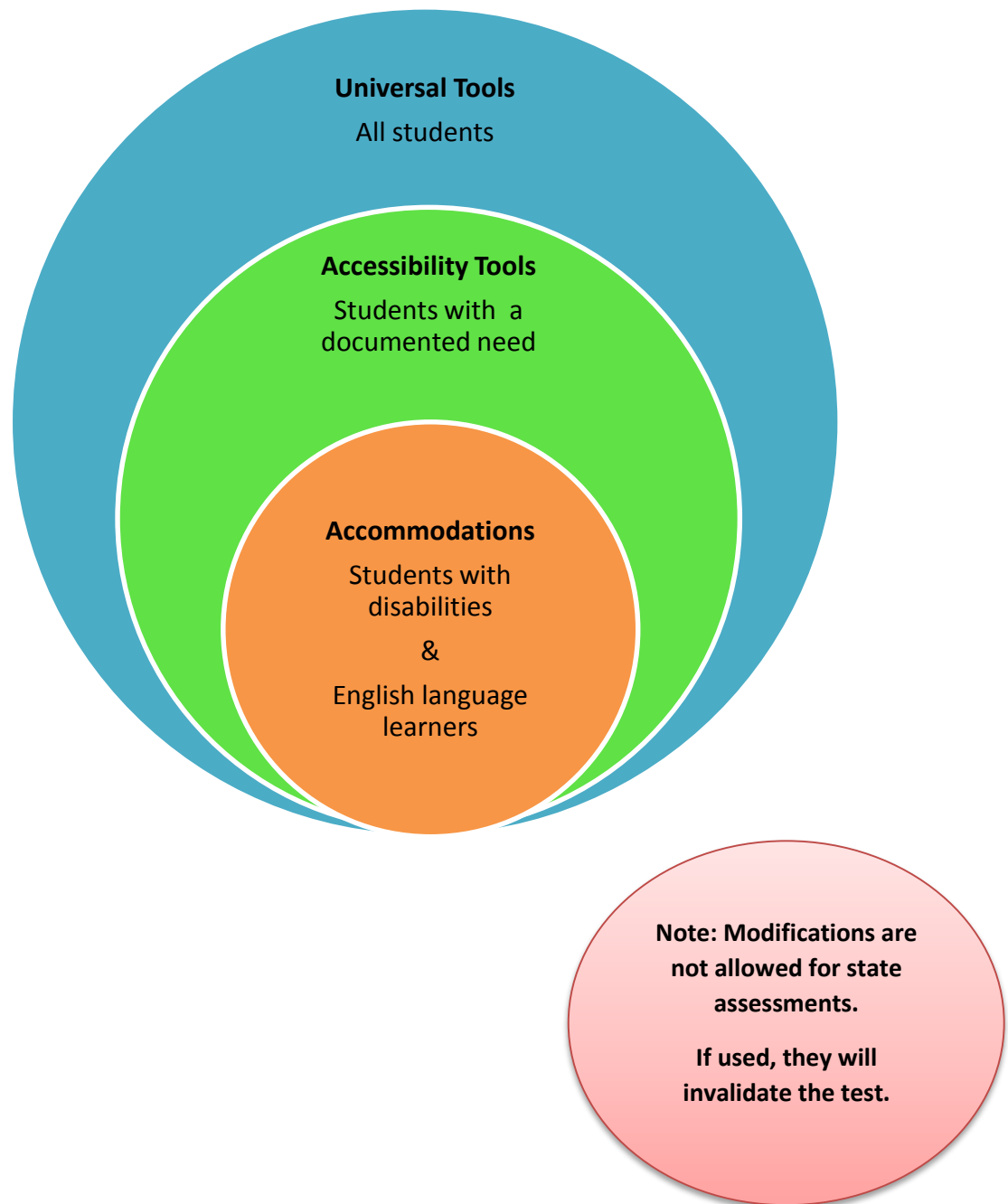
IEP or 504 teams, schools, and districts may consult with the department at any time when considering new adaptations, particularly when the adaptation is requested by a parent. In general, most IEP or 504 teams will be able to resolve issues regarding the proper use of adaptations. Sometimes, however, a district might determine that the adaptation is a modification while the parent thinks it is an accommodation. If that happens, the parent may request that the district consult with the department first before reaching its decision. The department will issue a non-binding advisory opinion on whether the requested change is an accommodation or a modification.

If a parent requests an adaptation that is declined by the IEP or 504 team, the district should advise the parent of parental appeal/due process rights, including the right to administrative complaint or mediation. If possible, the

district should provide notice to the parent in a timely manner, enabling the parent to appeal the decision before the test.

If an IEP or 504 team requests a modification for an assessment, the district should allow the student to take the assessment with the modification if possible. The district must inform the IEP or 504 team that the modification will make the assessment results invalid and that the test will not be scored.

The relationship between Universal Tools, Accessibility Tools, & Accommodations



Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP) Computer-Based Assessment

The Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP) assessment is designed to measure student growth and achievement in the Alaska English Language Arts and Mathematics Standards (adopted in 2012). AMP is administered to all students (except those with significant cognitive disabilities who participate in the Alternate Assessment program) in grades 3-10 in the spring.

The accessibility tools and accommodations available on the computer-based AMP and the paper/pencil AMP are largely the same. However, some differences exist and educators must refer to the specific tables for each assessment.

Student Supports for the AMP Assessment

Universal Design

The Alaska Measures of Progress is designed with the principals of Universal Design. “Universally designed assessments” are developed from the beginning to allow participation of the widest possible range of students and to result in valid inferences about performance for all students who participate in the assessment. As such, universally designed assessments add a dimension of fairness to the testing process. According to the National Research Council (1999), “fairness, like validity, cannot be properly addressed as an afterthought once the test has been developed, administered, and used. It must be confronted throughout the interconnected phases of the testing process, from test design and development to administration, scoring, interpretation, and use” (p. 81). The *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* also addresses this need by requiring that “all examinees be given a comparable opportunity to demonstrate their standing on the construct(s) the test is intended to measure. Just treatment also includes such factors as appropriate testing conditions and equal opportunity to become familiar with the test format, practice materials, and so forth. Fairness also requires that all examinees be afforded appropriate testing conditions” (p. 74).

Universally designed assessments are based on the premise that each child in school is a part of the population to be tested and that testing results should not be affected by disability, gender, race, or English language ability. Universally designed assessments are not intended to eliminate individualization, but they may reduce the need for accommodations and various alternative assessments by eliminating access barriers associated with the tests themselves.

Universal Tools, Accessibility Tools, and Accommodations

Universal Tools

Universal Tools are supports or preferences that are available to **all** students taking the AMP computer-based assessment or the paper/pencil assessment. Universal Tools are available at all times and their use is based on student choice, need, and preference. Some Universal Tools for computer-based assessments, such as a highlighter or screen magnification, are embedded in the computer testing system; others are outside of the computer testing system, such as scratch paper. These tools do not alter the test construct (what the test is measuring) or change the reliability or validity of the assessment. Universal Tools do not change score interpretation. Similarly, Universal Tools require no additional test security measures.

Accessibility Tools

Accessibility Tools are supports that are available to **all** students with a documented need taking the Alaska Measures of Progress computer-based assessment. The documented need does **not** have to be an IEP, 504 Plan, or ELL Plan. A documented need may be existing documentation in the school, such as the additional reading support provided to a student who is reading below grade level. For further guidance on determining a student's need for an Accessibility Tool, refer to the guidance accompanying this document. The Accessibility Tools do not alter the test construct (what the test is measuring) or change the reliability or validity of the assessment. Accessibility Tools do not change score interpretation. Similarly, Accessibility Tools require no additional test security measures.

Accommodations

Accommodations are practices and procedures that provide equitable access during instruction and assessments to students with disabilities and English language learners. Accommodations do not alter the validity of the assessment, score interpretation, reliability, or security of the assessment. Accommodations **must** be made available to students with disabilities with an IEP or 504 plan, students with transitory impairments, and LEP students, as documented in student plans.

Activating Accessibility Tools and Accommodations Embedded in the Alaska Measures of Progress System

AMP Personal Needs and Preferences Profile (PNP)

The Alaska Measures of Progress test engine uses a PNP to control the Accessibility Tools and embedded accommodations provided to a student. Accessibility Tools and embedded accommodations, unlike Universal Tools, are only available for students to use when activated by an educator via the PNP *prior* to testing. It is a local decision to determine who (teacher, special education teacher, site coordinator, etc.) will complete the PNP for students.

The PNP is completed using the information in the existing IEP, ELL Plan, 504 Plan, or student instructional plan. The educator assigned the role by the district and school for completing the PNP utilizes the Educator Portal of the AMP Assessment System to select the appropriate tools to activate for the student. The PNP is unique to each student, providing an individualized testing experience. If a student transfers schools or districts, the PNP is linked to the student's test record and "follows" the student. It can be accessed by the educators at the new school once that student is enrolled. However, the educators at the new school do not need to open the PNP again unless they want to make changes.

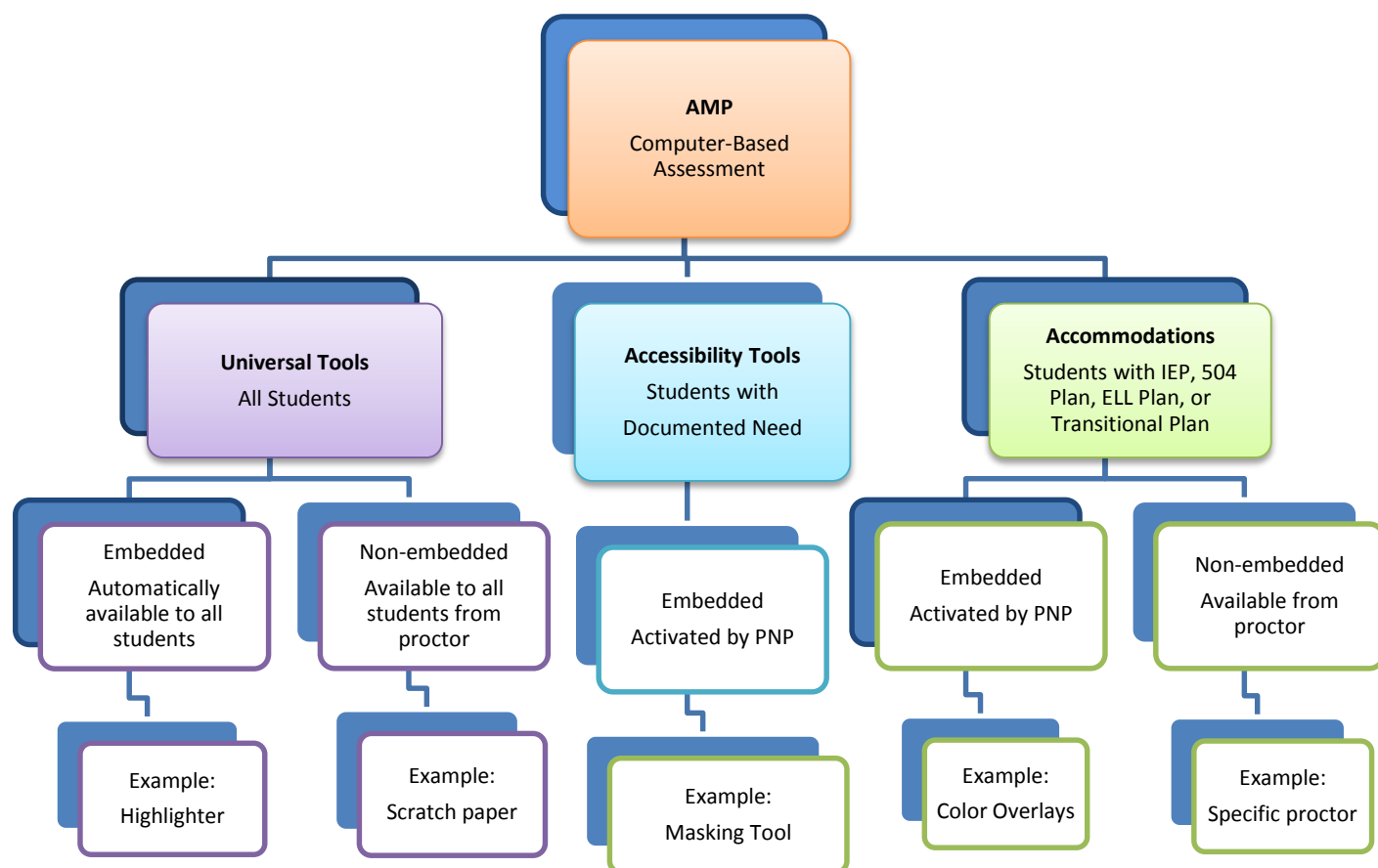
More information about the PNP can be found at <http://akassessments.org/>.

Embedded and Non-embedded Accessibility Tools and Accommodations

Accessibility Tools and accommodations are provided to students based on the decisions of the instructional team. Accessibility Tools and accommodations can be either embedded or non-embedded.

- **Embedded Accessibility Tools and accommodations** are those that are within the test engine. They are activated for an individual student via the Personal Needs and Preferences Profile (PNP) process.
- **Non-embedded Accessibility Tools and accommodations** are those that are outside of the technology. For example, preferential seating or use of math manipulatives.

Types of Student Supports for the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP) Computer-Based Assessment



For detailed information on how to use these supports for students, refer to the *Handbook for the Participation Guidelines: How to Select, Administer and Evaluate the Use of Student Supports for Assessment* at <http://education.alaska.gov/tls/assessment/accommodations.html>.

Universal Tools for AMP Computer-Based Assessment

Table 1

Universal Tools	
Available to all students. Embedded within the testing system and/or provided by test administrator.	
UNIVERSAL TOOL	TOOL DESCRIPTION
Highlighter	Allows students to select text on the screen and highlight the selected text with a yellow background.
Striker	Allows students to place a line through an answer choice that is not desired.
Eraser	Removes highlighting and striker marks from screen.
Tags	Allows students to place small graphics in reading passages to mark important parts such as the main idea, supporting details, and key words.
Guide line	When selected, follows the student's pointer and lightly highlights the text of a reading passage line by line.
Search Tool	Allows student to enter search terms. Matching words are then highlighted in orange.
Calculator	Available only for selected items. Grades 6-10.
Graphing Calculator	Allows students to graph functions. Available only for selected items. Grades 9-10.
Scientific Calculator	Available only for selected items. Grades 6-8.
Mathematical formulas	Formulas will be embedded in the test question if the skill being measured is the application of the formula. <i>Math reference sheets are not allowed.</i>
Use of whole screen magnification	Students can enlarge text on screen.
Text-to-Speech for test directions	Allows students to start, stop, or replay computer synthesized audio of the text associated with the directions.
Provided by Test Administrator:	
Use of graph paper or scratch paper	Scratch paper must be securely destroyed after assessment session.
Using a device to screen out extraneous sounds	Students may wear headphones that block sound for testing (this does not include music devices).
Clarification of technology directions	Students may request clarification of technology directions; guidance provided in Test Administration Manual.

Note: For a list of expected formulas students must know for Alaska's mathematics standards, refer to the *Handbook for the Participation Guidelines: How to Select, Administer and Evaluate the Use of Student Supports for Assessment* at <http://education.alaska.gov/tls/assessment/accommodations.html>.

Accessibility Tools for AMP Computer-Based Assessment

Table 2

AMP Accessibility Tools	
For students with a documented need. Activated by an educator with the Personal Needs Profile.	
ACCESSIBILITY TOOL	TOOL DESCRIPTION
Auditory calming	Provides relaxing, peaceful music that can play while testing. Students select music track.
Magnification - default	The PNP default for magnification can be set to x2, depending on student need. This setting enlarges all text automatically.
Masking portions of the test to direct attention to uncovered items or to maintain place	Two available options: 1. On-screen masking shows answer choices one at a time. 2. Student-controlled option provides a black, rectangular box on the screen that can be resized and moved. The student moves the mask on the screen or adds additional masks.
Text-to-Speech for Math : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedded directions • Math items • Graphics 	Allows students to start, stop or replay computer audio of the text associated with the content on the screen for math. Not for ELA items.

For guidance on the use of accessibility tools and determining documented need refer to the *Handbook for the Participation Guidelines: How to Select, Administer and Evaluate the Use of Student Supports for Assessment* at <http://education.alaska.gov/tls/assessment/accommodations.html>.

Accommodations for AMP Computer-Based Assessment

The accommodations in Table 3 are embedded within the computer-based assessment and activated by an educator in the Personal Needs Profile.

Table 3

Accommodations	
For students with disabilities, as documented in an IEP or 504 Plan. Embedded in the computer-based assessment; activated by an educator with the Personal Needs Profile.	
ACCOMMODATION	ACCOMMODATION DESCRIPTION
Text-to-Speech for English language arts items. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embedded directions Items (questions only, not passages) Answer choices 	Allows students to start, stop or replay computer audio of the text associated with some of the content on the screen. Does not read the passages associated with the items. Note: only available to students with a documented reading disability who <u>regularly</u> receive read aloud as part of a <u>successful</u> instructional strategy. Documentation of the successful use of this strategy in both instruction and assessment is required to be maintained locally.
Using Braille edition provided by test contractor	The test engine is designed to interface with assistive technology such as Braille Writers
One- and two-switch scanning	An assistive technology device used to respond to test questions.

Common instructional supports not allowed as accommodations for the AMP assessments:
Mathematics reference sheets
Calculators on all sections of the test
Reading aloud the reading passages
Spell-check

Accommodations for AMP Computer-Based Assessment

The accommodations table in this section are provided by the test proctor or administrator. This is **not** an exhaustive list of the allowable accommodations for students with disabilities for content assessments. Additional accommodations are listed in Appendix A of this document.

Table 4

Accommodations	
For students with disabilities, as documented in an IEP or 504 Plan. Not embedded in the computer-based assessment; provided by Test Administrator.	
ACCOMMODATION	ACCOMMODATION DESCRIPTION OR USE
Administering the test individually or in a small group in a separate location	Students who need additional assistance that may be disruptive to others must take the test in a separate location. Note: Many accommodations that require a small group or individually administered assessment when using a paper/pencil assessment may be provided successfully in the standard testing group when using a computer-based assessment. For example, text-to-speech (read aloud) does not require small group or individually administered assessment. Educators should evaluate each student's needs carefully and only use individual and small group testing when absolutely necessary for students to be successful. In addition, as with all accommodations, it should be a frequently used and successful instructional strategy if used for testing.
Using a specific test proctor	For students who need a familiar test proctor or test administrator.
Clarification of embedded test directions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • student requests clarification • student restates directions 	Test administrator or proctor provides accommodation; separate location for testing recommended if disruptive to others.
Allowing alternative responses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • oral response • signing • pointing • recorded response 	Scribe will enter student responses verbatim into the test engine.
Use of math manipulatives	Student use of physical objects for math items. See <i>Handbook for the Participation Guidelines</i> for list of allowable and non-allowable.
Signing to student: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • directions • embedded directions • math items • ELA questions & answer choices 	Interpreters must read and sign a Test Security Agreement and may not provide additional information to student, such as drawing pictures of math problems. Reading passages may not be signed to the student. This invalidates the assessment.
Use of adaptive devices, equipment and furniture.	Some adaptive devices may require individual test administration as well as a scribe to type responses verbatim into the test engine.

Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP) Paper/Pencil Test Administration

AMP paper/pencil test administration is available for districts that demonstrate a lack of technological capacity required to participate in the computer-based assessment. Schools must have an approved Waiver from Computer-based Administration of AMP to administer the paper/pencil assessment. Additionally, a paper/pencil assessment may be chosen for a student by an IEP team as an accommodation if the student's disability prevents the successful use of a device.

