

# CLARIFICATION FROM THE IEP OFFICE

## Test Selection/Accommodations 2008-09

All students can work toward grade level academic content standards and most students will be able to achieve these standards when the following three conditions are met:

1. Instruction is provided by teachers who know how to differentiate instruction for diverse learners.
2. IEPs for students with disabilities are developed to ensure the provision of specialized instruction.
3. Appropriate accommodations are provided to help students access grade level content.

### **LEARN ABOUT ACCOMMODATIONS**

#### **Accommodations for Instruction and Assessment**

Accommodations are tools and procedures in the areas of presentation, response, setting, and timing/scheduling that provide equitable access during instruction and assessments for all students. Accommodations do not reduce learning expectations; they provide access. Examples include:

**Presentation Accommodations**—Allow students to access information in ways that do not require them to visually read standard print. These alternate modes of access are auditory, multi-sensory, tactile, and visual.

**Response Accommodations**—Allow students to complete activities, assignments, and tests in different ways or to solve or organize problems using some type of assistive technology.

**Timing/Scheduling Accommodations**—Increase the length of time to complete a test or assignment and/or change the way the time is organized.

**Setting Accommodations**—Change the location in which a test or assignment is given or the conditions of the assessment setting.

Accommodations can be used by any student, but may be especially beneficial to students with disabilities. Accommodations are intended to mediate the effects of a student's disability; they do not reduce learning expectations. Accommodation use needs to link classroom instruction, classroom tests, and district and state tests.

## **SELECT ACCOMMODATIONS**

When considering accommodations for any student, a planning team (e.g. IEP team) should list the student's access needs and identify accommodations that address these needs. For the accommodations that match the student's needs, consider:

- The student's willingness to learn to use the accommodation.
- The student has opportunities to learn how to use the accommodation in classroom settings.
- The conditions for use on state assessments. (The Kansas Assessments are computerized and in a paper pencil format.)

Plan how and when the student will learn to use each new accommodation. Be sure there is plenty of time to learn to use instructional and assessment accommodations before an assessment takes place. Remember, accommodations used during assessments should be routinely used during instruction.

### **Consider these questions in the selection process:**

- What is the student's learning strengths and needs?
- How does the student's learning needs affect the achievement of grade level content standards?
- What specialized instruction does the student need to achieve grade level content standards?
- What accommodations will increase the student's access to instruction and assessment?

### **Discuss each of these points:**

- accommodations regularly used by the student during instruction and on classroom tests;
- results for assignments and tests when accommodations were used and not used;
- student's perception of how well an accommodation "worked;"
- effective combinations of accommodations;
- difficulties experienced when using accommodations; and
- information from parents, teachers, and specialists about how the accommodation have worked.

Based on this review, decide if the student should continue using an accommodation as is, if changes are needed, or if the accommodation should be discontinued.

## **Visual Presentation Accommodations**

### **Large Print**

Large print editions of tests and instructional materials are required for some students with visual impairments. All text and graphic materials, including labels and captions on pictures, diagrams, maps, charts, exponential numbers, notes, and footnotes, must be presented in at least 18 point type for students who need large print. Students, working with their teachers, need to find an optimal print size and determine the smallest print that can still be read. (Copyright issues may need to be addressed). It is important for the print to be clear, with high contrast between the color of the print and the color of the background. When using large print classroom material, consider the weight, size, and awkwardness of books. Large print books are now available that look very similar to the same books in standard print.

### **Magnification Devices**

Some students with visual impairments read regular print materials and enlarge the print by using magnification devices. These include eyeglass-mounted magnifiers, free standing or handheld magnifiers, enlarged computer monitors, or computers with screen enlargement programs. Some students also use closed circuit television (CCTV) to enlarge print and display printed material with various image enhancements on a screen.

### **Sign Language**

Sign language interpreters may be required for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Sometimes an interpreter is only needed or allowed to sign instructions and to assist in communication. Some students may need all print materials interpreted while learning to read print. Interpreters need to be able to translate in the same method of sign language typically used by the student. Interpreters must not paraphrase, clarify, elaborate, or provide assistance with the meaning of words, intent of test questions, or responses to test items. Graphic materials may be described, but should also be available in print or tactile formats.

## **Auditory Presentation Accommodations**

### **Human Reader (Signer for ASL communicators)**

A qualified person may be provided to read orally to students who are unable to decode text visually.

