

Assessment Supports: Accommodations & Accessibility Features



It is important to ensure that performance in the classroom and on the assessment is influenced as little as possible by a student's disability or linguistic/cultural characteristics. In order for this to happen, some students with disabilities and English language learners will need additional support in order to show what they know on the PARCC tests. PARCC offers two categories of supports to assist students in accessing the test: accommodations and accessibility features. Accommodations are those supports designed and allowable only for students with disabilities and English language learners. Accessibility features are allowed for all students.

What are Accommodations?

- ✓ **Accommodations** are adjustments to the testing situation, test format, or the administration of the test that create equitable access for students with disabilities and English language learners.

An accommodation removes or decreases a barrier that is making a task difficult; it does not change the task itself. Many people wear contacts or eyeglasses to correct their vision. Glasses and contacts are an accommodation that allows people with imperfect vision to accomplish many everyday activities. How well a person does on a task doesn't necessarily improve but it does provide people with imperfect vision the same access to everyday tasks as those with perfect vision. Once the accommodations are in place, how well a person does on the task (how proficient they are) can be the focus.

How are Accommodations Chosen?

- ✓ **Choosing and evaluating accommodations** should be part of an ongoing process. A student's needs can change or require adjustments to ensure that the student is participating in the classroom and during any test at his/her maximum level of independence.

The steps below identify the selection and review process that should be used for all students receiving accommodations or accessibility features. **NOTE:** No accommodation or accessibility feature will substitute for effective instruction aligned to the standards being measured.

Step 1: Learn about accessibility features and accommodations.

Step 2: Select accessibility features and accommodations for individual students.

- Step 3:** Administer accommodations during assessments.
- Step 4:** Evaluate accommodations use.
- Step 5:** If necessary, adjust, tweak, add or remove accommodations that are not effective.

What are Accessibility Features?

-  **Accessibility Features** are tools that are either built into the computer-based tests or provided by test administrators. Accessibility features are intended for a wide range of students and are available to any students who need them to take the PARCC assessments.

Although accessibility features can be used by any student taking the PARCC assessments, not every student needs to use these features. Educators, parents, and students should put as much thought into determining the need for an accessibility feature as they would an accommodation. All supports provided to a student on a test or in the classroom should, first and foremost, address student's specific access issues.

How are decisions about accessibility features made?

-  In order for educators and students to determine which accessibility features may be useful, they need to have adequate time to learn how the accessibility features function. Educators should plan sufficiently ahead of testing time for students to choose the features they feel are most helpful and to use them prior to testing day.

It is important that students feel comfortable with PARCC's accessibility features in addition to other aspects of the online system (e.g. logging in an out, when to start and stop) so that neither the accessibility features nor the online system itself is a barrier for any student to show what he or she knows and is able to do.

Who selects accommodations and accessibility features for students?

-  **Educators, parents, and students** are responsible for selecting accommodations and accessibility features for both instruction and assessment.

School based teams that include educators, parents, and students are responsible for selecting accommodations and accessibility features for students. For students with disabilities, the IEP or 504 Plan team are responsible for this decision. All team members, for any student, should be knowledgeable about the Common Core State Standards, the PARCC assessments, and the district's aligned curricula.

Will accommodations or accessibility features impact my child's score on PARCC?

- ✓ Accommodations and accessibility features selected for your child should improve his/her ability to understand what is being asked of them, to navigate the test, and to provide his/her answers as independently as possible.

Accommodations and other supports are only intended to provide the student with access to the test so that educators can better understand what the student knows and is able to do in relation to the standards.

What can I do to help my child?

- ✓ Understand the accommodations and accessibility features.
- ✓ Use with your child using the PARCC online practice tests with your child.
- ✓ Ensure that your child's school has a plan to ensure that any assistive device your child uses is compatible with the PARCC online testing system.
- ✓ Ask your child's teacher to explain what your child is learning in class and how it is aligned to the common core state standards.
- ✓ Ask for feedback from your child about the accommodations he/she receives in school and any problem they may have with the way they are implemented.
- ✓ Ask if the school will complete a Unique Accommodation Request Form if your child uses an accommodation not found in the PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual.
- ✓ Ask whether your child will have adequate time to become familiar with the assigned accommodation(s) and/or accessibility feature(s) prior to testing so that he/she will feel comfortable and confident on testing day.

What types of PARCC Accommodations are available?

- ✓ PARCC has four types of accommodations:
 1. *Presentation* Accommodations
 2. *Response* Accommodations
 3. *Timing and Scheduling* Accommodations
 4. *Unique* Accommodations

The table on the next page provides an overview of each type.

THE FOUR TYPES OF PARCC ACCOMMODATIONS

<p>1. Presentation Accommodations change how the test is delivered to the student.</p>	<p>2. Response Accommodations address access challenges that affect the way a student answers test questions.</p>
<p><i>Presentation accommodations offered on PARCC are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistive technology such as adaptive keyboards. • Braille versions of tests in either paper or refreshable braille display. • Tactile graphics for students who read braille. • Closed-captioning of multimedia passages in the ELA/literacy test. • Descriptive video of visual elements • Video of interpreter using American Sign Language (ASL) for math assessments. Students can also have a human interpreter. • Text-to-speech for the ELA/literacy assessments is available for students who meet stringent and specific criteria. • Paper-and-pencil format for students with disabilities whose IEP or 504 plans require this format, and for schools that have gained approval for paper-and-pencil-based testing from their State Educational Agency (SEA). • Spanish translations of the mathematics assessments are available in both the online and paper formats. Human and online read-aloud translations in Spanish are also available. 	<p><i>Response accommodations offered on PARCC are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistive Technology • Braille note taker • Scribing or speech-to-text (dictating or transcribing) software or human scribe; eye gaze software, or AAC device. • Calculator or other calculation tools for the non-calculator section of the mathematics test. • Word prediction device for ELA/Literacy test. • Whisper phone for students who read aloud to themselves
<p>3. Timing and Scheduling Accommodations address access issues that affect when and/or how much time a student needs to take the test.</p>	<p>4. Unique Accommodations are those accommodations that are not already listed in the Accommodations Manual.</p>
<p><i>Timing and Scheduling Accommodations offered on PARCC are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional (extended) time beyond what is allotted for a test session. • Breaks during testing • Starting the test at time that is most beneficial to the student 	<p>In the event that there is an accommodation or support that a student may need and it is not listed in the Accommodations Manual, or there needs to be a change how an existing accommodation is administered, then the district can complete the Unique Accommodation Form and submit it to the state for approval.</p>

Additional Resources:

PARCC Accessibility and Universal Design: <http://www.parcconline.org/assessments/accessibility>

PARCC Accommodations Manual: <http://www.parcconline.org/assessments/accessibility/manual>