The accommodations table in this section is not an exhaustive list of the allowable accommodations for students with disabilities for content assessments. Additional accommodations are listed in Appendix A of this document.

Universal Tools for AMP Paper/Pencil Test Administration

Table 5

Universal Tools	
Available to all students. Provided by Test Administrator.	
UNIVERSAL TOOL	TOOL DESCRIPTIONS
Highlighter	Students may use a highlighter to highlight desired test items or selections; if a highlighter is used in student test booklet, answers may need to be transcribed into a clean test booklet in order to be properly scored.
Use of visual magnification	Students may use devices that magnify text such as a magnifying glass.
Use of graph paper or scratch paper	Scratch or graph paper must be securely destroyed after assessment session.
Masking portions of the test to direct attention to uncovered items	Students may use blank paper or other unmarked device to mask portions of the test to help them focus on one item at a time.
Using place markers to assist student in tracking test items	Students may use a device, such as an unmarked ruler, to help track test items.
Securing papers to work area with tape or magnets	Students may use devices to secure papers to work area; care must be taken to not damage the paper for scanning and scoring.
Using headphones to screen out extraneous sounds	Students may wear noise blocking headphones for testing (this does not include music devices).
Calculator	Available only for selected sections of test; see Test Administration Manual for further information.

Note: Accessibility Tools are not available for the AMP Paper/Pencil test administration because they are specific to the computer-based assessment.

Accommodations for AMP Paper/Pencil Test Administration

Table 6

Accommodations	
For students with disabilities, as documented in an IEP or 504 Plan. Provided by Test Administrator.	
ACCOMMODATION	ACCOMMODATION DESCRIPTION OR USE
Administering the test individually or in a small group in a separate location	Students who need individual or group test administration should take the test in a separate location.
Using a specific test proctor	For students who need a familiar test proctor or test administrator.
Frequent breaks or additional time	For students who need frequent breaks.
Reading, and re-reading, if requested, directions and embedded directions	Individual or small group test administration; reading done by test administrator.
Clarification of test directions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> student requests clarification student restates directions 	Test administrator or proctor can provide clarification of test directions (this does not apply to test questions or answer choices).
Signing to student: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> directions embedded directions math items ELA questions and answer choices 	Interpreters must sign a Test Security Agreement and may not provide additional information to student, such as drawing pictures of math problems. Signing of reading passages would be a modification and is not allowed.
Use Braille edition provided by test contractor	The test contractor will provide a paper Braille test by special order.
Use of large print form	The test contractor will provide a Large Print form by special order.
Use of adaptive devices, equipment or furniture	Some adaptive devices may require a scribe to transcribe student responses verbatim into the test booklet.
Audio CD or read aloud for math or ELA test questions and answer choices.	Use of test contractor audio CD required unless the student's IEP requires "read aloud" by proctor. Includes test questions and answer choices. Reading of reading passages is not allowed.
Allowing alternative responses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> oral response signing pointing recorded response use of word processor 	A scribe may type student responses verbatim into the test engine or test booklet. Use of a word processor must have other programs disabled and spelling, grammar check and other features turned off.
Allow student to mark in test booklet	Student may strike out unwanted choices, make notes etc. A scribe may be needed to transcribe answers verbatim into a clean test booklet.
Use of math manipulatives	Students may use physical objects for math items as defined in guidance.
Use of a special pen or non-#2 pencil	This requires a scribe to transcribe responses verbatim into test booklet.

Accommodations

For students with disabilities, as documented in an IEP or 504 Plan.
Provided by Test Administrator.

Auditory amplification device	Assistive listening devices help amplify sounds, especially with background noise.
Provide detailed monitoring to ensure student marks responses in correct answer area.	Proctor or test administrator monitors student responses – individually or in small group.
Provide student with additional room for writing responses	This may require a scribe to transcribe responses verbatim into test booklet.
Use of graphic organizers	Student can use items such as basic flow charts and story webs that do not contain text.

Student Supports for ELLs for Content Assessments

All students identified as LEP must participate in statewide academic assessments. For the purposes of this document, the term **English language learner (ELL)** refers to **currently identified LEP students**, not former LEP students. The Accessibility Tools listed below in Table 7 are allowed for AMP Computer-Based and Paper/Pencil test and the Alaska Science test.

The research-based LEP accommodations in Table 7 are ELL-responsive, i.e., have been shown to support ELLs linguistically in order to more accurately assess their academic content knowledge. Careful selection of ELL-responsive accommodations allows for meaningful participation in content assessments and ensures information obtained from the assessment is an accurate reflection of what the assessment is meant to measure rather than a measure of the students' English proficiency level.

ELLs may also use the Universal and Accessibility tools available as documented in their student files. **The accommodations listed below are the only allowable accommodations for ELLs for content assessments.**

Accessibility Tools for ELLs for Content Assessments

Table 7

Accessibility Tools for ELLs		
Linguistic support for English Language Learners. Documented in the LEP student file.		
ACCESSIBILITY TOOL	AMP Computer-Based Assessment. Requires educator to activate using the Personal Needs Profile.	Paper/Pencil Assessments ELA/Math & Science
Text-to-Speech for computer-based AMP math test . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions Answer choices Directions Embedded directions 	Allows students to start, stop or replay computer audio of the text associated with some of the content on the screen. Not allowed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AMP ELA test Read aloud by proctor 	
Audio CD for paper/pencil AMP math test . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions Answer choices Directions Embedded directions 		Use of test contractor audio CD required. 'Read aloud by proctor' or test administrator is considered an accommodation. CD not allowed for AMP ELA test.
Masking portions of the test to direct attention to uncovered items or to maintain place	Two available options: 1. On-screen masking shows answer choices one at a time. 2. Student-controlled option provides a black, rectangular box on the screen that can be resized and moved. The student moves the mask on the screen or adds additional masks.	Students can use blank paper or unmarked plastic masking tools to manually limit the amount of visible text.

Accommodations for ELLs for Content Assessments

Table 8

Accommodations for ELLs	
Documented in the LEP student file.	
ACCOMMODATION	Computer-Based AMP Assessment and/or Paper/Pencil AMP Assessment, and/or Alaska Science Assessment
Administering the test individually or in a small group in a separate location	Students who need additional assistance that may be disruptive to others must take the test in a separate location. Note: Many accommodations that require a small group or individually administered assessment when using a paper/pencil assessment may be provided successfully in the standard testing group when using a computer-based assessment. For example, text-to-speech (read aloud) does not require small group or individually administered assessment. Educators should evaluate each student's needs carefully and only use individual and small group testing when absolutely necessary for students to be successful. In addition, as with all accommodations, it should be a frequently used and successful instructional strategy if used for testing.
Using a specific test proctor	For students who need a familiar test proctor or test administrator.
In English or the native language provide written version of written/oral test directions	Written version of test directions must be verbatim of what is provided in the Test Administration Manual.
In English or the native language, read aloud and/or repeat written and/or oral test directions, including embedded directions	Translation should be an exact translation, as much as possible; additional clarifying ideas or examples are not allowed.
Clarification of test directions in English or the native language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • student requests clarification • student restates directions 	Clarification should not provide additional directions or examples.
Provide a commercial word-to-word bilingual dictionary	Dictionaries that include pictures or word definitions are not allowed. Electronic dictionaries are not allowed.
Provide the native language word for an unknown word in a test item when requested by student	Translation should not include additional words, ideas or examples. Not allowed for reading passages.
Allow the student to respond orally to constructed response items in English for math, and/or science items.	Requires a scribe to transcribe verbatim into the test engine or test booklet. Not allowed for English language arts items.

Note: ELL students with disabilities may be given ELL-responsive accommodations as well as accommodations that are afforded all students with disabilities, according to documented student need.

Text-to-Speech and Read Aloud for ELLs for Content Assessments AMP ELA/Math and Science SBA Assessments

Accommodations for ELLs	
Documented in the LEP student file.	
ACCOMMODATION	Description
Computer-Based AMP	
Text-to-Speech for AMP English language arts test. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions • Answer choices • Embedded directions 	Allows students to start, stop, or replay computer audio of the text associated with some of the content on the screen. Does not read the passages associated with the items.
Text-to-Speech for AMP math test. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions • Answer choices • Embedded directions 	Allows students to start, stop, or replay computer audio of the text associated with some of the content on the screen.
Paper/Pencil AMP	
Read Aloud or audio CD for AMP English language arts test. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions • Answer choices • Embedded directions 	Use of test contractor audio CD required unless specified 'read aloud' by proctor or test administrator as justified in ELL Plan. Read aloud only test questions and answer choices. Reading of passages would be a modification and is not allowed.
Read Aloud for AMP math test. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions • Answer choices • Embedded directions 	Read aloud by proctor or test administrator must be justified in ELL Plan because of the risk of non-standardized administration of the test.
Science SBA	
Read Aloud or audio CD for Science SBA. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions • Answer choices • Embedded directions 	Use of test contractor audio CD required unless specified 'read aloud' by proctor or test administrator as justified in ELL Plan.

Alaska Science Standards Based Assessment (SBA)

The Alaska Science Standards Based Assessment (SBA) is administered to all students in grades 4, 8, and 10. It assesses the Alaska Science Standards and Grade Level Expectations. The Science SBA administered in 2015 will be a paper/pencil assessment. Alaska will transition to a computer-based science assessment to be administered in spring 2016.

The accommodations for students with disabilities for the Science SBA are different than the English Language Arts and Mathematics content assessments. The accommodations allowed for this paper/pencil test must remain consistent with those allowed from the first administration of the assessment.

The accommodations table in this section is not an exhaustive list of the allowable accommodations for students with disabilities for the Science SBA. Additional accommodations are listed in Appendix A of this document.

Accommodations for Alaska Science SBA

Table 9a

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities	
Timing/Scheduling. Documented in the IEP or 504 Plan.	
ACCOMMODATION	ACCOMMODATION DESCRIPTION OR USE
Allowing frequent breaks during testing.	Student may take supervised, additional breaks. Caution should be taken that student does not disrupt other testers.
Allowing additional time	The Science SBA is an untimed test; a student with an IEP or 504 accommodation can take additional days, within the window, to complete the assessment.
Administering test at a time of the day most beneficial to the student	Students are required to take the Science SBA on the same day at the same time due to test security; if a student takes the assessment at a different time/day care should be taken to ensure that security of the test is maintained.

Table 9b

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities	
Setting. Documented in the IEP or 504 Plan.	
ACCOMMODATION	ACCOMMODATION DESCRIPTION OR USE
Administering the test individually or in a small group in a separate location	Students who need individual or group test administration should take the test in a separate location.
Providing special lighting, furniture, or acoustics	Students with physical disabilities may need specific adjustments to their environment.
Preferential seating	Student may need close proximity seating to teacher for additional support.

Table 9c

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities	
Presentation. Documented in the IEP or 504 Plan.	
ACCOMMODATION	ACCOMMODATION DESCRIPTION OR USE
Using the Braille edition or large type edition	Provided by the test contractor.
Reading aloud and, if requested, re-reading the test directions (including embedded directions) and/or questions and answer choices	Test must be administered in one-one setting or in small group. Test administrator must read the directions, questions, and answer choices verbatim. Cueing, emphasis, and pausing is not allowed.
Clarification of test directions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • student requests clarification • student restates directions 	Clarification must not provide additional directions, examples or cueing students.
Signing directions to the student	Interpreters must sign a Test Security Agreement and may not provide additional information to student, such as drawing pictures.
Providing highlighted words in the directions	Caution: highlights on the answer sheet make the assessment unscorable.
Writing helpful verbs on the board or a piece of paper	Verbs must be written verbatim; no additional explanation or examples are allowed, including drawing pictures.
Use of a checklist to remind student of tasks to be completed	Students with organizational or processing challenges may need this accommodation.

To determine whether an adaptation not found in this table or in Appendix A is an accommodation or modification, refer to the procedure outlined in the *Introduction to Participation in Assessments and Student Supports* section of this document.

ELL students with disabilities may be given ELL-responsive accommodations as well as accommodations that are afforded all students with disabilities, according to documented student need.

Alaska Alternate Assessment (AK-AA)

Overview of the Alaska Alternate Assessment for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

Students with significant cognitive disabilities will have access to, participate in, and make progress in the general education curricula in compliance with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA; 2004). All students must participate in statewide assessments in compliance with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). If students meet the eligibility criteria, they will take an alternate assessment. It is expected that only a small number (less than two percent) of all students will participate in an alternate assessment.

Alternate Assessments are designed for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. These assessments are based on the grade-level content covered by the general assessment, but at reduced depth, breadth, and complexity. These assessments describe achievement based on what is determined to be high expectations for these students.

Students with significant cognitive disabilities have a disability or multiple disabilities that significantly impact intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. Adaptive behaviors are essential to live independently and to function safely in daily life. When adaptive behaviors are significantly impacted it means that the individual is unlikely to develop the skills necessary to live independently and function safely in daily life. In other words, significant cognitive disabilities impact students both in and out of the classroom and across life domains, not just in academic domains. The alternate assessment is designed for students with these significant instruction and support needs.

Students taking the Alaska Alternate Assessment are not eligible to receive a high school diploma but may be awarded a Certificate of Completion. The Alaska Alternate Assessment assesses students with significant cognitive disabilities in grades 3 through 10 in English language arts and mathematics. Students in grades 4, 8, and 10 will also take the science alternate assessment. After grade 10, there are no required assessments for students who have been eligible for the Alternate Assessment. Students with significant cognitive disabilities in grade 11 or 12 may take a college- or career-readiness assessment if the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team determines it supports the transitional plan of the IEP. A student who takes the Alternate Assessment and participates in the WorkKeys assessment is not eligible for a high school diploma.

Content Standards and Achievement Standards

The Alaska Alternate Assessment is based on content standards called the *Alaska-Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Essential Elements*, which are aligned to the *Alaska Standards* but reduced in complexity, breadth, and depth. Students taking the alternate assessment are primarily being instructed using the Essential Elements in English language arts and mathematics. The Essential Elements are located on the department website at <http://education.alaska.gov/tls/assessment/alternateEE.html>. The science alternate assessment will continue to be based on the *Extended Grade Level Expectations*, <http://education.alaska.gov/tls/assessment/alternate.html>.

The alternate achievement standards are proficiency scores and proficiency level descriptors that are different from the achievement standards for the general education assessment. The proficiency levels (cut scores and descriptors) reflect a different set of academic expectations for students with significant cognitive disabilities and are reduced in depth, breadth, and complexity.

Administering the Alaska Alternate Assessments

District personnel must be trained and qualified in order to administer the Alternate Assessment. Districts are encouraged to have a lead Alternate Assessment Mentor prepared to train test administrators or assessors. Contact the Alternate Assessment Program Manager for information on the Alternate Assessment Mentor program.

Determining Student Eligibility for the Alaska Alternate Assessment

Eligibility for the Alaska Alternate Assessment is a decision made by the IEP team members on an annual basis during the IEP meeting. The IEP team will use the “Alternate Assessment Participation Criteria Checklist” found in this section and on the EED Alternate Assessment website to make the determination. Decisions made by the IEP team are reflected in the student’s IEP and kept in the student’s special education file. Parents must be informed when their child’s instruction will be based on Essential Elements and their achievement will be based on alternate achievement standards.

Documenting the Decision in the Individualized Education Program (IEP)

The IEP form found in the *Special Education Handbook* includes a page for selecting state and district-wide assessments. The section for students taking the Alaska Alternate Assessment must be completed and filed in the student’s special education file. This section includes the following information:

1. A statement that the Alaska Alternate Assessment is based on alternate achievement standards, and therefore, does not lead to a high school diploma.
2. Parents/guardians must be informed when their child’s achievement will be based on alternate achievement standards that will lead to a Certificate of Completion and not a high school diploma. A parent’s (guardian’s) signature section is included on the IEP to acknowledge that her/she has been notified that the student is taking the Alternate Assessment for the current school year. If a parent/guardian does not attend the IEP meeting, a letter of notification may be sent by the district.
3. A statement in the IEP by the team describing why the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP) assessment **is not appropriate**. The team must refer to the student’s Evaluation Summary and Eligibility Report (ESER), the Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP), and the “Alternate Assessment Participation Criteria Checklist” to provide evidence that support the decision.
4. A statement in the IEP by the team describing why the Alaska Alternate Assessment **is appropriate** based on the participation criteria. The team must refer to the student’s ESER, the PLAAFP, and the “Alternate Assessment Participation Criteria Checklist” to provide evidence that supports the decision.
5. The “Alternate Assessment Participation Criteria Checklist” must be reviewed and included in the IEP annually. The “Alternate Assessment Participation Criteria Checklist” is available on the Department of Education and Early Development’s Alternate Assessment website at <http://education.alaska.gov/tls/assessment/alternate.html>.
6. If a student meets the eligibility criteria for alternate assessment, the student will take the alternate assessments in all content areas.

Alaska Alternate Assessment Participation Criteria Checklist

Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

Participation in the Alaska Alternate Assessment requires a yes answer to each of the following questions. Students eligible for Alternate Assessment must take the Alternate in all the content areas: English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science.

Participation Criterion	Participation Criterion Descriptors	Agree (Yes) or Disagree (No)? Provide documentation for each
1. The student has a significant cognitive disability	Review of student records indicate a disability or multiple disabilities that significantly impact intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. <i>*Adaptive behavior is defined as essential for someone to live independently and to function safely in daily life.</i>	Yes / No
2. The student is primarily being instructed (or taught) using the AK-DLM Essential Elements as content standards.	Goals and instruction listed in the IEP for this student are linked to the enrolled grade level AK-DLM Essential Elements and address knowledge and skills that are appropriate and challenging for this student.	Yes / No
3. The student requires extensive direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measureable gains in the grade-and age-appropriate curriculum.	The student requires extensive, repeated, individualized instruction and support that is not of a temporary or transient nature and uses substantially adapted materials and individualized methods of accessing information in alternative ways to acquire, maintain, generalize, demonstrate and transfer skills across multiple settings.	Yes / No

The following are not allowable (or acceptable) considerations for determining participation in the Alaska Alternate Assessment:

1. A disability category or label.
2. Poor attendance or extended absences.
3. Native language/social/cultural or economic difference.
4. Expected poor performance on the general education assessment.
5. Academic and other services student receives.
6. Educational environment or instructional setting.
7. Percent of time receiving special education.
8. ELL status.
9. Low reading level/achievement level.
10. Anticipated student's disruptive behavior.
11. Impact of student scores on accountability system.
12. Administrator decision.
13. Anticipated emotional duress.
14. Need for accommodations (e.g., assistive technology) to participate in assessment process.

Student Supports for the Alaska Alternate Assessment

Accommodations and Assistive Technology

Students taking alternate assessments may use appropriate accommodations and assistive technology during testing. Accommodations and assistive technology must be listed on the IEP and should be used frequently with the student in the classroom. This ensures that the appropriate accommodations/assistive technologies have been selected for the student and that the student is familiar with the use of the accommodations and technologies. Originally the entire Accessibility Manual was to be included in the *Handbook for the Participation Guidelines*. Because of potential changes to various DLM and AMP manual, we decided to not include it there. Refer to the *Accessibility Manual for the Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment* located at <http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/alaska>.

Accessibility Provided by the Computer-Based Assessment System

Accessibility to the English language arts and mathematics assessments is provided via the Personal Learning Profile (PLP) and technology. The PLP consists of two sources of information: the Personal Needs and Preferences (PNP) Profile and the First Contact survey. This information is needed prior to testing so that the system knows how to customize each student's experience and can determine which test form from the most appropriate linkage level to deliver.