Readers should use even inflection so that the student does not receive any cues by the way the information is read. It is important for readers to read test items/questions and text word-for-word exactly as written. Readers **may not** clarify, elaborate, or provide assistance to students. Readers need to be familiar with the terminology and symbols specific to the content. This is especially important for high school mathematics and science. It is best practice to provide the read-aloud accommodation to a student on an individual basis. However, a small group of students (three or less) may use one reader. Refer to the Kansas Read-Aloud Accommodations Guidelines in Appendix C for further instruction on using human readers during statewide assessments.

## **Multi-Sensory Presentation Accommodations**

Students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing need visual cues in the classroom. Teachers should keep their faces visible to the class when speaking, pass out printed material before class, repeat questions asked by other students, and summarize classroom discussion.

### **Notes, Outlines, and Instructions**

Written notes may be taken by another student and copied. A teacher could provide a print copy of instructions and assignments. Students could also be given a detailed outline of the material to be covered during the class period and an outline of material to be covered (syllabus) at the beginning of each grading period.

### **Math Journals and Graphic Organizers (previously generated)**

These accommodations may be beneficial for students who need support for organization and sequence of multi-step processes. The use of these journals and organizers are appropriate for classroom instruction, homework, and classroom assessment. *The use of journals (generated prior to the assessment) on Kansas State Assessments will result in an invalid score.*

## **RESPONSE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR INSTRUCTION**

### **What are response accommodations?**

Response accommodations are tools and procedures which allow students to complete assignments, tests, and activities in different ways or to solve or organize problems using some type of assistive device or organizer. *The use of organizers (generated prior to the assessment) on Kansas State Assessments will result in an invalid score*

### **Who can benefit from response accommodations?**

Response accommodations can benefit students with physical, sensory, or learning disabilities (including difficulties with memory, sequencing, directionality, alignment, and organization).

### **Note-takers**

Students may have another student take notes or use an electronic note-taking device. Portable note-taking devices are small, lightweight devices equipped with a braille or typewriter-style keyboard for input and synthetic voice. Some note-takers also contain a braille display (between 18 and 40 characters) for output. Note-takers are tools for recording notes in school, at home, or at work. They often have additional features, such as a calculator and a calendar function. Newer models have a built-in modem, which allows the user to access e-mail as well as surf the web. When connected to a PC, files can be exchanged, or information can be sent from the note-taker to a braille embosser or to an ink printer. When linked to a computer using a screen reader, notetakers equipped with a braille display can act as a braille output device.

### **Respond on Test Booklet**

This accommodation allows a student to write directly in a test booklet rather than on an answer sheet (e.g., scannable “bubble” sheet).

## **Monitor Test Response**

Monitor placement of student responses on answer sheet. Students who are able to use bubbled answer sheets may benefit from having an adult simply monitor the placement of their responses, to ensure that they are actually responding to the intended question.

## **Materials or Devices Used to Solve or Organize Responses**

### **Calculation Devices**

If a student's disability affects math calculation but not reasoning, a calculator or other assistive device (e.g., an abacus, arithmetic table, manipulative, or number chart) may be used. It is important to determine whether the use of a calculation device is a matter of convenience or a necessary accommodation. It is important to know the goal of instruction and assessment before making decisions about the use of calculation devices. For example, if students are learning subtraction with regrouping, using a calculator would not give a student an opportunity to show regrouping. On the other hand, if students are learning problem solving skills that include subtraction (e.g., bargain shopping for items with a better value), the use of a calculation device may be a valid accommodation. Calculators may be adapted with large keys or voice output (talking calculators). The use of calculators is appropriate for classroom instruction, homework, and classroom assessment. ***The use of calculation devices on non-calculator portions of the Kansas general or KAMM math assessment will result in an invalid score. Additional information about the use of manipulatives on the Kansas Math Assessment is available in Appendix A.***

### **Spelling and Grammar Devices**

The use of a dictionary may be allowed on assignments that require an extended response or essay. Spelling and grammar can also be checked with pocket spellcheckers. Students enter an approximate spelling and then see or hear the correct spelling or correct use of a word. Students who use a word processor may be allowed to use a spell check or other electronic spelling device.

### **Organization Tools**

Organization tools include graph paper, highlighters, place markers, and scratch paper. Students may not be allowed to write in books owned by the school. Photocopying parts of written text allows a student to use a highlighter and write in the margins.

### **Graphic Organizers**

Graphic organizers help students arrange information into patterns in order to organize their work and stay focused on the content. Graphic organizers are especially helpful for writing reports and essays. Semantic mapping software is now available to enable students to understand a narrative story, informational text, or writing elements through graphics. The use of graphic organizers is appropriate for classroom instruction, homework, and classroom assessment. ***Student generated graphic organizers (including templates) created during the assessment are an appropriate accommodation for use on the Kansas State Assessments.***

## **SETTING ACCOMMODATIONS FOR INSTRUCTION**

### **What are setting accommodations?**

Setting accommodations change the location in which a student receives instruction or participates in an assessment. Students may be allowed to sit in a different location than the majority of students in order to reduce distractions to themselves or others, or to increase physical access, or access to special equipment. Some students may need changes in the conditions of an instructional setting. Every instructional and assessment setting should have good lighting and ventilation, with a comfortable room temperature, and should be as free as possible from noise, traffic, and other interruptions. Chairs should be comfortable and tables set at an appropriate height with sufficient room for materials. Staff should check that all needed materials and equipment are available and in good condition.

### **Who can benefit from setting accommodations?**

Setting accommodations, such as, changes in instructional and assessment locations can benefit students who are easily distracted in large group settings and who concentrate best in a small group or individual setting. Changes in location also benefit students who receive accommodations (e.g., reader, scribe, or frequent breaks) that might distract other students. Students with physical disabilities might need a more accessible location, specific room conditions, or special equipment.

### **Description of Setting Accommodations**

#### **Reduce Distractions to the Student**

A setting accommodation to reduce distractions would allow a student to do individual work or take tests in a different location, usually in a place with few or no other students. Changes may also be made to a student's location within a room. For example, a student who is easily distracted may not want to sit near windows, doors, or pencil sharpeners. Sitting near the teacher's desk or in the front of a classroom may be helpful for some students. Physically enclosed classrooms (classrooms with four walls) may be more appropriate than open classrooms, and study carrels might also be helpful for students who are easily distracted. Students with low vision may prefer to sit in the part of a room that has the best light. Some students concentrate best while wearing noise buffers such as earphones, earplugs, or headphones.

## **TIMING AND SCHEDULING ACCOMMODATIONS FOR INSTRUCTION**

### **What are timing and scheduling accommodations?**

Timing and scheduling accommodations change the allowable length of time to complete assignments, tests, and activities, and may also change the way the time is organized. Timing accommodations give students the time and the breaks they need to complete activities, assignments, and tests. Other changes may include the particular time of day, day of the week, or number of days over which a particular activity, assignment, or test takes place.

## **Who can benefit from timing and scheduling accommodations?**

Timing and scheduling accommodations are most helpful for students who need more time than generally allowed to complete activities, assignments, and tests. Extra time may be needed to process written text (e.g., a student with a learning disability who processes information slowly), to write (e.g., a student with limited dexterity as a result of arthritis), or to use other accommodations or equipment (e.g., assistive technology, audio tape, and/or scribe). Students who cannot concentrate continuously for an extended period, who become frustrated, or stressed easily may need frequent or extended relaxation breaks. It may also help to schedule classes and tests that require the greatest concentration in the morning for students who have difficulty concentrating and staying on task as the day progresses. Scheduling changes also might be helpful for students on medications that affect their ability to stay alert, or who have more productive times of the day. Some students with health related disabilities may have functioning levels that vary during the day because of the effects of medications or diminishing energy levels. For example, blood sugar levels may need to be maintained by eating several times a day at prescribed times. These students could be accommodated by scheduling tests and activities around the eating schedule, or by allowing food to be taken to the classroom or testing site. Students who fatigue easily may need to take some academic classes and tests before rather than after a physical education class or recess, or may need to reduce physical activity.

## **Description of Timing and Scheduling Accommodations**

### **Extended Time**

Extended time may require a student's IEP team to determine a specific amount of extra time to complete assignments, projects, and tests. The Kansas assessments are not timed assessments. Decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis. Usually "unlimited" time is not appropriate or feasible. Sometimes students who request extended time end up not needing it because of the reduction in anxiety of simply knowing that plenty of time is available. Students who have too much time may lose interest and motivation to do their best work.