The PNP is used to select the appropriate accessibility features and supports within the system, and thus to tailor each student's experience based on individual needs. It can be completed any time before testing begins and can be changed as a student's needs change. Once updated, the changes appear the next time the student is logged in to the test engine, which is the platform used to administer the English language arts and mathematics alternate assessments. The PNP is unique to each student, providing an individualized testing experience that ensures that the student is able to access the content being measured. If a student transfers schools or districts, the PNP is linked to the student's record and can be accessed by the educators at the new school.

The First Contact survey is completed prior to assessment administration and is used to determine the initial placement of the student into the assessment. Instructions on how to fill out the First Contact survey are located in the *Test Administrators' Manual*.

The following tables identify the accessibility features available for students. Test administrators and students may try out these features in provided practice tests to determine what works best for each student. These options are designed to deliver a personalized, accessible user experience as they are matched to assessments within the test engine system.

The terms used distinguish between the accessibility features and supports that can be utilized by selecting online features via the PNP, those that will need additional tools or materials, and those that can be selected outside of the system. Table 10 (Table 1 in the *Accessibility Manual*) shows which features fall under which category of supports, and each feature and support is described in the following section. Accommodations should be documented in the IEP.

Support Categories

Category 1: Supports provided within DLM via the PNP profile

Online supports include magnification, invert color choice, color contrast, and overlay color, and read aloud. Descriptions about how to select supports provided by the PNP are found in **Step 4** of the six-step DLM accessibility customization process, which is in the *Accessibility Manual*.

Educators are advised to test the following options in advance to make sure they are compatible and provide the best access for students:

- *Magnification* – Magnification allows educators to choose the amount of screen magnification during testing. Educators can choose between a magnification of 2x, 3x, 4x, or 5x. Without magnification, the font is Report School, size 22. Scrolling may be required when the level of magnification is increased and the entire item can no longer be seen on the screen. This will vary due to the level of magnification, the amount of text in the item, and the size of the screen.
- *Invert color choice* – When Invert Color Choice is activated, the background is black and the font is white; images display with a white background in both ELA and mathematics.
- *Color contrast* – The Color Contrast allows educators to choose from several background and lettering color schemes.
- *Overlay color* – The Overlay Color is the background color of the test. The default color is white; educators may select the alternate colors blue, green, pink, gray, and yellow.
- *Read aloud with highlighting* – Text to Speech (TTS) is read from left to right and top to bottom. There are four preferences for TTS: text only, text and graphics, graphics only, and nonvisual (this preference also describes page layout for students who are blind).

If test administrators decide to adjust the PNP-driven accessibility features during the assessment, they can select **Exit Does Not Save** during the assessment, log out of KITE, change the PNP features in Educator Portal, and log back into KITE. More information about KITE and Educator Portal is provided in the Test Administration Manual.

Category 2: Supports requiring additional tools or materials

These supports include Braille, switch system preferences, iPad administration, and use of special equipment and materials. These supports typically require prior planning and setup. These supports are all recorded in the PNP even though two-switch system is the only option actually activated by PNP.

- *Uncontracted Braille* – This support will be available for the spring assessment in 2015. Because the testlets are determined dynamically, fixed form Braille versions are not possible.
- *Single-switch system* – Single-switch scanning is activated using a switch set up to emulate the "Enter" key on the keyboard. In PNP, educators can set scan speed, indicate whether scanning should begin automatically when the page appears, and select the number of times the scan cycle repeats before stopping.
- *Two-switch system* – Two-switch scanning does not require any activation in PNP. The system automatically supports two-switch step scanning, with one-switch set up to emulate the "Tab" key to move between choices, and the other switch set up to emulate the "Enter" key to select the choice when highlighted.
- *Administration via iPad* – Students are able to take the assessment via an iPad. Other tablet options are not available at this time.
- *Adaptive equipment used by student* – Educators may use any familiar adaptive equipment needed for the student. While educators are able to test devices beforehand, we cannot guarantee all devices are compatible (e.g., keyboard, mouse, touchpads).
- *Individualized manipulatives* – Educators may use manipulatives that are familiar to students (e.g., abacus, unit cubes, interlocking blocks, counters, linking letters, etc.).

Category 3: Supports provided outside the DLM system

These supports require actions by the test administrator, such as reading the test, signing or translating, and assisting the student with entering responses. These supports are recorded in the PNP even though they are delivered by the test administrator:

- *Human read aloud* – If the student does not respond well to the synthetic voice, the test administrator may read the assessment to the student.
- *Sign interpretation of text* – Sign is not provided via the computer. For students who sign, test administrators may sign the content to the student using American Sign Language (ASL), Exact English, or personalized sign systems.
- *Language translation of text* – For students who are English learners or respond best to a language other than English, test administrators may translate the text for the student. Language translations are not provided via the computer.
- *Test administrator enter responses for student* – If students are unable to select their answer choices themselves, they may indicate their selected responses through normal response types and/or forms of communication, such as eye gaze, and then test administrators are able to key in those responses. This should only be used when students are unable to independently and accurately record their responses into the system.
- *Partner-assisted scanning (PAS)* – PAS is a strategy in which test administrators assist students with scanning, or going through, students' answer choices. Students make indications when their desired choices are presented.

Timing and setting options are not defined in the DLM system because there are no timed or group tests, so any flexibility the student needs is permissible. For example, the student may take as many breaks as needed throughout the assessment. The system can sit inactive for up to 28 minutes before automatically logging out. If additional time is needed, the student will need to be logged back into the system.

Supports Not Available in DLM

IEP teams may be accustomed to seeing longer lists of supports than are provided in DLM, especially when they consider accommodations that students with disabilities may need for the general education assessments. Because students participating in DLM also have significant cognitive disabilities, many of these accommodations are not appropriate for DLM:

- Sign language using human or avatar videos on screen is not provided. Fewer than 2,000 students who participate in DLM use ASL; many students who sign use Exact English or personalized sign systems.
- Tactile graphics are too complex and abstract for most blind students with significant cognitive disabilities. Instead, DLM incorporates the use of objects for concrete representations of content.

Decisions about supports not available in DLM alternate assessments were made using results from more than 50,000 First Contact survey responses, feedback from national experts on sensory impairments who also have expertise in this population of students, and lessons learned from test administration observation studies.

Accessibility Features and Supports for the Alaska Alternate Assessment

Table 10

(Table 1 in *Accessibility Manual* for the Alternate Assessment)

Accessibility Feature*	Supports Provided Within DLM Via PNP	Supports Requiring Additional Tools/Materials	Supports Provided Outside the DLM System
Category 1			
Magnification	X		
Invert color choice	X		
Color contrast	X		
Color overlay	X		
Read aloud with highlighting – Text to Speech (TTS)			
• Text only	X		
• Text & graphics	X		
• Graphics only	X		
• Nonvisual	X		
Category 2			
Uncontracted Braille		X	
Single-switch system/PNP enabled		X	
Two-switch system		X	
Administration via iPad		X	
Adaptive equipment used by student		X	
Individualized manipulatives		X	
Category 3			
Human read aloud			X
Sign interpretation of text			X
Language translation of text			X
Test administrator enter responses for student			X
Partner-assisted scanning (PAS)			X

* Accessibility features and supports used for writing assessments will be added later.

Note: These supports are described for the DLM system as of spring 2014. As new features are added, updated versions of this manual will include additional descriptions and procedures.

Common Allowable Supports for the Alaska Alternate Assessment

Table 11

Student Need	Allowable Support
The student has limited experience with interacting directly with the computer; and/or experience interacting with devices that assist interacting with the computer; and/or motor skills for interacting with the computer.	The test administrator may navigate the screens. The student may indicate answer choices to the educator and the educator may enter the responses on behalf of the student. The test administrator may only repeat the question as written until the student makes a choice.
The student is blind and typically reads Braille.	Until Braille forms become available, the test administrator may read aloud using the feature available in the test engine (synthetic) or human read aloud. The test administrator may use objects in place of graphics. Descriptions of graphics may be provided through synthetic read aloud or human read aloud using scripted descriptions. Once Braille forms become available, further instructions will be provided on how to access those forms.
The student has a severe visual impairment and needs larger presentation of content than the 5x magnification setting provides.	The test administrator may use an interactive whiteboard or projector, or a magnification device that works with the computer screen. For familiar texts in ELA assessments, the test administrator may retrieve the texts from the DLM bookshelf in the Tar Heel Readers library and print the texts in the size the student needs.
The student uses sign language to communicate and has limited proficiency in reading text.	The test administrator may sign the text, spelling unfamiliar words and adapting or interpreting the language as needed based on the signs the student is familiar with.
The student has uses eye gaze to communicate.	The test administrator may represent the answer options in an alternate format or layout and enter the student's response.
The student needs special equipment for positioning (e.g., slant board) or non- computerized materials (e.g., Velcro objects on a board) to respond to questions.	The test administrator may use the equipment and materials the student is familiar with. The student should still interact with the content on the screen, but the educator may navigate and enter answers the student has demonstrated outside the system.
The student uses graphic organizers, manipulatives, or other tools to complete academic work.	The test administrator may use the equipment and materials the student is familiar with. The student should still interact with the content on the screen, but the educator may navigate and enter answers the student has demonstrated outside the system.

Science Alternate Assessment

Table 12

Allowable Accommodations for Standard Test Items			
Accommodation	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 10
Enlarging the pictures for a student with limited vision	✓	✓	✓
Providing colored pictures or photographs	✓	✓	✓
Providing real objects from the classroom	✓	✓	✓
Allowing student to use assistive devices/supports	✓	✓	✓
Prompting after a delay with no response	✓	✓	✓

Table 12a

Allowable Accommodations for Expanded Levels of Support Items	
Support Level/Score	Support Uses or Descriptions
1	Assessor uses full physical contact to elicit student response.
2	Assessor uses partial physical contact to elicit student response.
3	Assessor uses visual, verbal, and/or gestural prompts to elicit student response.
4	Student independently responds; no contact and no prompting required.

Early Literacy Screener

Alaska statute AS 14.07.020(b) and regulation 4 AAC 06.710, require the use of literacy screening assessments in the early grades to ensure that all students are gaining the fundamental reading skills that are essential for building strong literacy skills through graduation. Screening helps to identify or predict students who may be at risk for poor learning outcomes before students fall significantly behind and remediation is needed. These brief, skill specific assessments provide teachers with the information they need to provide targeted instruction to students.

Students with special needs must also participate in the early literacy screening. The test administration guidelines will have specific guidance about accommodations for students with disabilities.

Districts are to administer an approved early literacy screening assessment to all students in these grades:

- Kindergarten
- First grade
- Second grade
- Third grade students identified as experiencing delays in attaining early literacy skills during the second grade.

Literacy screeners are designed to screen students' literacy skills in the fall, winter, and spring. The regulation requires that the screening assessment be given at least once annually between April 1 and May 30. Screening data must be submitted to the Department no later than July 15. The Early Literacy Screening may be administered by the classroom teacher, a specialist, or a team of teachers who assess all students.

The screener must do the following:

- accurately identify students experiencing delays in attaining early literacy skills;
- be individually administered; and
- have an administration format that permits testing not less than three times per school year.

There are two options for screeners from which to choose. For the current list of approved screeners and FAQs go to http://education.alaska.gov/akassessments/earlyliteracy screener_faq.pdf

1. **Option A** includes AIMSweb, easyCBM, DIBELS, and Star. These tools have the following characteristics:
 - a. Measures the early literacy sub-skills of letter sound fluency, phoneme segmentation fluency and oral reading fluency;
 - b. Are individually administered; and
 - c. Yield data that includes the number of words read correctly in one minute.
2. **Option B** is NWEA MAP. This tool has the following characteristics:
 - a. Measures the literacy sub-skills of phonological awareness, phonics, concepts of print, vocabulary, word structure, and writing;
 - b. Permits data to be reported in Rasch units.

Screeners other than those listed on EED's website may not be used for this assessment; however, districts are not restricted to the use of one screening tool. This current list of screening assessments has been evaluated by the Center on Response to Intervention as moderate-to-strong for validity and reliability. The Center's evaluation of these screening tools can be found at <http://www.rti4success.org/resources/tools-charts/screening-tools-chart>.

Districts are required to share the screening data with parents not less than once annually for all tested students. For students experiencing delays, data should be shared not less than twice annually.

Note: Refer to the individual literacy screener test administration manuals for allowable accommodations.

English Language Proficiency (ELP) Assessment

Students in grades Kindergarten through 12 who have been formally identified as limited English proficient (LEP) students must be assessed annually to monitor their progress in acquiring academic English. Alaska's secure large-scale English language proficiency (ELP) assessment is based on the WIDA* English Language Proficiency Standards, 2007. It is a tool used to assess the proficiency levels of LEP students' receptive and productive skills in English in the areas of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. The English language proficiency assessment focuses on the progress and proficiency levels of academic language rather than content area knowledge and skills; therefore, some accommodations that might be appropriate for the classroom or content areas tests should not be used with the ELP assessment as they will invalidate the test. Assessment administration information is available at <http://wida.us/assessment/ACCESS/>.

For the purposes of this guide, the term **English language learner (ELL)** refers to **currently identified LEP students**, not former LEP students.

In general, accommodations for ELLs for the ELP assessment are not allowed. However, ELLs with disabilities may receive some accommodations. Allowable accommodations for ELLs with disabilities are as listed in Table 13.

Accommodations are appropriate when the standard test presentation, timing or response format prevents a student from accessing or responding to the test items because of physical, emotional, cognitive, or learning disabilities, thus denying the student the opportunity to demonstrate what he or she can do in English as measured by the ELP assessment. Accommodations decisions should be made by the IEP or 504 team and documented within the student specific plans.

Note: the accommodations recommended here are NOT appropriate for ELLs with significant cognitive disabilities. Students with significant cognitive disabilities who cannot participate fully in the regular ELP assessment, with or without accommodations, may be eligible to take the Alternate ELP assessment if they meet the required criteria. Assessment administration information is available at <http://www.wida.us/assessment/alternateaccess.aspx>.

Accommodations for ELLs with Disabilities for the ELP Assessment

Table 13

Applies to the regular ELP and Alternate ELP Assessments

Accommodation FOR ELLs WITH DISABILITIES				
Test Directions	Listening	Reading	Writing	Speaking
<i>Test "directions" refers to all text in the Test Administrator's Script that is provided to explain logistics of the test, including all practice items. Directions include what is scripted in the Test Administrator's Script. For Speaking, the directions end just before the test administrator reads "Part A," and for Listening, the directions end just before the test administrator presses Play.</i>				
Translation of directions into native language	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Signing directions to students	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Explanation of directions in English and/or native language	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Repeating directions	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Use of directions that have been marked by teacher in the <i>Student Response Booklet</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A

Accommodation FOR ELLs WITH DISABILITIES				
Presentation Format	Listening	Reading	Writing	Speaking
<i>"Test" refers to test items (including introductory text and graphic support), but not scripted test directions (previously defined)</i>				
Translation of test into native language	No	No	No	No
Translation of test into sign language	No	No	No	No
Oral reading of test in English	No	No	Yes	No
Oral reading of test items in native language	No	No	No	No
Use of bilingual dictionary	No	No	No	No
Use of highlighters (yellow only) by student, in test booklet text only; must not be used in answer area	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A
Use of marker to maintain place	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A
Large print (Student responses must be transcribed into a standard test booklet)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Low vision aids or magnification device	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Audio amplification device or noise buffer	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student reads questions or responses aloud to self	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A
Student reads questions or responses aloud and records with tape recorder	No	Yes	No	No

Setting Format	Listening	Reading	Writing	Speaking
<i>Test may be administered...</i>				
By trained school personnel in non-school setting (e.g., home or hospital)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
With preferential seating	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
In study carrel	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
In space with special lighting	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
In space with special acoustics	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
With special furniture for student	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
With equipment or technology that the student uses for other tests and school work (e.g., pencils adapted in size or grip, slant board, or wedge)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Timing/Schedule	Listening	Reading	Writing	Speaking
<i>Flexibility with timing of test is permitted for students who require extra time or have limited attention spans as documented in their IEPs.</i>				
More breaks as needed by student	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Short-segment testing (refers to administration of very brief sections of the test at a time, such as three or four items related to a common theme)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Extended testing time within same school day	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Extended testing sessions over multiple days	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Accommodation FOR ELLs WITH DISABILITIES				
Response Format	Listening	Reading	Writing	Speaking
<i>Certain devices or practices may be used to facilitate testing for students who have difficulty with bubbling or writing in the correct area of the test booklet.</i>				
Braille writers	N/A	N/A	No	N/A
Computer, word processor, or similar assistive device (spell check, grammar check, and dictionary/thesaurus must be turned off)	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A
Tape recorders for recording student responses	N/A	N/A	No	No
Scribes: all student responses must be transcribed verbatim, including spelling, punctuation, and paragraph breaks	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Responses in native language	No	No	No	No
Answers are given orally or by pointing	Yes	Yes	No	N/A

Other Test Administration Considerations for all Students	Listening	Reading	Writing	Speaking
<i>Certain practices can reduce testing anxiety for students. For example, test administrators may...</i>				
Be school personnel familiar to student	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Be special education personnel	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Administer the test in a separate room	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Administer the test in a small group	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Administer the test to students individually	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A
Provide verbal praise or tangible reinforcement to increase motivation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Administer practice test or examples before the administration date of the assessment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Other Accommodations NOT RECOMMENDED	Listening	Reading	Writing	Speaking
Braille edition of assessment	Possible	Yes	Yes	Possible
Signing questions or answers	No	No	No	No

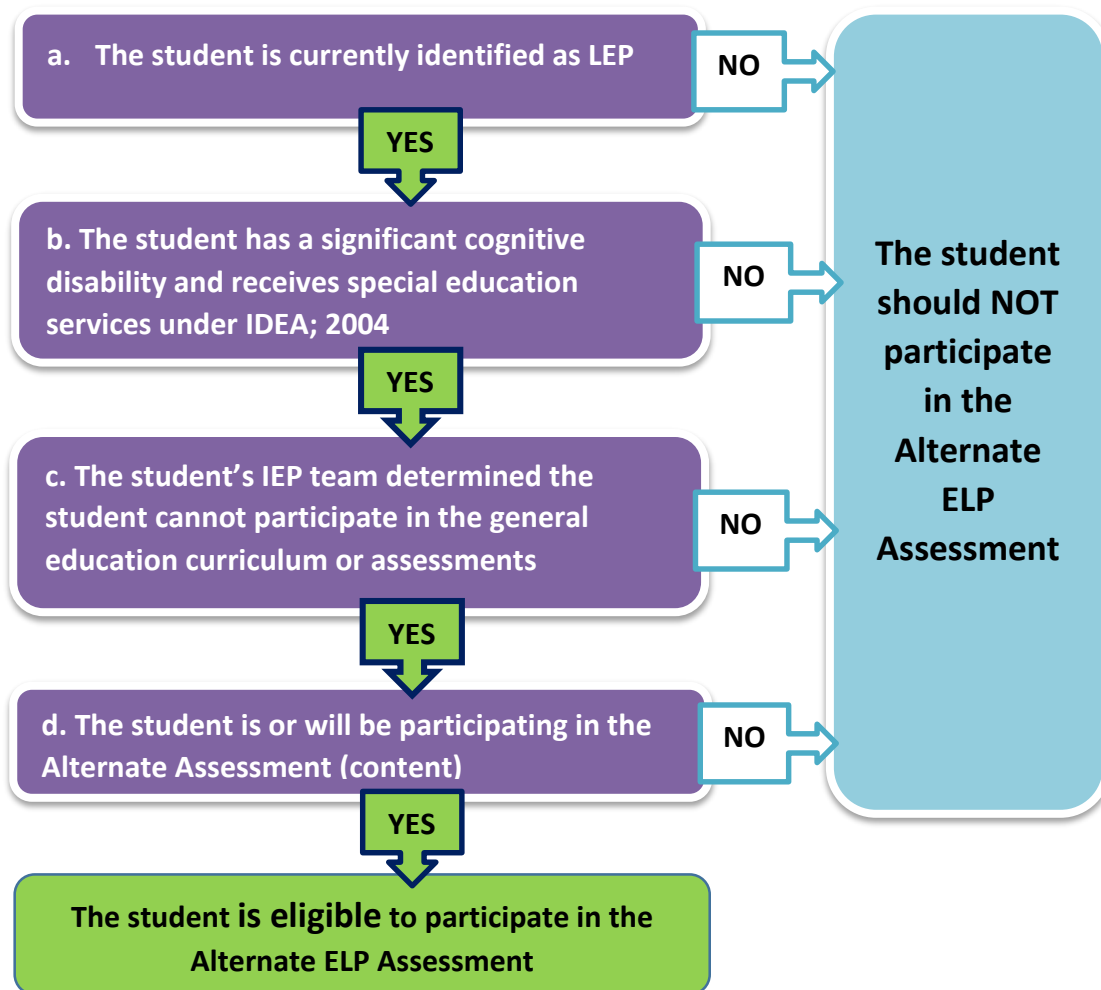
This list of accommodations can also be found in the ELP *Test Administration Manual* at <http://www.wida.us/assessment/ACCESS/>.

Alternate English Language Proficiency (ELP) Assessment

The Alternate ELP assessment is an assessment of English language proficiency (ELP) for students in grades 1 -12 who are formally identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP) and have significant cognitive disabilities that prevent their meaningful participation in the regular English language proficiency assessment. (An Alternate ELP assessment is not available for kindergarten.) The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB; 2001) requires that all students identified as LEP be assessed annually for English language proficiency, including students who receive special education services. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA; 2004) also mandates that students with disabilities participate in state-wide and district-wide assessment programs, including alternate assessments with appropriate accommodations, when it is documented in their Individualized Education Programs (IEP).

Each test form in the Alternate ELP test assesses the four language domains of Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. Test forms are divided into the following grade-level clusters: 1 – 2, 3 – 5, 6 – 8, and 9 – 12.

If any response to the criteria below is “No” or “Disagree”, the student **must** participate in the regular ELP assessment with or without accommodations.



The following Participation Criteria Checklist should be a part of the decision making process for students who may be eligible to take the Alternate ELP assessment.

Alternate ELP Assessment Participation Criteria Checklist

Yes/No	Alternate English Language Proficiency Assessment Criteria
	The student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and is currently identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP). The student meets the eligibility criteria for special education related to the areas of, but not limited to, cognitive impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, or multiple disabilities.
	For grades 3 – 10, the student takes the Alaska Alternate Assessment instead of the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP) Assessment.
	The student demonstrates deficits in adaptive behavior/skills that adversely impacts the student’s educational performance and prevents completion of the standard academic curricula that leads to a diploma.
	The student requires extensive, frequent, individualized instruction in multiple settings to acquire, maintain, generalize and demonstrate performance of skills, including English language skills.
	Objectives written for the student in the designated content area are less complex than the Alaska English/Language Arts and Math Standards, making the regular ELP assessment, even with accommodations, inappropriate for this student..
	The accommodations or modifications needed by the student to participate in the regular ELP assessment would compromise the validity of the test.
	The decision to participate in the Alternate ELP assessment is not based solely on language, social, cultural, or economic differences or excessive or extended absences.
	The decision to place the student on the Alternate ELP assessment is not being made for program administration reasons, such as the student is expected to perform poorly on the regular ELP assessment, the student displays disruptive behaviors or experiences emotional duress during testing.

Alaska Policy for Administration of the Alternate ELP Assessment

- It is strongly recommended that districts designate a contact person to oversee the alternate ELP assessment and to work closely with special education staff to meet the testing needs of these students.
- It is strongly recommended that certified teachers administer the alternate ELP assessment.
- The alternate ELP assessment is designed only for **current LEP students** with significant cognitive disabilities.
- The IEP team will determine if the student will take the alternate or regular ELP assessment. For students in grades 3-8, the students must also be taking the Alaska Alternate Assessment (content assessment) instead of the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP). For students in grades 1, 2, 11 & 12 who do not take the AMP, the IEP team makes the decision about the alternate ELP assessment using the checklist above.
- Test administrators must be certified online annually to administer this assessment.
- Online training is available on this website at <http://www.wida.us/assessment/alternateaccess.aspx>.
- **The alternate ELP assessment does not address Proficiency levels 4, 5, or 6; therefore, a student cannot exit LEP status as ‘Proficient’ on this assessment.**

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is a national assessment of a representative sampling of America's students in grades 4, 8, and 12 conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics. Results are only given at the state-level; no school or student results are provided. Only students with disabilities who participate in the Alaska Alternate Assessment based on alternate achievement standards will be automatically excluded from any NAEP assessment. All other students with disabilities should participate in NAEP with or without NAEP allowed accommodations.

NAEP strives to obtain as complete a picture as possible of the educational progress of all students. Thus, the NAEP sample includes students who have been identified as having physical, emotional, or developmental disabilities; or who have had limited exposure to the English language. NAEP's goal is to include as many students with disabilities and/or limited English proficiency as possible; therefore, NAEP's advice to schools is, when in doubt, include the student.

NAEP has specific accommodations for students with disabilities or who are English language learners. The allowed accommodations and requirements for administration of NAEP are determined by NCES and the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) and information about them is provided to the schools prior to the NAEP assessment. NAEP accommodations for each assessment year are typically finalized in late fall prior to the assessment year.

The Department of Education & Early Development expects that most English language learners (ELL) will be included on the NAEP. Only English language learners who have been enrolled in United States schools for less than 1 full academic year before the NAEP assessment may be excluded from any NAEP assessment. All other English language learners should participate in NAEP with or without NAEP allowed accommodations.

NAEP is administered by a federally contracted assessment team that receives extensive training to ensure consistent administration across the nation. School personnel may be asked to assist with some accommodations, such as signing questions for students.

School personnel with the best knowledge of the student's accommodation needs should use the guidance provided by NAEP to decide if the student should be included in the NAEP assessment and the accommodations needed.

The information regarding accommodations for NAEP can be found at <http://education.alaska.gov/tls/assessment/naep.html>. If you have questions about the NAEP accommodations, please contact the NAEP State Coordinator at 907-465-8729.

College- and Career-Readiness Assessments

Alaska House Bill 278, or The Education Act, requires all students to take a college-readiness or career-readiness assessment (CCRA) to earn a high school diploma in addition to meeting all local and state credit requirements. The approved college-readiness assessments are the ACT and the SAT; the approved career-readiness assessment is WorkKeys.

As stated in 4 AAC 06.717, the Department of Education & Early Development (EED) will pay for one administration of one assessment for every grade 11 student. Grade 12 students who did not have the opportunity to take the assessment in grade 11 may also have one paid administration.

Districts must administer the career-readiness assessment and one or both of the college-readiness assessments. Students are only required to take **one** CCRA; students choose between the career-readiness assessment (WorkKeys) and the provided college-readiness assessment(s) (ACT and/or SAT). The assessments must be provided on school days in session; provisions for taking the test on a National Test Day are also available.

WorkKeys, ACT, and SAT assessments each have distinct registration, administration, and accommodation policies as determined by the testing company. Educators are encouraged to refer to the assessment website for the most up-to-date information.

SAT Assessment

Developed by the College Board, the SAT is a national college admission test that provides college-readiness information to students, families and colleges. The SAT is an aptitude test which assesses reasoning and verbal abilities. Students are required to take the three sections in the SAT: Mathematics, Critical Reading, and Writing. The writing section includes an essay.

Mathematics	Total of 70 minutes: one 20 minute multiple choice and student produced response, two 25 minute multiple choice, and one 20 minute multiple choice section.	<p>The questions require students to apply mathematical concepts and to use data literacy skills in interpreting tables, charts, and graphs. They cover skills in four major areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers and operations • Algebra and functions • Geometry and measurement • Data analysis, statistics, and probability
Critical Reading	Total of 70 minutes: two 25-minute and one 20-minute multiple choice sections.	<p>The critical reading questions are all multiple choice. They can have one of two formats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence completion • Passage-based reading with long and short excerpts from works in natural sciences, humanities, social sciences, and literary fiction <p>The questions assess students' reading skills, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying main and supporting ideas • Determining the meaning of words in context • Understanding the authors' purpose • Understanding the structure and function of sentences
Writing	Total of 60 minutes: 25 minute essay, 25 minute and 10 minute multiple choice sections.	<p>The writing section consists of two types of questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An essay • Multiple-choice questions <p>The multiple-choice questions ask students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize sentence errors • Choose the best version of a piece of writing • Improve paragraphs

SAT Accommodations Policy

If a student has a documented disability, the student may be eligible for accommodations on SAT tests. Specific information is available from the test vendor. Students are required to apply and provide required documentation. The College Board's request process can take up to seven weeks. Documentation of the student's disability and need for specific accommodations is required and submitted for College Board review. Further information about the approval process is available at <https://www.collegeboard.org/students-with-disabilities>.

American College Testing (ACT)

The ACT is a national college admissions test that provides college-readiness information to students, families, and post-secondary institutions. There are five required subtests: English, Mathematics, Reading, Science, and an optional Writing test.

English	75 questions	45 minutes	Measures standard written English and rhetorical skills.
Mathematics	60 questions	60 minutes	Measures mathematical skills students have typically acquired in courses taken up to the beginning of grade 12.
Reading	40 questions	35 minutes	Measures reading comprehension.
Science	40 questions	35 minutes	Measures the interpretation, analysis, evaluation, reasoning, and problem-solving skills required in the natural sciences.
Writing Test	1 prompt	30 minutes	Measures writing skills emphasized in high school English classes and in entry-level college composition courses.

Accommodations Allowed for the ACT

ACT has established policies regarding documentation of an applicant's disability and the process for requesting accommodations. Further details are available at <http://www.actstudent.org/regist/disab/policy.html>.

If a student currently receives accommodations in school due to a professionally diagnosed and documented disability, documentation must be submitted to ACT to request accommodations.

The ACT and ACT Plus Writing are offered only in English. Accommodations (including extended time) are not available solely on the basis of limited English proficiency.

WorkKeys Assessment

WorkKeys is a career skills assessment. The three assessments given to students consist of Applied Mathematics, Locating Information, and Reading for Information.

Applied Mathematics	33 items 55 minutes (WorkKeys Internet Version) 45 minutes (Paper-and-pencil)	This assessment measures the skill people use when they apply mathematical reasoning, critical thinking, and problem-solving techniques to work-related problems. The test questions require the examinee to set up and solve the types of problems and do the types of calculations that actually occur in the workplace. This test is designed to be taken with a calculator. A formula sheet that includes all formulas required for the assessment is provided. While individuals may use calculators and conversion tables to help with the problems, they still need to use math skills to think them through.
Locating Information	38 items 55 minutes (WorkKeys Internet Version) 45 minutes (Paper-and-pencil)	The <i>Locating Information</i> test measures the skill people use when they work with workplace graphics. Examinees are asked to find information in a graphic or insert information into a graphic. They also must compare, summarize, and analyze information found in related graphics. The skill people use when they locate, synthesize, and use information from workplace graphics such as charts, graphs, tables, forms, flowcharts, diagrams, floor plans, maps, and instrument gauges is a basic skill required in today's workforce.
Reading for Information	33 items 55 minutes (WorkKeys Internet Version) 45 minutes (Paper-and-pencil)	The <i>Reading for Information</i> test measures the skill people use when they read and use written text in order to do a job. The written texts include memos, letters, directions, signs, notices, bulletins, policies, and regulations. It is often the case that workplace communications are not necessarily well-written or targeted to the appropriate audience. <i>Reading for Information</i> materials do not include information that is presented graphically, such as in charts, forms, or blueprints.

Allowable Accommodations for WorkKeys

The Department of Education & Early Development has developed a separate document to assist school districts with selecting accommodations for students with disabilities and identified LEP students prior to testing with WorkKeys. ACT has provided guidance in the *ACT WorkKeys Supervisor's Manual for State Testing-Special Testing*. This additional supplement should only be used when selecting accommodations for students with disabilities and identified limited English proficient students for WorkKeys testing. The *Alaska Supplement for WorkKeys Assessment, June 2014* can be found at <http://education.alaska.gov/tls/assessment/ccra.html>.

IEP, 504, and LEP teams should become familiar with the column headings in the tables below during the selection process. Both Internet Testing and Paper/Pencil Event Testing administration are represented. The letter "I" for Internet Testing and/or "P" for Paper/Pencil Event Testing is printed in the WorkKeys-Eligible and/or State-Allowable columns indicating the accommodation is allowed. WorkKeys reportable scores and National Career Readiness Certificates (NCRCs) will be issued for students using the accommodation if it is marked in the appropriate column. The NCRC is contingent on the student's level score. A blank in any column indicates not allowable or consequences apply. **Both WorkKeys-eligible and state-allowable accommodations must be administered according to the special criteria noted on the tables and *WorkKeys Supervisor's Manual for State Testing- Special Testing*.**

Note: Manipulatives for WorkKeys tests are not eligible accommodations. Other accommodations in the tables that are grayed out are not allowable or applicable accommodations for WorkKeys, and if used may invalidate the assessment.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities for WorkKeys

Applies to students on an IEP/504 and Transitory Impairment Plans

Table 14

Accommodation	WorkKeys Eligible	State Allowable	Reportable Scores	NCRC	Special Criteria
Timing/Scheduling					
Allowing frequent breaks during testing.	I/P	I/P	■	■	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only individual testing Internet Testing - Only between Assessments- no stop-the-clock breaks Paper/Pencil Event Testing use codes for stop the clock breaks. Must use accommodated form only
Allowing additional testing time.	I/P	I/P	■	■	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only individual/small cluster testing Must use accommodated form only
Administering at a time of the day most beneficial to the student.	I/P	I/P	■	■	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be administered at any time during school day Must use accommodated form only
Administering the test over several days completing the testing on or before the last day of the test window.					
SETTING					
Administering the test individually in a separate location.	I/P	I/P	■	■	
Administering the test to a small group in a separate location.	I/P	I/P	■	■	
Providing special lighting.	I/P	I/P	■	■	
Providing adaptive or special furniture.	I/P	I/P	■	■	
Providing special acoustics.	I/P	I/P	■	■	
Administering the test in locations with minimal distractions (e.g., small group, study carrel, or individually).	I/P	I/P	■	■	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study carrel must be observable Room supervisor must be able to view student and work area at all times
Using a communication device such as auditory amplification to give directions.	I/P	I/P	■	■	
Using a specific test proctor (e.g. examinee's regular or special education teacher).	I/P	I/P	■	■	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proctor must meet all ACT, Inc.'s staffing requirements in <i>Supervisor's Manual</i>
Preferential seating.	I/P	I/P	■	■	
Support of physical position of student by increasing or decreasing opportunity for movement.	I/P	I/P	■	■	
Using a checklist to remind student of tasks to be completed.	I/P	I/P	■	■	
PRESENTATION: Test Directions					
Using the Braille edition or large-type (20 font) edition, which are provided by the test contractor.	P	P	■	■	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must use accommodated form only
Signing the verbal instructions to the student.	P	P	■	■	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May use American Sign Language or Exact English Signing
Allowing student to ask for clarifications on test directions.	P	P	■	■	

I = Internet Testing
P = Paper/pencil Event Testing
■ = allowable
Gray indicates not allowable

Accommodations	WorkKeys Eligible	State Allowable	Reportable Scores	NCRC	Special Criteria
Clarifying directions by having student restate them.	P	P	■	■	
Reading, and re-reading if requested, embedded directions.	P	P	■	■	• Only individual/small cluster testing
Providing written version of verbal instructions.	P	P	■	■	
Presenting directions through use of projection equipment.	P	P	■	■	
Providing highlighted words in embedded directions.	P	P	■	■	
Writing helpful verbs from the directions on the board, or on a separate piece of paper.	P	P	■	■	
PRESENTATION: Test Items					
Reading or signing math, science, and/or writing items on the state required assessments to student. (Signing is allowed as long as the sign does not cue the correct response to a question.)	P	P	■	■	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only individual testing • All signing must be Exact English Signing only • Must use/order Reader Script • All WorkKeys tests may be read or signed aloud • Must use accommodated form only
Using test contractor signing DVD.					• DVD does not exist
Using test contractor audio version.	P	P	■	■	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to <i>Supervisor's Manual</i> • Must use/order Audio DVD • Must use accommodated form only
Reading or signing multi-step math, science, or writing test items one step at a time. (Signing is allowed as long as the sign does not cue the correct response to a question.)	P	P	■	■	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only individual testing • All signing must be Exact English Signing (American Sign Language will result in state allowable scores only) • Must use/order Reader Script • All WorkKeys tests may be read or signed aloud • Must use accommodated form only
Assisting student in tracking or sequencing test items.	I/P	I/P	■	■	
Providing detailed monitoring to ensure student marks responses in correct answer area.	P	P	■	■	
Turning pages for student.	P	P	■	■	
Masking portions of the test to direct attention to uncovered items.	P	P	■	■	
Using color screens to direct attention to specific sections on a page.	P	P	■	■	
Allow student to highlight words except in answer document area.	P	P	■	■	
PRESENTATION: Use of Assistive Devices/Supports					
Using a calculator with minimal functions: having only addition, subtraction, division, multiplication, percentage, square root, and memory functions.	I/P	I/P	■	■	• Refer to <i>Supervisor's Manual</i> for list of approved calculators
Using visual magnification devices.	I/P	I/P	■	■	
Using templates to reduce visible print.	P	P	■	■	

Accommodations	WorkKeys Eligible	State Allowable	Reportable Scores	NCRC	Special Criteria
Using auditory amplification device, hearing aid, or noise buffers.	I/P	I/P	■	■	
Securing papers to work area with tapes/magnets.	I/P	I/P	■	■	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tape or other adhesive on the answer document will make the test unscorable
Using a device to screen out extraneous sounds (does not include music devices).	I/P	I/P	■	■	
Using adaptive equipment to deliver test (requires consultation with the department for security reasons).	P	P	■	■	
Using masks or markers to maintain place.	P	P	■	■	
Using special pen or pencil such as felt-tip marker or ink pen.	I/P	I/P	■	■	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses must be transcribed
Using an adaptive keyboard.	I/P	I/P	■	■	
Using math manipulatives.		I/P			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only individual/small group testing Must use accommodated form only
RESPONSE: Test Format					
Using graph paper.	I/P	I/P	■	■	
Allowing students to mark responses in test booklet if test employs a separate answer sheet.	P	P	■	■	
Providing student with additional room for writing response.	P	P	■	■	
Using color visual overlays.	I/P	I/P	■	■	
Using ruler or object to maintain place in test.	I/P	I/P	■	■	
Using shield to reduce glare.	I/P	I/P	■	■	
RESPONSE: Use of Assistive Devices/Supports					
Allowing student to tape response for later verbatim transcription.	P	P	■	■	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only individual testing Must use accommodated form only Responses must be transcribed
Using computer without spell or grammar Checker.	P	P	■	■	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must use accommodated form only Responses must be transcribed
Dictating to a scribe for all tests.	I/P	I/P	■	■	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only individual testing If extended time applies, order an accommodated form Reference scribe procedures in the <i>Participation Guidelines</i>
Allowing alternative responses such as oral, sign, typed, pointing.	I/P	I/P	■	■	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only individual testing If extended time applies, order an accommodated form Reference scribe procedures in the <i>Participation Guidelines</i>
Using a Braille.	P	P	■	■	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must use accommodated form only Responses must be transcribed
Using a specially-designed #2 pencil.	I/P	I/P	■	■	

I = Internet Testing
 P = Paper/pencil Event Testing
 ■ = allowable
 Gray indicates not allowable

Accommodations for LEP Students for WorkKeys

Table 15

State-Allowable Accommodations		WorkKeys Eligible	State Allowable	Reportable Scores	NCRC	Special Criteria
Direct Linguistic Support Accommodations						
Ref Materials	Provide a commercial word-to-word bilingual dictionary. Dictionaries that include pictures or word definitions are not allowed. Electronic devices are not acceptable.	I/P	I/P	■	■	
Test Directions	In English or the native language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide written version of written/oral test directions read aloud and/or repeat written and/or oral test directions read aloud and/or repeat embedded test directions clarify/explain test directions 	P	I/P	■	■	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only individual/small cluster testing
Test Items	Read aloud, and repeat if requested: writing, math, and/or science test items in English		P			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only individual testing Must use accommodated form only Must use/order a Reader Script
	Provide test contractor audio version.		P			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer the <i>Supervisor's Manual</i> Must use/order Audio DVD Must use accommodated form only
	Provide the native language word for an unknown word in a test item, when requested by student.		P			
	Allow the student to respond orally to constructed response items.					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constructed response items do not exist on WorkKeys
Indirect Linguistic Support Accommodations						
Timing	Provide extended time.		I/P			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only individual/small group testing Must use accommodated form only
	Provide scheduled breaks as needed during testing.		I/P			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only individual testing Internet Testing - Only between Assessments- no stop-the-clock breaks Paper/Pencil Event Testing use codes for stop the clock breaks. Must use accommodated form only
	Flexible Schedule: Administer the test over several days.					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to page 6 of the <i>Supplement</i>
Test Administration Practices						
	Administer the test individually.	I/P	I/P	■	■	
	Administer the test to small groups in a separate location.	I/P	I/P	■	■	

I = Internet Testing
 P = Paper/pencil Event Testing
 ■ = allowable
 Gray indicates not allowable

Appendix A: Allowable Accommodations for Assessments

The accommodations appendix is not an exhaustive list of the allowable accommodations for students with disabilities for content assessments. To determine whether an adaptation not found in this table or the appendix is an accommodation or modification, refer to the procedure outlined in the *Introduction to Participation in Assessments and Student Supports* section of this document.