### **Multiple or Frequent Breaks**

Breaks may be given at predetermined intervals or after completion of assignments, tests, or activities. Sometimes a student is allowed to take breaks when individually needed. If the length of a break is predetermined, a timer might be used to signal the end of the break.

### **Change Schedule or Order of Activities**

If possible, schedule tests and activities that require focused attention at the time of day when a student is most likely to demonstrate peak performance. Sometimes students are allowed to complete activities and take tests over multiple days (e.g., completing a portion each day). This usually is done to reduce fatigue.

## **RULES FOR ADMINISTERING SPECIFIC ACCOMMODATIONS**

### **Most commonly used at KSD.....**

#### **Sign Language Interpreter**

- A student's teacher should not be the interpreter in a testing situation unless a second

person is present to monitor for quality and fairness.

- An interpreter may sign all parts of the Kansas Mathematics, Science, and History-Government (Social Studies) Assessments. On the Kansas Reading Assessment, an interpreter may sign the test directions, prompts, and item questions and answer choices. ***NO PART OF THE PASSAGES ON THE KANSAS READING ASSESSMENT MAY BE SIGNED.***
- Interpreters must not clarify, elaborate, paraphrase, or provide assistance with the meaning of words, intent of test questions, or responses to test items.
- Graphic materials may be described, but should also be available in print or tactile formats.

### **Provide Extended Time**

- The Kansas State Assessments are not timed; therefore, a student may be given extra time.
- Decisions to provide extended time should be made on a case-by-case basis, keeping in mind the type of accommodations being provided, the disability involved, and the type of test. For example, if a reader or scribe is used, double time may be appropriate. Usually “unlimited” time is not appropriate or feasible.

### **Read-Aloud and KCA Voice 2009 Policy**

Two options exist for KCA read-aloud: scripts and computer voice. Those who choose to use the read-aloud option will not have to be trained this year, because a script will be available and must be used. Scripts will be available for mathematics, science, and high school history-government (off-cycle) general assessments and KAMM assessments, as well as for the questions and answer choices on the reading general assessment and KAMM. Scripts will not be available for Fall OTL, but will be available in time for the Spring, 2009 testing window. Scripts will not be available to teachers before the tests begin.

### **General Guidelines For Providing the Read-Aloud Accommodation**

- All text in the Kansas Science, Mathematics, and History-Government (Social Studies) Assessments can be read. Only the item questions and answer choices may be read to a student receiving the read-aloud accommodation on the Kansas Reading Assessment. ***Absolutely nothing from a reading passage on the Kansas Reading Assessment may be read or pronounced, including single words.***
- Text labels on diagrams, graphs, maps, tables, charts, timelines, graphic organizers, etc., should be read. The reader should point to each component of the diagram while reading the labels.

- The reader should cue the student to look at the diagram before reading the words on the diagram.
- The reader should point to the words on a diagram, from left to right or from top to bottom, whichever is most appropriate, when reading the captions on the diagram. The numbers on complex graphs do not need to be read, unless the student requests it.
- A table should be read in the order that is most relevant for that individual item. For example, when reading an input/output table in math, the table should be read across the rows because that will appropriately reflect how the numbers in the table are related.
- If a diagram does not seem to have any particular organization, the labels can be read in any order, pointing to each label as it is read.
- The reader should be very careful not to say or describe anything that is not written in text, especially for diagrams, charts, etc. ***The reader may not clarify, elaborate, or provide assistance to students in any way.***
- The reader needs to use the same labels consistently across all content areas. (e.g., abbreviations for units, numbers with and without decimal points, the symbol for degrees, etc.). A reader should study all of the examples for science, mathematics, and history-government (social studies) in order to know the procedures to be followed for reading diagrams and labels for any of these content areas.
- The reader may emphasize only the words bolded, capitalized, or italicized.
- If the student requests, the reader can read an item again.

**Accommodations for Students who are ELLs on the Kansas Writing Assessment:**

- The Kansas Writing Assessment will be scored using the General Writing Rubric. The Modified Writing Rubric is only for students with an IEP.
- Directions and prompts for the Kansas Writing Assessment may be available in Spanish, but the students' responses must be written in English.
- ***Electronic translators and bilingual dictionaries are allowed.***

***For additional information go to the link below and surf the KS Assessment Information site***

<http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=420>