Additional Accommodations Allowed for AMP Computer-Based Assessment:

- Frequent or additional breaks
- Providing special lighting
- Preferential seating
- Support of physical position of student by increasing or decreasing opportunity for movement
- Using a student-generated checklist as a reminder of tasks to be completed

Additional Accommodations allowed for AMP Paper/Pencil Administration:

- Preferential seating
- Support of physical position of student by increasing or decreasing opportunity for movement
- Presenting directions through the use of projection equipment
- Turning pages for student
- Extended testing time
- Administering at a time of day most beneficial to the student
- Providing special lighting
- Using a device to screen out extraneous sounds (does not include music devices)
- Using adaptive equipment to deliver test (consult with the department for security reasons)
- Using an adaptive keyboard or computer with all other programs and features turned off
- Using color visual overlays
- Using shield to reduce glare
- Dictating to a scribe
- Using a Braille
- Providing highlighted words in embedded directions
- Write helpful verbs from the directions on the board or a separate piece of paper

Additional Accommodations allowed for the Alaska Science SBA Paper/Pencil Administration:

- Using a specific test proctor or test administrator
- Support of physical position of student by increasing or decreasing opportunity for movement
- Presenting directions through the use of projection equipment
- Assisting student in tracking or sequencing test items
- Turning pages for student
- Extended testing time
- Using color screens to direct attention to specific sections on a page
- Securing papers to work area with tapes/magnets etc.
- Using a device to screen out extraneous sounds (does not include music devices)
- Using adaptive equipment to deliver test (consult with the department for security reasons)
- Using masks or markers to maintain place
- Using special pen or pencil such as felt-tip marker (student responses must be transcribed)
- Using an adaptive keyboard or computer with all other programs and features turned off
- Using color visual overlays
- Using shield to reduce glare
- Allowing student to record response for later verbatim transcription
- Dictating to a scribe
- Allowing alternative responses such as oral, signed, typed, pointing, etc. (student responses must be transcribed)
- Using a Braille

Appendix B: Modifications NOT Allowed for Testing

The following are examples of modifications that are not allowed for testing. Modifications will invalidate an assessment because they change what the assessment is measuring and/or give the student an unfair advantage. This is not an exhaustive list of modifications.

- Clarification of a test item
- Paraphrasing test items
- Using spell or grammar check
- Reading the passages of the reading test
- Use of a dictionary or thesaurus (this does not include the specific type of dictionary allowed for ELLs as an accommodation)
- Use of a mathematics or English language arts resource guide or reference sheets
- Use of a calculator on items where it is not permitted
- Proctors providing synonyms for unknown words

Appendix C: Acronyms and Definitions

AA – Alternate Assessment

AA-AAS – Alaska Alternate Assessment based on **ALTERNATE** Achievement Standards for **NON**-diploma track students

ACT – American College Test

ADA – Americans with Disabilities Act of 2008

AMP – Alaska Measures of Progress, Alaska’s assessment that is designed to measure student growth and achievement in the Alaska English Language Arts and Mathematics Standards

CBA – Computer-based Assessment

CCRA – College and Career-Readiness Assessments

COA – Certificate of Achievement, a certificate for students on an alternate assessment or who are unable to fulfill all requirements to receive a diploma

DLM – Dynamic Learning Maps, a system of assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities

EED – Education and Early Development (Alaska State Department of Education and Early Development)

ELA/Mathematics – English Language Arts and Mathematics Standards

ELLs – English language learners

ELP – English language proficiency assessment

ESEA – Elementary and Secondary Education Act, a federal act that emphasizes equal access to education

ESER – Evaluation Summary and Eligibility Report, a special education eligibility report

FC – First Contact survey, an initial placement survey for the computer-based Alternate Assessment

IDEA – Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004

IEP – Individualized Education Program, individualized education plans for students with disabilities

LEP – Limited English proficient, a formally identified English language learner

NAEP – National Assessment of Educational Progress, a national assessment of a representative sampling of America’s students in grades 4, 8, and 12 conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics

NAGB – National Assessment Governing Board, the governing board that makes decisions regarding accommodations for the NAEP assessment

NCES – National Center for Education

NCLB – No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

NCRC – National Career Readiness Certificates, a WorkKeys certificate documenting a student’s level of career readiness

PLAAFP – Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance, a section within the IEP that documents the student’s academic and functional skills and knowledge

PNP – Personal Needs and Preferences, student supports that are selected in a computer-based assessment system prior to testing

SAT – A college-readiness assessment

SBA – Standards-Based Assessment

**Frequently Asked Questions about
Special Education Eligibility and Entitlement within a
Response to Intervention (RtI) Framework**

A Closer Look at the RTI Process and Special Education

Frequently Asked Questions about Special Education Eligibility and Entitlement within a Response to Intervention (RtI) Framework

This “Frequently Asked Questions” (FAQ) document is designed as a tool for the conference participants. It is intended to provide districts with a framework for collecting and using RtI data to support special education eligibility decision making and provide additional detail and examples. **It is important to note that the FAQ is intended to provide technical assistance and should not be a substitute for appropriate professional and/or legal advice on specific matters.**

The questions contained in the FAQ were developed, in part, based on questions and issues raised by stakeholder groups and individuals during the review of the initial draft of the FAQ Document and the review of factors and considerations for English Language Learners (ELL) subsequently added to the document. The responses to the questions draw on current research and effective practices in implementing a three-tiered model of instruction, assessment, and intervention, as well as the federal [Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act \(IDEIA\) regulations](#) and states rules governing special education and transitional bilingual education team.

The questions and answers are grouped by topic and are listed below.

Data Collection

1. **How long must an intervention be implemented** before eligibility can be considered?
2. What are the best ways to **establish and document the implementation integrity** of instruction and/or intervention?
3. What are **scientifically-based screening/benchmarking tools and progress monitoring tools** for reading, math, and writing?
4. I have heard the terms **CBA, CBM, and CBE**. How are they different?
5. What are **structured, classroom-based observations**?
6. How **frequently should progress be monitored**?
7. What is **significantly discrepant**? What is **inadequate progress**?
8. Should we **compare a student’s performance to that of age level peers or to grade level standards** when determining discrepancy/gap and rate of progress? What about a student who has been retained?
9. When implementing an RtI model, how is the criterion for **“repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals”** established for **a student who has recently moved into the district** and is suspected of having a SLD?
10. How can we ensure that **assessments** we use are **appropriate for ELLs**?

Scientifically-Based Curriculum, Instruction, and Interventions

11. How do we determine that our **core curriculum is scientifically-based**?
12. What do you do if your district **doesn’t have a research-based core curriculum**? If a district isn’t using a scientifically-based curriculum must they adopt another curriculum?
13. How is a **“sufficient provision’ of standards-aligned curriculum”** determined? What standards exist to define this and what data would support the finding?
14. What are some additional **considerations that may be unique to ELLs** in terms of their **“opportunity to learn”**?

15. In the context of **implementation integrity** of the curriculum, what does the term **“limited access to ELL services”** mean?
16. A large portion of students in our district are **not making AYP**. How do we **use RtI to determine eligibility** in our district?
17. Is it permissible to use a **“standard protocol” intervention approach** rather than a problem solving approach at Tier 2?
18. What are resources for identifying **scientifically-based instruction and interventions**?
19. Is **Tier 3 ONLY** special education?

Special Education Evaluation

20. When is a **special education evaluation initiated** in an RtI process?
21. How can the requirement for a **full and individual evaluation** be met in an RtI model?
22. What constitutes a **“sufficiently comprehensive evaluation”**?
23. Can **existing evaluation data** be used to **meet the requirements of a comprehensive evaluation**? When are **additional data** necessary beyond the use of existing data when using RtI in determining eligibility?
24. Can a **Review of Existing Data** meeting and an **Eligibility meeting occur at the same time**?
25. Can **parents request an evaluation** while their child is involved in an RtI process?
26. If a **parent requests an “immediate” evaluation** during or prior to the RtI process, how does the school fulfill its obligation to **complete the evaluation within the 60 school-day timeline** and still meet the requirement to use an RtI process as part of the evaluation procedures for SLD? What if the **parent requests a “traditional” evaluation** using the ability/achievement discrepancy model?
27. When is **informed parental consent** sought for evaluation when RtI is used?
28. Who should **make up the multi-disciplinary team** when an RtI process is used as part of the evaluation procedures to determine special education eligibility?
29. How will we determine the existence of a SLD in the areas of **oral expression, listening comprehension, and written expression** where no formal RtI is being done? What data collection, research-based curriculum and interventions, benchmarking, etc., are supposed to be used for these areas?
30. Do I have to do an **IQ test** as part of an evaluation for SLD?
31. Does **cognitive processing** need to be assessed as part of an SLD eligibility evaluation?
32. With regard to **ruling out cultural factors** as the primary reason a student is experiencing difficulty, what constitutes **culturally responsive instruction**?
33. When **ruling out limited English proficiency**, what about ELLs who may have had **limited access to language assistance instructional programs**?
34. Given the requirement for use of an RtI process as part of the evaluation procedures for SLD, can the **results of independent evaluations** be used to determine eligibility for SLD?
35. How is RtI used when conducting evaluations of **parentally-placed private school students or students who are home schooled**?
36. How are **reevaluations conducted** when using RtI?

Eligibility and Entitlement

37. I have heard the terms **“eligibility” and “entitlement”** used. How are they different?
38. Can we **use RtI to determine eligibility for disability categories other than SLD**?
39. Can **more timely procedures** be used to determine eligibility?
40. Is RtI just a **way to avoid providing special education services**?
41. What happens if the school team has **made changes to the intervention(s)** based on student data **but has not been able to identify an intervention that results in a positive rate of improvement** for a student? Does that mean the **student is eligible for special education services**?

42. Why doesn't the Illinois Guidance Document delineate **more specific/prescriptive eligibility criteria** for SLD, such as how discrepant a student must be in order to be found eligible for special education services?
43. Can a student's eligibility for SLD be determined **by establishing a pattern of strengths and weaknesses** in performance, achievement or both?
44. Can a student's eligibility for SLD be determined **by establishing a severe discrepancy between intellectual ability and achievement** since this option is allowed under states rules governing special education?
45. Can a student with a **nonverbal learning disability** qualify for/continue to receive special education services?
46. If an RtI process is used as part of the procedures for eligibility determination, won't "**slow learners**" **qualify** for special education services?
47. In an RtI system, what happens to **students who are gifted and talented** but still have learning difficulties? Will they qualify for special education services under SLD?

Data Collection

1. ***How long must an intervention be implemented before eligibility can be considered?***

In general, decisions about the duration, type(s), and number of interventions must be based on an individual student's performance data; therefore, there is no prescribed length of time for intervention implementation. Sufficient time must be provided to: a) determine if the intervention is working and b) "close the gap" between the performance of the target student and peers or benchmark expectations when effective interventions have been documented. The greater the gap, the more time that may be needed to bring the target student into the range of expected performance. Accordingly, it is important that the team consider each individual student's needs and use data from frequent progress monitoring and other sources to determine the length of time to implement interventions and plan revisions to interventions accordingly. Other factors to consider include:

- The student's baseline performance level,
- The student's prior history of effective interventions,
- The stability of the student in the current school and instructional environment (e.g., length of time the student has been enrolled, regular school attendance), and
- The intensity of the interventions.

Students who are determined eligible for special education services will continue to receive the recommended amount and intensity of supports articulated through a well-defined process that measures the growth towards achievement of the identified goals.

It is important to note that in the case of students who have or are suspected of having a specific learning disability (SLD), IDEA rules governing special education prohibit a district from using a student's participation in a process that determines how he or she responds to scientific, research-based interventions as a basis for denying a parent's request for an evaluation. Accordingly, the team must consider a parent's request and follow the required procedures for determining whether a special education evaluation is necessary (see Question 25).

2. ***What are the best ways to establish and document the implementation integrity of instruction and/or intervention?***

There are a number of different ways to ensure implementation integrity of an intervention including, but not limited to, professional development, the use of intervention scripts, guided practice and feedback, and treatment integrity checks. Effective RtI systems require that schools establish and maintain consistently high levels of fidelity in the implementation of instruction, interventions, and progress monitoring. This means that instruction is delivered and intervention plans are carried out consistently and as intended.

The following discussion about implementation integrity is an excerpt from the Pennsylvania Department of Education document "PA Guidelines for Identifying Students with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD)" (2008). The bracketed language within the excerpt has been added to highlight the relevance of the information to not only interventions but also to instruction.

Professional development is important in initially establishing and maintaining fidelity. Direct and indirect assessments of the implementation of major components of interventions will allow school districts to measure and analyze fidelity to determine the professional development needs of staff. This reiterates the importance of using a limited number of research-based [curricular materials and] interventions so school districts are working with a common understanding of what [the instruction or] intervention "looks like" and can support effective implementation in the classroom. This analysis is usually conducted at the building level, often by the school principal.

Direct assessment of the fidelity of implementation is done through observation during implementation and task analysis of staff's use of the major components. Indirect assessment is conducted through staff's self-reporting, interviews and documentation. Indirect assessment should focus on the staff's knowledge of components (often documented through a checklist) and gap analysis to determine when components were and were not used properly.

There are a number of ways that [the integrity of instruction and interventions] can be documented. Commercially prepared or locally created checklists of critical features of the instructional program [or intervention] can be used by teachers as a self-check tool among teachers as peer to peer checks [and can be verified by instructional coaches and/or supervisory personnel]. Administrators may use these checklists to review lesson plans and during routine classroom visits and more formal observations. Documentation of the methods used and the outcome of the methods, [duration and frequency of the instruction/intervention, and rigorous adherence to the critical features of the instruction/intervention] should be detailed in the evaluation report.

A detailed discussion on this topic is also available in Best Practices in School Psychology V (pp. 195-208). Roach, A.T., & Elliott, S.N. (2008). Best Practices in Facilitating and Evaluating Intervention Integrity.

The following are examples of instruction and intervention integrity tools:

- Planning and Evaluation Tool for Effective Schoolwide Programs
http://reading.uoregon.edu/logistics/pet_tool.pdf
- Florida Principal Walk Through Example
http://fcrr.org/Curriculum/PDF/RWT_ThirdGrade_final.pdf
- Reading Mastery Integrity Checklist Example
<http://www.aea11.k12.ia.us/idm/checklists/rdgmasteryrevdo.pdf>

3. What are **scientifically-based screening/benchmarking tools and progress monitoring tools** for reading, math, and writing?

Because each district is responsible for selecting screening/benchmarking and progress monitoring tools, specific tools will not be identified here. Rather, the response focuses on the purposes of universal screening and progress monitoring, as well as resources available for evaluating tools to determine if they are scientifically-based.

Universal screening generally refers to the systematic assessment of all students within a given class, grade, school building, or school district, on critical academic and/or social-emotional indicators. Universal screening provides data that help school teams determine if the core curriculum is meeting the needs of the majority of students in a school district and whether enhancements are needed in the core curriculum, instruction, and/or educational environments. Universal screening also guides decisions about which students may require additional assessment and/or supplemental or intensive intervention and instruction beyond what is provided through core programming. The process of using a screening tool multiple times across the school year to assess the effectiveness of the core curriculum and identify students at risk for failure is referred to as benchmarking.

The National Center on Response to Intervention (<http://www.rti4success.org/>) has established a standard process to evaluate the scientific rigor of commercially available screening tools. The reviews are conducted by a Technical Review Committee that is made up of national experts who together have developed rigorous evidence standards to guide the review process. The Technical Review Committee has identified the following criteria upon which to judge the scientific rigor of universal screening/benchmarking tools:

- 1) *Classification Accuracy*: The screening tool is able to accurately classify students into "at risk" and "not at risk" categories.
- 2) *Generalizability*: Results generated from one population can be applied to another population. A tool is considered more generalizable if studies have been conducted on larger, more representative samples.
- 3) *Reliability*: The tool consistently classifies students from one administration to the next. It produces the same results when administering the test under different conditions, at different times, or using different forms of the test.
- 4) *Validity*: The tool accurately measures the underlying construct that it is intended to measure.
- 5) *Disaggregated Reliability, Validity, and Classification Data for Diverse Populations*: Data are calculated and reported separately for specific sub-populations.
- 6) *Efficiency of Administration*: The screening tool is easy to administer and can be administered to large groups of students in a timely manner.

Progress monitoring generally refers to the frequent assessment of student performance over time. Progress monitoring allows teams to determine how students are progressing toward established goals in a timely manner. The collection of ongoing and frequent data on student performance is essential in helping determine a student's response to intervention. It is critical that schools and districts utilize scientifically-based progress monitoring tools when making instructional decisions.

The National Center on Response to Intervention has also established a standard process to evaluate the scientific rigor of commercially available progress monitoring tools. The reviews for progress monitoring tools are conducted by a Technical Review Committee who have developed rigorous evidence standards to guide the review process. The Technical Review Committee has identified the following criteria upon which to judge the scientific rigor of progress monitoring tools:

- 1) *Reliability of the Performance Level Score*: The screening score (or average/median of 2-3 scores) is accurate and consistent.
- 2) *Reliability of the Slope*: Individual differences in growth trajectories can be detected using the tool.
- 3) *Validity of the Performance Level Score*: The screening score (or average/median of 2-3 scores) represents the underlying construct it was intended to measure.
- 4) *Predictive Validity for the Slope of Improvement*: The slope of improvement predicts end-level performance on highly valued outcomes.
- 5) *Alternate Forms*: Parallel versions of the measure are available within a grade level and are of comparable difficulty (or with Item Response Theory (IRT) based, item or ability invariance).
- 6) *Sensitive to Student Improvement*: The measure reveals improvement over time, when improvement actually occurs.
- 7) *End-of-Year Benchmarks*: The measure specifies the level of performance expected at the end of the grade, by grade level.
- 8) *Rates of Improvement Specified*: The measure specifies the expected slopes of improvement or average weekly increases, based on a line of best fit through the student's scores.
- 9) *Norms Disaggregated for Diverse Populations*: Norms are established for various subgroups of students.
- 10) *Disaggregated Reliability and Validity Data*: The data for determining the reliability and validity for the measure are calculated and reported separately for specific sub-populations (e.g., race, economic status, special education status, etc.).

Schools and districts are encouraged to visit the website of the National Center on Response to Intervention (<http://www.rti4success.org>) when selecting or reviewing screening and progress monitoring tools. It is important to note that the presence of a particular tool on their site does not constitute endorsement and should not be viewed as a recommendation. The National Center on Response to Intervention simply reports how different tools performed against the criteria established. If a school is using a tool that has not been

reviewed by this site, the district would need to determine whether the tool meets the criteria above for being scientific.

Another resource for selecting or reviewing progress monitoring tools is the website of the National Center on Student Progress Monitoring (<http://www.studentprogress.org>), where information is available about the characteristics of various progress monitoring options and to assist in identifying appropriate measures. In addition, there are a number of websites that provide detailed instructions and calculation aides for determining slope of progress, such as the RtI Action Network (<http://www.rtinetwork.org>) and Vanderbilt University's IRIS Center (<http://www.iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu>).

4. *I have heard the terms **CBA, CBM, and CBE**. How are they different?*

CBA stands for "curriculum-based assessment" and is an umbrella term used to refer to an assessment process or tool utilized to determine a student's status on skills that are taught in a curriculum. CBM (curriculum-based measurement) is one type of CBA. CBM is a set of standardized and validated short duration tests (i.e., 1-5 minutes) used to measure student progress in basic skill areas (e.g., reading, spelling, written expression, math, early literacy, and early numeracy). CBE (curriculum-based evaluation) is also under the umbrella of CBA and is a process of evaluation and decision making that may use CBM or other assessment tools to help inform that decision making process. CBE is most useful when problem solving about the academic or social problems of students and determining student skill strengths and weaknesses.

5. *What are **structured, classroom-based observations**?*

The purpose of observation in the context of RtI is to describe and quantify behavior under specific conditions in order to facilitate the selection of appropriate interventions and to monitor the effectiveness of those interventions. When conducting classroom-based observations, the focus of the observation should be on the interaction between a student and the environment and the alterable variables specific to that particular environment (e.g., the frequency of positive reinforcement from the teacher, strategies the student uses for gaining teacher attention) and not on identifying underlying traits of the student that are presumed to be constant across environments (e.g., student lacks self-control). Observations should take place across multiple settings and over time (before, during, and after intervention).

Systematic and structured classroom-based observations are distinguished by five characteristics. "First, the goal of observation is to measure specific behaviors. Second, the behaviors being observed have been operationally defined a priori in a precise manner. Third, observations are conducted under standardized procedures and are highly objective in nature. Fourth, the times and places for observation are carefully selected and specified. Fifth, scoring and summarizing of data are standardized and do not vary from one observer to another" (Hintze, Volpe, & Shapiro, 2007, p. 319).

When defining target behaviors, the definition should be "a) objective, referring only to observable characteristics of the behavior and environment, b) readable and unambiguous, such that an experienced observer could read it and readily paraphrase it accurately, and c) complete, delineating the boundaries of what is to be included as an instance of the behavior and what is to be considered not an instance of the behavior" (Hintze, Volpe, & Shapiro, 2007, pp. 322-323).

The data collected as part of a systematic and structured observation are intended to quantify the behaviors of concern. There are many types of data that are used to quantify behavior, but the most common include:

- A) Frequency/event recording – the number of times a specific behavior occurred during a specific time period.
- B) Duration recording – how long a specific behavior occurred.

- C) Latency recording – the length of time between a signal (e.g., the bell ringing) and the onset of the target behavior (e.g., the student arriving in class).
- D) Interval recording – whether a behavior was present or not present during a certain period of time or interval of time. The recording schedule can either be whole-, partial-, or momentary-time-sampling recordings.

The data collected as part of a systematic observation can be used to establish a baseline level of a particular behavior, to monitor a target behavior over time, and/or to identify the circumstances that surround a target behavior in order to develop or confirm hypotheses about why that behavior is occurring. Observation is equally important for academic and behavioral concerns. Academic problems do not occur in a vacuum, and the problem and the solution do not solely rest within the student. There are always variables in the environment that can help to alleviate academic difficulties or exacerbate them. The systematic classroom observation is essential in helping to identify these variables.

The following is a sampling of systematic observation codes. Observation codes are instruments that have been developed in order to assess a specific range of behaviors in a standardized manner. Hintz, Volpe, and Shapiro (2007) reported detailed information about the purpose of each of the codes, the behaviors that they are intended to measure, and their psychometric properties. The interested reader is directed to their chapter (see References on page 24).

1. Academic Engaged Time Code of the SSBD (AET-SSBD; Walker & Severson, 1990)
2. ADHD School Observation Code (ADHD-SOC; Gadow, Sprafkin, & Nolan, 1996)
3. Behavioral Observation of Students in Schools (BOSS; Shapiro, 2004)
4. Classroom Observation Code (COC; Abikoff & Gittelman, 1985)
5. Direct Observation Form (DOF; Achenbach, 1986)
6. State-Event Classroom Observation System (SECOS; Saudargas, 1997)
7. Student Observation System (SOS; Reynolds & Kamphaus, 2004)

6. *How frequently should progress be monitored?*

The frequency of progress monitoring is determined by the level of intensity of interventions. In general, students receiving supplemental (strategic) interventions (Tier 2) should be monitored at least twice per month. Students receiving intensive interventions (Tier 3) should be monitored at least weekly.

7. *What is significantly discrepant? What is inadequate progress?*

It is the responsibility of each school district to establish and consistently apply specific criteria and data-based decision making rules regarding what constitutes a significant discrepancy or inadequate progress in terms of students' skill performance. In order to do this, it is recommended that district personnel analyze district, school, and student level data and consider any additional pertinent information (e.g., characteristics of the school environment).

Within the context of RtI, there are three key factors involved when determining significant discrepancy and inadequate progress:

1. The student has one or more significant academic skill deficits compared to age level peers or grade level benchmarks,
2. The student is making insufficient progress in response to research/evidence-based interventions or is making adequate progress but that progress is only possible when the student has been provided and continues to need curriculum, instruction, and environmental interventions that are significantly different from general education peers and of an intensity or type that exceed general education resources, and

3. The learning difficulties are not primarily the result of lack of appropriate instruction in reading and math or limited English proficiency, and additionally for SLD, are not primarily the result of a visual, hearing, or motor disability; an intellectual disability; an emotional disability; cultural factors; or economic disadvantage.

By applying the established district criteria and decision making rules, a school team may describe a student's academic performance as significantly discrepant when he or she does not achieve adequately for his or her age or to meet a State-approved grade level standard and fails to make sufficient progress when using a process based on the response to scientific, research-based interventions. Inadequate progress is tied directly to this second component and is present when supplemental/intensive interventions fail to result in the student demonstrating improved academic performance as measured via frequent progress monitoring, resulting in a learning trajectory that will lead to the student meeting the peer and/or grade level standard. Whenever interventions are not successful, whether that occurs before or after special education eligibility, teams are expected to use the RtI/problem solving process to refine, modify, and/or change intervention programs until a successful intervention is found. In the case of students who are already eligible for special education, it is important to keep in mind that changes in interventions being delivered in accordance with the student's IEP must be made in accordance with procedural safeguard requirements (see Question 41 for further details).

8. *Should we **compare a student's performance to that of age level peers or to grade level standards** when determining discrepancy/gap and rate of progress? What about a student who has been retained?*

Ultimately, it is each district's decision whether to compare a student's performance to age level peers or to grade level standards to determine discrepancy/gap and rate of progress within an RtI framework. Because grade level standards are typically connected to state learning standards, it is more common for districts to use grade level standards. A possible exception to using grade level standards involves implementation of an RtI framework in early childhood settings. Due to the significant variability in academic and behavioral development at early ages, early childhood research and best practice would support the use of age-based norms, including benchmarking scores.

In terms of grade retention, it is first recommended that districts and schools review the research on the effectiveness of grade retention in addressing the needs of students whose skills are below the age-appropriate grade level benchmark(s). In particular, research does not support grade retention as being an effective "intervention" for closing the gap between a student's skill level and the expected benchmark. According to Jimerson, Woehr, & Kaufman (2007), evidence indicates that grade retention is an *"ineffective and possibly harmful intervention."* Therefore, schools and districts are strongly encouraged to utilize more effective alternatives to grade retention (i.e., scientifically research-based instructional and intervention strategies) to address the skill needs of students. In those instances when a student has been retained, school teams should consider the fact that he/she has not been exposed to the same instruction as his/her age level peers and will take the state assessment for the grade level in which he/she is currently enrolled. Therefore, it is recommended that grade level standards be used to determine the student's discrepancy/gap and rate of progress.

9. *When implementing an RtI model, how is the criterion for **"repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals"** established for **a student who has recently moved into the district and is suspected of having a SLD?***

When a student moves into a district, it is recommended that universal screening (as defined in the ISBE Guidance Document and discussed in the response to Question 3) be conducted to assist in determining the student's current level of performance and educational needs. These data should be shared with the student's parents. If universal screening is administered to all students in the district (including students who move into the district) and these data are utilized for provision of tiered early intervening services with

results reported to all parents on a regular basis, the criterion for “repeated assessments at regular intervals” is established.

If a team determines that, based on the universal screening data, the performance level of a student who has recently moved into the district is significantly discrepant (as defined by locally-established criteria; see Question 7) in comparison with age level peers or grade level standards, and the team suspects that student may be a student with a disability, the team should initiate an evaluation. The evaluation process would be no different for this student than for any other student, except that the early intervening period (i.e., where supplemental instruction and interventions with regular progress monitoring occurs) might be concurrent with the evaluation. As part of the evaluation, the new district should make efforts to obtain information regarding instructional history and assessment results from the student’s previous district(s). This process is applicable whether an IEP team is implementing an RtI process to meet the requirement for using such a process as part of the evaluation procedures for determining SLD eligibility or has chosen to utilize an RtI process for other suspected disabilities.

10. *How can we ensure that **assessments** we use are **appropriate for ELLs**?*

Any assessment procedure for ELLs should: a) reflect authentic language and literacy use; b) provide scaffolds for oral or written language input through visuals, diagrams, manipulatives, or other supports; and c) be situated in meaningful contexts. Further, English assessments should be aligned to the student’s English language proficiency level as determined by ACCESS for ELLs® or at a minimum, allow for differentiation according to language proficiency levels. It is essential that the assessment tool is able to clearly distinguish between measurement of language proficiency and measurement of content area skill and concept attainment. Generally, the language of assessment should correlate with the language of instruction, and in the case of two-language learners/emerging bilingual students, assessment would incorporate all of their languages to the extent possible. Additionally, the norm group should be checked to be sure that it consisted of ELLs similar to the ELL(s) being assessed. If the assessment does not meet these standards of appropriateness and is used nonetheless, the resulting scores should be presented in the context of their reduced and compromised validity and reliability.

Scientifically-Based Curriculum and Instruction

11. *How do we determine that our **core curriculum** is **scientifically-based**?*

In order to determine whether its core curriculum is scientifically-based, a district may embark on a process of inquiry to assess the degree to which the curriculum is aligned with national and state standards and effective instruction (pedagogy) research. For example, in selecting or reviewing a core program in reading, a district would review curricula in relation to its alignment with the National Reading Panel (NRP) standards, the 2006 Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth, learning standards adopted by the state of Illinois, and effective instructional practices.

The information below is taken directly from “Selecting a Scientifically Based Core Curriculum for Tier 1” by Charles Hughes, Ph.D., and Douglas D. Dexter, M.Ed., Penn State University – RtI Action Network. (Please note that this information is provided only in the context of existing tools and resources that could assist districts in determining the effectiveness of core reading curricula. It should also be noted that the five components of effective reading instruction discussed below may not be sufficient for teaching literacy to ELLs. For an understanding of how the five components should be addressed when instructing and assessing ELLs, please refer to the Report of the National Literacy Panel for Language-Minority Children and Youth (2006).)

The five components of effective early reading (e.g., grades K–3) instruction, as reported by the NRP, are as follows:

1. *Phonemic awareness, the understanding that the sounds of spoken language work together to make words.*
2. *Phonics, the relationship between the letters of written language and individual sounds of spoken language.*
3. *Fluency, the ability to read text accurately and quickly.*
4. *Vocabulary, the words one must know to communicate effectively.*
5. *Text Comprehension, understanding what one is reading.*

As part of the 2000 report, the NRP reviewed more than 100,000 studies that met several criteria: a) the study included one or more of the above components in reading, b) results were generalizable to a large number of students, c) the study had to examine effectiveness of an instructional approach, and d) the research was regarded as "high quality"...

Technical Assistance Centers

The U.S. Department of Education funds technical assistance centers in Oregon, Texas, and Florida to help states, districts, and schools implement Reading First requirements. At least two practical tools [that can assist districts in reviewing reading curricula] were developed at these centers. Simmons and Kame'enui (2003) created A Consumer's Guide to Evaluating a Core Reading Program Grades K–3: A Critical Elements Analysis at the Oregon Center, and researchers at the Florida center created a scoring rubric for evaluating potential core reading programs. According to Foorman (2007),

"The Oregon Center's Consumer's Guide suggests that educators select a core reading program by first considering (a) evidence of efficacy established through rigorously designed experimental studies, and (b) relevance to the demographic characteristics of the students who will use the program. At a second stage, the guide includes a critical elements analysis to help educators determine whether the five major components of reading instruction emphasized by the NRP are adequately addressed: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. Educators are recommended to review elements (a) in terms of the program's scope and sequence, (b) within a lesson or series of two to three successive lessons, and (c) across a series of 10 consecutive lessons (to analyze a "skill trace"). Elements are to be rated as (a) not satisfactorily meeting the criterion, (b) partially meeting or exceeding the criterion, or (c) consistently meeting or exceeding the criterion." (p. 27)

The Florida Center's rubric consists of the following questions:

1. *Are all five components from the NRP present and prominent?*
2. *Is instruction within each component explicit and systematic?*
3. *Is the sequence for instruction organized sequentially?*
4. *Is student material coordinated with the teacher guide?*
5. *Is instruction across components clearly linked?*

Each potential core reading program is judged by the presence (yes/no) and quality (acceptable/not acceptable) of these five categories. Essential to this review process, each reviewer must be highly knowledgeable in reading content and pedagogy.

Using Oregon's consumer guide and Florida's rubric for selecting core reading programs as their basis, Al Otaiba, Kosanovich-Grek, Torgesen, Hassler, and Wahl (2005) reported that effective core reading programs aligned with Reading First share three important features:

1. *A clearly articulated statement of SBRR*
2. *Explicit instructional strategies*

3. Consistent organizational and instructional routines

The presence of these features in a core reading curriculum potentially helps prevent reading difficulties in a wide array of diverse classroom learners.

Selecting Core Programs in Other Subjects

Although there is considerable literature describing selection of core curricula in reading, there is much less focusing on core curricula in writing, mathematics, science, and social studies.

However, some of the findings by Al Otaiba et al. (2005) about reading programs appear to translate across disciplines. That is, effective core curricula should a) have a clearly articulated scientific research base, b) involve explicit instructional strategies, and c) provide consistent organizational and instructional routines. Without explicit guidance or the aid of technical assistance centers in these subjects, it becomes imperative that classroom teachers take the lead in determining an effective core curriculum in these subjects. Teachers can accomplish this by asking whether the content of a curriculum's teacher guide is research based and clearly organized, and whether the text in the pupil edition allows students sufficient practice to master the instructional strategies covered in the lessons (Foorman, 2007). [The first component of the Florida guidelines "Overall Instructional Design and Pedagogy" also might be applicable to other subject areas.]

References

Al Otaiba, S., Kosanovich-Grek, M. L., Torgesen, J. K., Hassler, L., & Wahl, M. (2005). Reviewing core kindergarten and first-grade reading programs in light of No Child Left Behind: An exploratory study. Reading & Writing Quarterly, 21, 377–400.

Foorman, B. R. (2007). Primary prevention in classroom reading instruction. Teaching Exceptional Children, 39, 24–30.

Consumer's Guide to Evaluating a Core Reading Program Grades K - 3: A Critical Elements Analysis (Oregon) http://reading.uoregon.edu/appendices/con_guide.php.

12. What do you do if your district **doesn't have a research-based core curriculum**? If a district isn't using a scientifically-based curriculum must they adopt another curriculum?

If a district has completed a process of inquiry to assess the degree to which the curriculum is aligned with national and/or state standards and effective instruction (pedagogy) research (following the process discussed in Question 11) and has determined that their curriculum is not scientifically-based, the district is responsible for addressing deficits within their curriculum. However, addressing deficiencies within a core curriculum is not synonymous with adoption of another curriculum.

While adoption of scientifically-based core curriculum materials is likely the most efficient, and arguably the most effective, route to establishing a scientifically-based core curriculum, districts still can take steps to correct curriculum deficiencies when adoption of new materials is not immediately possible. For instance, if a district finds their math curriculum to be deficient because it lacks consistent instructional routines, that district might take steps to correct this deficiency by creating and implementing common instructional routines such as the SIM Course Organizer and Unit Organizer Routines (<http://www.ku-crl.org/sim>).

13. How is a **“sufficient provision’ of standards-aligned curriculum”** (as discussed in the ISBE Guidance Document) determined? What standards exist to define this and what data would support the finding?

The phrase “sufficient provision,” as used in the ISBE Guidance Document, incorporates several components. The first is that a student is in school, attending, and has been regularly exposed to instruction. Second, the choice of curriculum in a district/school is expected to align with state learning standards, if not agreed upon internationally benchmarked common core state standards. (Currently, Illinois has adopted state learning standards and is part of the Common Core State Standards Initiative.) Third, the curriculum chosen must reflect research-based components, e.g., reading curriculum includes the five essential components of reading instruction.

14. What are some additional **considerations that may be unique to ELLs** in terms of their **“opportunity to learn”**?

For ELLs, opportunity to learn includes instruction provided by personnel well versed in the implementation of proven strategies and approaches appropriate for ELLs and designed to foster their linguistic and academic growth in culturally responsive and relevant ways. Thus, those providing instruction should be bilingual teachers with their bilingual approval or endorsement or, in the instance of low incidence languages within Transitional Programs of Instruction (TPI), highly qualified teachers holding English as a Second Language (ESL) approval or endorsement. In the instance of there being very few such students, or where parents have refused language instruction support services, it is important for districts to provide the necessary support for classroom teachers to acquire the relevant knowledge and skills specific to teaching ELLs and essential to providing effective instruction and support to these students.

15. In the context of **implementation integrity** of the curriculum, what does the phrase **“limited access to ELL services”** mean?

Limited access to ELL services could include, but is not limited to, situations such as the following: a) when parents have refused language assistance instructional program services for their children or withdrawn their children from such services before the students have attained a score of English proficient in their annual language proficiency assessments; b) when ELLs who, through a decision by the school’s or district’s administration, were not provided either a Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) program or TPI, as defined in [23 IAC 228](#); c) when the instructional program design for serving ELLs has changed numerous times over the course of an ELL’s educational career; d) when an ELL experiences the cumulative effects of being taught by personnel without appropriate bilingual/ESL credentials; e) when an ELL’s early childhood program did not assess for English proficiency to identify language support needs; or f) when an ELL began in an English-only Head Start or prekindergarten program before entering a bilingual kindergarten.

16. A large portion of students in our district are **not making AYP**. How do we **use RtI to determine eligibility** in our district?

Districts that have a large portion of students not making AYP need to assess the degree to which their curriculum is scientifically-based and implemented with integrity, as outlined in Questions 11 – 13 above, and matches the needs of their students. Low achieving districts should document plans to remediate curriculum deficiencies found through these processes in their District Improvement Plan (DIP) and School Improvement Plans (SIP). Districts with a large portion of students not making AYP may need to consider intensifying instruction for all students so that approaches considered to be Tier 2/supplemental instruction in a high achieving district are utilized by general educators at Tier 1 for all students in a low achieving district. Doing this provides more intensive support to all students and is more efficient and effective than trying to place large percentages of students in remedial and special education programs, which ultimately dilutes those remedial services.

Once low achieving districts create and implement DIPs and SIPs addressing their deficiencies in curriculum, instruction/pedagogy, and instructional environments, eligibility determination is no different than described in the ISBE Guidelines. In part, the low achieving district would establish universal screening systems to provide tiered early intervening services, monitor integrity and progress of interventions, and establish district guidelines for meeting the discrepancy/gap component of the ISBE Guidance Document by setting local data-based decision making rules to compare individual students against age level peers within that district or to grade level standards.

17. *Is it permissible to use a “standard protocol” intervention approach rather than a problem solving approach at Tier 2?*

The standard protocol and problem solving approaches for intervention are not mutually exclusive. A standard protocol intervention represents a specific intervention that is consistently used to address one or more particular skill deficits within an RtI model. The standard protocol intervention should be scientifically-based, including evidence that it has a high probability of success in remediating the targeted academic or behavioral deficits for a majority of students. Staff receives training on the standard protocol intervention to increase the fidelity of implementation.

The problem solving process is an integral part of the three-tiered instruction and intervention model and is used at all tiers, although it may look somewhat different at each tier. For example, at Tier 1, problem solving can be used at a systems level to use data (e.g., from universal screening) to determine:

- 1) If there is a problem with the core curriculum and/or instruction,
- 2) Why the curriculum and/or instruction is not effective,
- 3) How the curriculum and/or instruction can be improved, and
- 4) Whether the changes are working.

Within Tier 2, a team can use a problem solving process by analyzing universal screening data to identify a group of students with common educational needs and then match their needs to one or more standard, scientifically research-based interventions (i.e., standard protocol interventions) that can be provided to small groups of students, with progress monitoring to assess effectiveness. A similar process may also be used at Tier 3, but some students may require more individualized interventions that are identified through the individual problem solving process based on universal screening and/or progress monitoring data. The same criteria identified above for standard protocol interventions (scientifically-based and a high probability of success for remediating the targeted skill) apply to individualized interventions.

In summary, problem solving is used across the tiers but in slightly different ways, with more standardized interventions integrated at Tiers 2 and 3.

18. *What are resources for identifying scientifically-based instruction and interventions?*

Scientifically-based research is “...research that involves the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs” (Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 2001). Scientifically-based interventions are those practices that have been rigorously reviewed to determine whether they produce positive educational results in a predictable manner. The strongest evidence comes from studies which use control groups and sound statistical analyses to examine the impact on student achievement. The U.S. Department of Education publishes a document titled “Identifying and Implementing Educational Practices Supported by Rigorous Evidence: A User Friendly Guide.” The guide is designed to “provide educational practitioners with user-friendly tools to distinguish practices supported by rigorous evidence from those that are not.” The document is available online at <http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/rigorousvid/index.html>.

Information regarding scientifically-based methods is more available in some areas than in others. There is a large bank of information available regarding what constitutes scientifically-based methods in the area of reading. Large-scale studies, such as those conducted by the National Reading Panel (<http://www.nationalreadingpanel.org/>), have made strong conclusions regarding what constitutes effective reading instruction. Several Reading First sites have systematically reviewed many core, supplemental, and intensive instructional and intervention reading programs and practices, and the results of these reviews are available online (see links below).

While not as plentiful as the area of reading, information on scientifically-based methods exists for the other identified SLD areas as well. For example, the final report of The National Mathematics Advisory Panel, “Foundations for Success,” was published in 2008 and is available online at <http://www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/mathpanel/report/final-report.pdf>. The findings in this report are expected to have an impact on math instruction similar to the impact the National Reading Panel report had on reading instruction. Already, many more scientifically-based programs and practices are available for math than were available just a few years ago. The websites below are a partial listing of scientifically-based programs and practices information available online.

Websites with Scientifically-Based Instruction and Intervention Information in Multiple Subject Areas

- **Doing What Works – U.S. Dept. of Ed.;** <http://dwww.ed.gov/>
Early Childhood Education
English Language Learners
Math and Science
Psychology of Learning
School Improvement
- **What Works Clearinghouse – U.S. Dept. of Ed.;** <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>
Beginning Reading
Adolescent Literacy
English Language Learners
Early Childhood Education
Elementary School Math
Middle School Math
Dropout Prevention
Character Education
- **Center on Instruction;** <http://www.centeroninstruction.org>
Reading
Math
Science
Special Education
English Language Learners
- **Center for Research on Learning;** <http://www.ku-crl.org/sim/strategies.shtml>
Learning Strategies
Reading
Writing
Math
Studying and Remembering Information
Improving Assignment and Test Performance
Effectively Interacting with Others
Motivation

Content Enhancement Teaching Routines for:

Planning and Leading Learning
Exploring Text, Topics, and Details
Teaching Concepts
Increasing Student Performance

- **Intervention Central;** <http://www.interventioncentral.org>
General Academic Strategies
Study and Organization
Reading
Math
Writing
Classroom Management
Behavior
Bullying Prevention
Motivation
Developmental Disabilities
- **IRIS Center;** <http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/resources.html>
Reading, Literacy, Language Arts
Math
Differentiated Instruction
Content Instruction
Behavior

Websites with Scientifically-Based Instruction and Intervention Information by Specific Area

- **Reading and Writing**
 - *Center on Instruction: Reading*
http://www.centeroninstruction.org/resources.cfm?category=reading&subcategory=&grade_start=&grade_end
 - *What Works Clearinghouse: Beginning Reading and Adolescent Literacy*
<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/reports/topic.aspx?tid=01>
 - *Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts; www.meadowscenter.org/vgc/*
 - *Florida Center for Reading Research; <http://www.fcrr.org>*
 - *Oregon Reading First Center; http://oregonreadingfirst.uoregon.edu/inst_curr_review_si.html*
- **Math**
 - *Doing What Works: Math; http://dww.ed.gov/priority_area/priority_landing.cfm?PA_ID=8*
 - *What Works Clearinghouse: Elementary School Math and Middle School Math*
<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>
 - *Center on Instruction: Math; <http://www.centeroninstruction.org/resources.cfm?category=math>*
- **Oral Expression & Listening Comprehension**
 - *American Speech-Language & Hearing Association - Compendium of EBP Guidelines and Reviews and Evidence-Based Systematic Reviews; <http://www.asha.org/default.htm>*
- **ELLs**
 - *National Center on Culturally Responsive Educational Systems*
<http://nccrest.org/publications/briefs.html>
 - *Equity Alliance at ASU*
<http://www.equityallianceasu.org/>

- *World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA)*
<http://www.wida.us/>
- *What Works Clearinghouse: ELLs*
<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/reports/topic.aspx?tid=10>
- *Doing What Works – U.S. Dept. of Ed.*
http://dww.ed.gov/priority_area/priority_landing.cfm?PA_ID=6

19. Is Tier 3 ONLY special education?

No. The Illinois State RtI Plan discusses a three-tiered model of increasingly intense instruction and interventions that is intended to meet the needs of *all* students and does not define Tier 3 as being only special education. Rather, Tier 3 is discussed as being the most intense level of instruction and intervention provided to students, which may include special education services if appropriate to a student's needs. In an RtI context, a student who does not respond to intense interventions may be found eligible for special education services when it has been demonstrated that the intensity or type of intervention required to produce acceptable rates of student improvement exceeds the resources in general education.

Special Education Evaluation

20. When is a *special education evaluation initiated* in an RtI process?

The point at which a special education evaluation is initiated depends on the student's individual plan and progress status based on the student's participation and success in the RtI process. Per federal regulations and [23 IAC 226](#), a referral for special education can be initiated at any time for a student who is suspected of having a disability. If an IEP team is considering special education eligibility, it is important that questions are formulated and the review of comprehensive student progress data and progress through the RtI process are an integral part of the referral process. When a student is participating in an RtI process, data showing that the student has a significant skill deficit and is making insufficient progress, even when provided with intense, research-based interventions, could lead the team to suspect that the student has a disability and make a referral for evaluation. Another possible consideration in determining the need for a referral for evaluation is the student's need to receive ongoing and specialized supports and services in order to participate and make progress in the general education curriculum. These procedures are applicable whether an IEP team is implementing an RtI process to meet the Part 226 requirement for using such a process as part of the evaluation procedures for determining SLD eligibility or has chosen to utilize an RtI process for other suspected disabilities.

It is important to note that in the case of students who have or are suspected of having a SLD, ISBE's rules governing special education prohibit the district from using a student's participation in a process that determines how he or she responds to scientific, research-based interventions as a basis for denying a parent's request for an evaluation [[23 IAC 226.130\(b\)](#)]. Accordingly, the team must consider a parent's request and follow the required procedures for determining whether a special education evaluation is necessary (see Question 25).

21. How can the requirement for a *full and individual evaluation* be met in an RtI model?

The federal regulations at 34 CFR 300.301(a) require a "full and individual evaluation" to be completed before the initial provision of special education and related services, and this requirement does not change in an RtI process. Further, in accordance with 34 CFR 300.304(b), in conducting the evaluation, school districts must use a variety of assessment tools and strategies that may assist in determining whether the student is a student with a disability. The student must also be "assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability, including, *if appropriate [emphasis added]*, health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status, and motor abilities" [34 CFR 300.304(c)(4)]. In

addition, the evaluation must be sufficiently comprehensive to identify all of the student's special education needs [34 CFR 300.304(c)(6)]. Depending on their nature and scope, it is possible that data generated during the RtI process could fulfill the requirements of a "full and individual evaluation."

22. What constitutes a **"sufficiently comprehensive evaluation"**?

The use in the federal regulations of such terms as "if appropriate" establishes the authority of the school team, of which the student's parent is a member, to determine the areas, also called domains, in which the student should be assessed. Therefore, what constitutes a "comprehensive" evaluation is determined on an individual basis in accordance with a student's needs. In the past, the required "comprehensive evaluation" was interpreted by most to mean a common battery of assessments for all students suspected of having a particular disability. Now it is anticipated that the data gathered during the RtI process, related directly to the student's performance in the learning context, should reduce the need for the "common battery" approach to assessments.

In conducting an evaluation, the team may not use any single measure or assessment as the sole criterion for making a disability determination and for determining an appropriate educational program. While a student's response to scientific, research-based intervention is crucial to disability identification and educational planning, other types of information and assessment data must also be collected throughout the RtI process.

The requirement to collect additional information and assessment data can be addressed through what is commonly called the RIOT (Record review, Interviews, Observation, and Testing) process, which is typically an integral part of the early intervening period. Below are examples of data sources and evaluation tools in each of these four categories that might be included in a full and individual evaluation. The collection of this information and data may occur during the RtI process and/or after the special education evaluation period begins.

- Record Review: Student work samples, grades, office referrals, etc.
- Interviews: Of teachers, parents, counselors, the student, and others involved in the student's education
- Observation: Of the student in specific, relevant settings and of the learning environment
- Testing: Universal screening, CBMs (depending on tier), classroom tests, district-wide and state tests, functional behavior assessments, etc.

The following is a list of some of the evaluation tools that might be included in a full and individual evaluation:

- Interviews
- Observation of the student in specific, relevant settings
- Error analysis of work samples
- CBAs/Functional Academic Assessments, including CBMs and CBE (see Question 4)
- Progress monitoring data
- Results from state and local assessments
- Functional Behavioral Assessments
- Behavior Rating Scales
- Vocational assessments
- Developmental, academic, behavioral, and functional life skills checklists
- Standardized (norm-referenced) assessments

23. Can **existing evaluation data** be used to **meet the requirements of a comprehensive evaluation**? When are **additional data** necessary beyond the use of existing data when using RtI in determining eligibility?

Screening data collected as components of Tier 1 activities and Tier 2 and 3 assessment data (e.g., classroom observations, the results of a curriculum-based evaluation) and progress monitoring data documenting student response to intervention are part of the comprehensive evaluation and may be sufficient for determining entitlement for special education services as stated in the regulations at 34 CFR 300.305(a).

- (a) *Review of existing evaluation data.* As part of an initial (if appropriate) and as part of any reevaluation under this part, the IEP Team and other qualified professionals, as appropriate, must –
- (1) Review existing evaluation data on the child, including –
 - (i) Evaluations and information provided by the parents of the child;
 - (ii) Current classroom-based, local, or State assessments, and classroom-based observations; and
 - (iii) Observation by teachers and related services providers; and
 - (2) On the basis of that review, and input from the child’s parents, identify what additional data, if any [emphasis added], are needed to determine –
 - (i) (A) Whether the child is a child with a disability, as defined in §300.8, and the educational needs of the child; or
 - (B) In the case of a reevaluation of a child, whether the child continues to have such a disability, and the educational needs of the child;
 - (ii) The present levels of academic achievement and related developmental needs of the child;
 - (iii) (A) Whether the child needs special education and related services; or
 - (B) In the case of a reevaluation of a child, whether the child continues to need special education and related services...

The term “if any” allows the team the discretion to determine if further data are required. In a system where RtI is being implemented, existing data collected during the RtI process will be used as an important source of evaluation information when determining special education eligibility. The school team, which includes a student’s parents, will make a decision about whether these data are sufficient to determine eligibility or if additional evaluation data are needed. The team may decide that the collection of additional data is necessary when they do not feel that they have enough data to meet the eligibility requirements (e.g., there is insufficient evidence regarding the level of discrepancy between the target student and his/her age level peers or grade level standard, a pattern of student performance over time has not been established, there is insufficient evidence for the implementation integrity of the interventions, they have not been able to identify the instructional characteristics that produce a positive impact on the student’s performance, one or more of the exclusionary criteria have not been ruled out).

24. Can a **Review of Existing Data** meeting and an **Eligibility meeting** occur at the same time?

Neither ISBE’s rules governing special education nor the federal IDEIA regulations specifically prohibit such meetings from being held concurrently, provided that all requirements associated with the review of existing evaluation data and the eligibility determination meeting are met, including the notice requirements at 34 CFR 300.322 and 300.501(b)(2) and the requirements associated with membership of the eligibility and IEP team(s).

The regulations at 34 CFR 300.305(b) allow the review of existing evaluation data to occur without a formal meeting, provided parents have an opportunity to participate in the process. However, a meeting of “a group of qualified professionals and the parent of the child” must be held to determine whether the student is or continues to be a student with a disability and the educational needs of the student [34 CFR 300.306(a)].

If, as a result of the review of existing evaluation data, the IEP team determines that no additional evaluation data are needed, the requirements at 34 CFR 300.305(d) must be met. This means that the district must notify the student's parent of the determination and the reasons for it and of his or her right to request further assessment.

If the parent agrees with the determination that no additional evaluation data are needed and is willing to proceed immediately to the eligibility determination, then it is possible to subsequently conduct the eligibility meeting. It is important to ensure that the parent fully understands the data being used to determine the student's eligibility. Accordingly, the documentation of the evaluation results should fully detail the existing data being used to make the eligibility determination, including data graphs and/or charts. The documentation must also verify that the requirements for a full and individual evaluation, in accordance with 34 CFR 300.301, have been fulfilled.

25. Can *parents request an evaluation while their child is involved in an RtI process?*

Yes. The right for parents to request a special education evaluation at any time has not changed, nor have the requirements associated with the district's response to such a request. Therefore, parents can request a special education evaluation at any time prior to, during, or following their child's involvement in an RtI process. If the district agrees that the student may be a student with a disability requiring special education and related services, then it must provide notice of the intent to conduct an evaluation, obtain written parental consent, and complete the evaluation. If the district does not agree that a special education evaluation is warranted, a written notice must be provided to the parents that informs them of this decision and explains the reasons why it has been determined an evaluation is not indicated. The parent can challenge the district's decision by requesting mediation and/or a due process hearing to resolve the dispute over the student's need for an evaluation.

Once written parental consent is obtained, the 60 school-day timeline begins for completing the evaluation, determining eligibility, and if the student is eligible, developing an IEP. When determining SLD eligibility, this timeline may be extended by "mutual written agreement of the student's parents and a group of qualified professionals" [34 CFR 300.309(c)]. Also, given the [Part 226](#) requirement for the use of a process that determines how a student responds to scientific, research-based interventions as part of the evaluation procedures for SLD, if the student has not been involved in an RtI process and SLD is the suspected area of disability, appropriate interventions must be initiated in the area(s) of difficulty and the student's progress regularly monitored during the evaluation period.

26. If a *parent requests an "immediate" evaluation during or prior to the RtI process, how does the school fulfill its obligation to complete the evaluation within the 60 school-day timeline and still meet the requirement to use an RtI process as part of the evaluation procedures for SLD? What if the parent requests a "traditional" evaluation using the ability/achievement discrepancy model?*

If a parent requests an immediate evaluation, the same procedures discussed in the response to Question 25 apply. If a decision is made to conduct an evaluation, the school team should explain the RtI process and the services the student will receive during the evaluation period. Schools may not use the RtI process as a reason not to conduct an evaluation of a student suspected of having a SLD [[23 IAC 226.130\(b\)](#)] or to try to convince parents not to request an evaluation; however, it is expected that parents will be informed of the requirement that an RtI process must be part of the evaluation procedures for SLD. If parents request a "traditional assessment" using an ability/achievement discrepancy model, the team must determine if such an assessment is necessary and appropriate in order to evaluate the student and determine eligibility. In Illinois, assessment of an ability/achievement discrepancy is neither required nor sufficient for determining the existence of a SLD.

27. When is **informed parental consent** sought for evaluation when Rtl is used?

Informed parental consent for a special education evaluation must be obtained any time a special education evaluation is to be conducted. If the school team suspects that a student may have a disability requiring special education and related services, then a request for special education evaluation must be initiated and written parental consent to conduct the evaluation must be obtained prior to completing the evaluation.

Informed parental consent is not required for activities such as universal screening, intervention delivery, and progress monitoring that are implemented during the Rtl process as part of the general education program. Specifically, the federal regulations at 34 CFR 300.302 clearly state that screening of a student to “determine appropriate instructional strategies for curriculum implementation” is not considered an evaluation for special education eligibility and, therefore, informed parental consent is not required. It is important, though, that parents be fully informed of these activities and receive regular reports of student progress. For example, one of the requirements for SLD eligibility determination is that “data-based documentation of repeated assessments of achievement at reasonable intervals, reflecting formal assessment of student progress during instruction” [34 CFR 309(b)(2)] must be completed and the results provided to the student’s parents. Thus, regular communication and sharing of data with parents is critical.

28. Who should **make up the multi-disciplinary team** when an Rtl process is used as part of the evaluation procedures to determine special education eligibility?

The requirements for membership of the multidisciplinary team formed for the purpose of determining eligibility using an Rtl process are the same as those set forth at 34 CFR 300.306. If the suspected disability is SLD, then the additional requirements for team membership at 34 CFR 300.308 also apply.

It is suggested that the multidisciplinary team members be chosen from the Rtl problem solving team, as these individuals would be knowledgeable of the student’s intervention and progress monitoring data. Other individuals can be added to the team if needed to provide specific expertise or to fulfill particular roles. This team would develop an evaluation plan and complete the necessary evaluation components, the results of which will be used by the group to determine if the student has a disability requiring special education and related services.

If the student in question is not currently receiving interventions through an Rtl process and the public agency agrees to initiate a special education evaluation, the student should be referred to the Rtl problem solving team so that interventions can be initiated as part of the evaluation procedures (see Question 26 regarding a parent request for immediate evaluation) and eligibility group members identified. This information is applicable whether an IEP team is implementing an Rtl process to meet the [Part 226](#) requirement for using such a process as part of the evaluation procedures for determining SLD eligibility or has chosen to utilize an Rtl process for other suspected disabilities.

29. How will we determine the existence of a SLD in the areas of **oral expression, listening comprehension, and written expression** where no formal Rtl is being done? What data collection, research-based curriculum and interventions, benchmarking, etc., are supposed to be used for these areas?

In order to identify a student as having a SLD in the areas of oral expression, listening comprehension, and/or written comprehension, a district should collect benchmarking data (to determine what is typical educational achievement and progress) in these three areas and develop a three-tiered system of increasingly intensive interventions targeting these three areas. Although most of the research related to data collection/benchmarking and research-based curriculum and interventions within an Rtl framework has been conducted in the areas of reading and mathematics, more research is occurring related to diagnostic assessment, research-based curriculum and interventions, and benchmarking in the areas of written language (see Berninger & Wagner, 2008; Malecki, 2008; Robinson & Howell, 2008) and listening

comprehension and oral expression (see Bray, Kehle, Caterino, & Grigerick, 2008). Also see the response to Question 18.

30. *Do I have to do an **IQ test** as part of an evaluation for SLD?*

Neither ISBE's rules nor federal IDEIA regulations governing special education evaluation requirements, including the additional procedures for SLD identification, specify that a particular type of assessment (e.g., an intelligence/IQ test) must be conducted. However, in the past districts have often used intelligence tests to establish that a student has a severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability in order to determine the existence of a SLD, as previously required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997.

Because the implementing regulations of IDEIA 2004 [see 34 CFR 300.309(a)] eliminated the IQ/achievement discrepancy criterion for SLD, districts that previously conducted intelligence testing to fulfill this criterion no longer need to do so. Intelligence tests are also not necessary for intervention planning, as screening, progress monitoring, and diagnostic/prescriptive assessments collected as part of the RtI process can provide the information needed.

31. *Does **cognitive processing** need to be assessed as part of an SLD eligibility evaluation?*

No. As stated previously, none of the federal regulations addressing special education evaluation requirements, including the additional procedures for SLD identification, specify that a particular type of assessment (e.g., assessment of psychological or cognitive processing) must be conducted. Further, although the federal definition of SLD uses the terminology "a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes," the U.S. Department of Education's response in the "Analysis of Comments and Changes" section of the federal regulations states the following:

*The Department does not believe that an assessment of psychological or cognitive processing should be required in determining whether a child has an SLD. There is no current evidence that such assessments are necessary or sufficient for identifying SLD. Further, in many cases, these assessments have not been used to make appropriate intervention decisions... In many cases, though, assessments of cognitive processes simply add to the testing burden and do not contribute to interventions. As summarized in the research consensus from the OSEP Learning Disability Summit (Bradley, Danielson, and Hallahan, 2002), 'Although processing deficits have been linked to some specific learning disabilities (e.g., phonological processing and reading), direct links with other processes have not been established. Currently, available methods for measuring many processing difficulties are inadequate. Therefore, systematically measuring processing difficulties and their link to treatment is not yet feasible * * *. Processing deficits should be eliminated from the criteria for classification * * *.' (p.797). (Federal Register, Vol. 71, No. 156, p.46651)*

32. *With regard to **ruling out cultural factors** as the primary reason a student is experiencing difficulty, what constitutes **culturally responsive instruction**?*

Culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy (teaching and learning) involves the use of cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them. It teaches *to and through* the strengths of these students. It is culturally validating and affirming. (Adapted from Gay, 2000)

33. *When **ruling out limited English proficiency**, what about ELLs who may have had **limited access to language assistance instructional programs**?*

If an ELL has had limited access to a language assistance instructional program such as TBE or TPI (see Question 15 for examples of limited access), it is essential that the school team keep in mind that ELLs may

not have developed the expected proficiency in academic language in English and in their home language due primarily to inconsistencies in the language assistance instructional program being offered or in the student's participation in such a program. Such inconsistencies could result in the student having language fragmentation rather than a language disability. In these situations, the team would recommend interventions to support these students in both languages as they work to determine if the student is an ELL who may also need special education services or a student who needs more intensive support as an ELL.

With regard to the design of the language assistance instructional program itself, it is also important to remember that this includes meaningful content, appropriate ELL methodology, deliberate plans for language of instruction/language allocation, model of instruction, sufficient frequency and duration of daily instructional services, and whether gaps in content instruction occurred within a typical instructional day. These factors can all greatly influence ELLs' performance.

34. *Given the requirement at 23 IAC 226.130 for use of an RtI process as part of the evaluation procedures for SLD, can the **results of independent evaluations** be used to determine eligibility for SLD?*

As provided in 34 CFR 300.502, a parent has the right to request an independent educational evaluation (IEE) at public expense if the parent disagrees with an evaluation obtained by the school district. If the district has not yet completed its evaluation, the parent would not have a right to obtain an IEE at public expense. The U.S. Department of Education addressed this issue specifically in the context of RtI in the "Analysis of Comments and Changes" section of the federal regulations, as follows:

The parent, however, would not have the right to obtain an IEE at public expense before the public agency completes its evaluation simply because the parent disagrees with the public agency's decision to use data from a child's response to intervention as part of its evaluation to determine if the child is a child with a disability and the educational needs of the child. (Federal Register, Vol. 71, No. 156, p. 46689)

If the independent evaluation is to be at public expense, it must conform to the state and district eligibility criteria [see 34 CFR 300.502(e)]. Therefore, if the IEE fails to follow the state criteria, districts are not obligated to use the information provided. Further, because ISBE's rules governing special education require the use of a process that determines how a student responds to scientific, research-based interventions as part of the evaluation procedures for SLD, an independent evaluation at public expense must meet this criterion.

With regard to use of the results of an IEE to determine eligibility, as stated at 34 CFR 300.502(c)(1), "If the parent obtains an independent evaluation at public expense or shares with the district an evaluation obtained at private expense, the results of the evaluation must be considered, if it meets the agency criteria [emphasis added], in any decision made with respect to the provision of FAPE [free appropriate public education] to the child." The requirement that a district must consider the results of an IEE (provided the evaluation meets the education agency's criteria) does not equate to a requirement that the results be accepted in making the eligibility determination. If the IEE results meet the education agency's criteria for special education evaluation and the district team accepts the results, then the data should be considered in determining the student's eligibility.

35. *How is RtI used when conducting evaluations of **parentally-placed private school students or students who are home schooled**?*

When evaluating students who are parentally-placed in a private school or who are home schooled, the same processes of reviewing existing assessment data and determining what, if any, additional data need to be collected for educational decision making are used (see Question 23). Many private schools regularly collect assessment data that a school district may review and include in their determination of a student's response to instruction and intervention (e.g., state and local program evaluation assessments, universal screeners,

curriculum-embedded assessments). Some private schools provide supplemental and intensive interventions within their setting and monitor progress toward a goal. Any of these data may be useful in determining whether appropriate instruction was provided, determining discrepancy/gap from age level peers or grade level standard, and/or for assessing response to ongoing instruction. Students who are home schooled may also have similar assessment data available for use in an RtI model.

Districts may want to provide private school and home school educators with educational opportunities in RtI and in the use of RtI in special education eligibility and entitlement decisions (e.g., workshops, brochures). While private schools and home school settings are not required to provide early intervening services or special education, knowledge of RtI might assist both the district and the student's private school or home school in communicating and working with one another.

When existing data are not available, the district is responsible for collecting necessary data in order to determine a student's response to instruction and intervention as part of the evaluation. Universal screening measures utilized in the district might be administered and the resulting scores compared to same age/grade students in the district, and/or the team may choose to provide limited consultation or interventions and progress monitoring.

36. *How are **reevaluations conducted** when using RtI?*

Some states require the use of a process that determines how a student responds to scientific, research-based interventions as part of the evaluation procedures to determine the existence of a SLD, and such a process must also be used as part of a reevaluation for SLD. The requirements specific to reevaluations with regard to when and how often they must be conducted, as delineated at 34 CFR 300.303, remain applicable, as do the requirements for evaluations in general [34 CFR 300.302, 300.304, 300.305, and 300.306] and the additional requirements for SLD identification.

When a student is found eligible for special education and related services through an evaluation process that includes RtI, the same core practices of RtI continue in the delivery of the services identified on the student's IEP. This includes interventions matched to student needs and frequent progress monitoring to determine the student's response to intervention, as well as adjusting the interventions based on the progress monitoring data. The data collected as part of that intervention process should be used to determine needs and eligibility on an ongoing basis, including during the reevaluation process.

Regardless of whether or not the initial evaluation included the use of an RtI process, it is presumed that the initial eligibility process was valid and that the disability remains unless data exist that indicate otherwise. Such data could include evidence showing a change in the student's ability to benefit from the general education curriculum without special education and related services. The U.S. Department of Education commented on this issue in the context of reevaluations and state SLD eligibility criteria that have been revised to include an RtI process:

States should consider the effect of exiting a child from special education who has received special education and related services for many years and how the removal of such supports will affect the child's educational progress... Obviously, the group should consider whether the child's instruction and overall special education program have been appropriate as part of this process. If the special education instruction has been appropriate and the child has not been able to exit special education, this would be strong evidence that the child's eligibility needs to be maintained. (Federal Register, Vol. 71, No. 156, p. 46648)

Planning for reevaluations is the same as the planning that occurs for initial evaluations. The IEP team, which includes the student's parents, reviews existing data to determine what, if any, additional data are needed. The reevaluation focuses on assessment of progress, including how the student has responded to the

interventions (i.e., the degree to which the special education services are addressing the student's needs), answering any assessment or diagnostic questions, and planning subsequent instruction and interventions. Ultimately, the reevaluation determines:

- Whether the student continues to have a disability and need special education and related services,
- The educational needs of the student,
- The present levels of academic achievement and related developmental needs of the student, and
- Whether any additions or modifications to the special education and related services are needed to enable the student to meet the annual IEP goals and to participate in the general education curriculum.

Eligibility and Entitlement

37. *I have heard the terms “**eligibility**” and “**entitlement**” used. How are they different?*

Eligibility generally refers to a student's qualification for special education services as a result of falling within and having his/her educational performance adversely affected by one of the 13 federal disability categories described in IDEIA [34 CFR 300.8], as determined through the special education evaluation process. Eligibility determination is addressed in the federal regulations at 34 CFR 300.306, with additional requirements for SLD addressed at 34 CFR 300.311. Entitlement is a term generally used in conjunction with a student's right to procedural safeguards and the provision of special education services based upon the determination that the student qualified for special education services under IDEIA.

38. *Can we **use RtI** to determine eligibility **for disability categories other than SLD**?*

The RtI process is applicable for all disabilities, and districts have the option to use it as a data-driven process that establishes needs/goals and eligibility in disability categories other than SLD, provided all aspects of any evaluation requirements and eligibility criteria for the suspected disability are addressed. The essential evaluation questions are the same across disability categories: a) What is the discrepancy of the student's performance with the peer group and/or standard?, b) What is the student's educational progress as measured by rate of improvement?, and c) What are the instructional needs of the student? In an RtI framework, the focus of a special education evaluation is on determining the effective educational goals and strategies necessary to address the student's educational needs.

39. *Can **more timely procedures** be used to determine eligibility?*

It is misleading to represent RtI as a lengthy means-to-an-end procedure to determine eligibility. The RtI process provides intervention strategies for the student much earlier than in the traditional system, and the eligibility process is designed to refine the student's intervention plan – not to wait until the student has a special education label to intervene.

40. *Is RtI just a **way to avoid providing special education services**?*

RtI combines the legal mandates of ESEA 2001 and IDEIA 2004 with the primary intent to ensure that students receive high quality, effective instruction and intervention strategies as early and as effectively as possible. Since RtI is a process applicable for all students, there are some students whose educational needs will require special education services. It is not, therefore, a way of avoiding the provision of special education services. If anything, it should result in a more timely provision of services to address students' needs.

41. *What happens if the school team has **made changes to the intervention(s)** based on student data **but has not been able to identify an intervention that results in a positive rate of improvement** for a student? Does that mean the **student is eligible for special education services**?*

The focus of the entire three-tiered problem solving system is to identify successful interventions that result in acceptable rates of learning. A student may receive intensive interventions that yield an acceptable rate of learning, but the type(s) and amount of resources necessary to maintain this rate are beyond what can be supported by general education alone. Another student may receive appropriate, intensive interventions that do not produce acceptable rates of progress within the expected time period. In both cases, the team should examine the student's educational progress by reviewing progress monitoring data and evidence that the scientifically- or evidence-based interventions were directly linked to the student's area of deficit, delivered with integrity, and implemented for a sufficient amount of time to allow changes to occur in the student's skill level. The team can then use the results of this review to make a decision about the need to conduct a special education evaluation in accordance with all relevant laws, statutes, regulations, and rules. If an evaluation is conducted, the educational progress data will also be an important source of evaluation information in determining if the student has a disability that requires special education and related services.

It is important to note that special education does not automatically equate to "successful interventions" simply by virtue of being special education. Therefore, it is expected that when a student does not make expected progress or is not able to maintain progress when receiving intensive interventions provided with general education resources alone, eligibility determination for special education services will occur within the context of the problem solving framework, where all educational professionals are responsible for the student's education. When interventions that improve performance have not been identified at the point where initial special education eligibility is determined, the team continues to work to establish effective interventions delivered using special education resources.

If a student is found eligible for and receives special education services, it is important that the team continue to monitor the student's progress and utilize student data to determine the effectiveness of and make any needed adjustments to the interventions. When adjustments are made to interventions being delivered in accordance with the student's IEP, these changes must be made in accordance with procedural safeguard requirements. For example, if the amount of interventions specified on the IEP will be modified, an IEP meeting must be convened to revise the IEP.

42. *Why doesn't this FAQ Document delineate **more specific/prescriptive eligibility criteria** for SLD, such as how discrepant a student must be in order to be found eligible for special education services?*

At no time have the federal law, implementing federal regulations, governing special education enumerated prescriptive eligibility criteria for SLD (i.e., how deficient a student must be to qualify for special education). It is the responsibility of the district to develop criteria within the established eligibility framework that includes the following three components:

1. The student has one or more significant academic skill deficits compared to age level peers or grade level benchmarks.
2. The student is making insufficient progress in response to research/evidence-based interventions or is making adequate progress but that progress is only possible when the student has been provided and continues to need curriculum, instruction, and environmental interventions that are significantly different from general education peers and of an intensity or type that exceed general education resources.
3. The learning difficulties are not primarily the result of lack of appropriate instruction in reading or math; a visual, hearing, or motor disability; an intellectual disability; an emotional disability; cultural factors; economic disadvantage; or limited English proficiency.

43. *Can a student's eligibility for SLD be determined **by establishing a pattern of strengths and weaknesses** in performance, achievement, or both?*

Permits (but does not require) the eligibility team to consider whether a student exhibits a pattern of strengths and weaknesses in performance, achievement, or both to determine SLD eligibility, teams in Illinois have the option of examining data for this purpose if they consider such information relevant to an identification of SLD. However, establishing a pattern of strengths and weaknesses is neither required nor sufficient to determine SLD eligibility in some states. (Refer to your state guidelines) Therefore, if a student is not found eligible based on his or her response to scientific, research-based interventions, then it is not possible to subsequently find the student eligible based on a pattern of strengths and weaknesses.

44. *Can a student's eligibility for SLD be determined **by establishing a severe discrepancy between intellectual ability and achievement** since this option is allowed under some states rules governing special education at)?*

States rules governing special education allow districts, **in addition to** using an identification process that determines how a student responds to scientific, research-based intervention, to also use a severe discrepancy between intellectual ability and achievement as part of the evaluation procedures. Thus, teams have the option of conducting an assessment to establish such a discrepancy if they consider that information relevant to an identification of SLD. However, the words "in addition to" that appear in state rules clearly indicate that ability/achievement discrepancy alone is neither required nor sufficient to determine eligibility. Therefore, if a student is not found eligible based on his or her response to scientific, research-based interventions, then it is not possible to subsequently find the student eligible based on an ability/achievement discrepancy.

45. *Can a student with a **nonverbal learning disability** qualify for/continue to receive special education services under the SLD category?*

Only students exhibiting skill deficits in the eight areas (i.e., oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading skills, reading fluency skills, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation, or mathematics problem solving) may be considered for eligibility under the category of SLD. These eight areas represent the only academic areas inclusive of SLD. The eligibility requirements include student performance data that focus on achievement, not processing deficits. Therefore, a student must exhibit skill deficits in one or more of the eight areas to be considered for initial or continued eligibility under the SLD category.

46. *If an RtI process is used as part of the procedures for eligibility determination, won't "**slow learners**" **qualify** for special education services?*

In the past, educators used the term "slow learner" to classify a student who performed in the below average or borderline range (composite IQ scores between 70 and 85), generally above the range of students considered to have an intellectual disability (if there are also concomitant deficits in adaptive behavior) yet well below average. It was thought that students functioning within this level could not benefit from more intense and specially designed interventions often provided as part of special education. However, this assumption has been proven false.

The eligibility criteria within an RtI framework do not focus on level of cognitive ability. Instead, these criteria include a) a significant discrepancy from age level peers or grade level standard in terms of academic achievement using more direct measures of academic skills (e.g., curriculum based measurement) and b) educational progress, as measured by rate of improvement in response to evidence-based interventions, that is significantly lower than age level peers or grade level standard. If they meet these two criteria and

have instructional needs beyond what can be provided with general education resources alone, then students who in the past might have been considered to be functioning in the “slow learner” range of cognitive ability can be found eligible under SLD.

47. *In an RtI system, what happens to **students who are gifted and talented** but still have learning difficulties? Will they qualify for special education services under SLD?*

If students who are considered to be gifted and talented (defined as those who “(i) exhibit high performance capabilities in intellectual, creative, and artistic areas; (ii) possess an exceptional leadership potential; (iii) excel in specific academic fields; and (iv) have the potential to be influential in business, government, health care, the arts, and other critical sectors of our economic and cultural environment” and are experiencing learning difficulties, then they would be provided interventions within the RtI three-tiered system of increasingly intensive interventions. If a student who is gifted and talented exhibits a significant discrepancy from age level peers or grade level standard in terms of academic achievement in one of the eight areas (see Question 45), has a level of educational progress as measured by rate of improvement in response to evidence-based interventions that is significantly lower than age level peers or grade level standard, and exhibits instructional needs beyond what can be met with general education resources alone, then the student would be eligible for special education services as a student with a SLD. Providing interventions or services within an RtI framework requires that all students experiencing a specific academic or behavioral skill deficit be provided with intervention(s) to address the targeted area(s) of deficit.

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