



# **PARCC ACCESSIBILITY FEATURES AND ACCOMMODATIONS MANUAL**

Guidance for Districts and Decision-Making Teams to Ensure that PARCC Mid-Year, Performance-Based, and End-of-Year Assessments Produce Valid Results for All Students

***FIRST EDITION***

*Produced by:  
Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)*



PARTNERSHIP FOR ASSESSMENT OF READINESS FOR  
COLLEGE AND CAREERS (PARCC)

PARCC is an alliance of states working together to develop common assessments serving approximately 23 million students. PARCC's work is funded through a four-year, \$185 million dollar grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Partners include about 200 higher education institutions and systems representing hundreds of campuses across the country that will help develop the high school component of the new assessment – and then put it to good use as an indicator of student readiness. PARCC is led by its member states and managed by Achieve Inc., a nonprofit group with a 15-year track record of working with states to improve student achievement by aligning K-12 education policies with the expectations of employers and the postsecondary community. PARCC's ultimate goal is to ensure all students graduate from high school college- and career-ready.

PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual:  
*Guidance for Districts and Decision-Making Teams to Ensure that PARCC Mid-Year, Performance-Based, and End-of-Year Assessments Produce Valid Results for All Students*

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Available on the World Wide Web at:  
<http://www.parcconline.org/parcc-assessment-policies>

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Three policies included in the manual were released for two round of public comment in January and February 2013, and the entire manual was released for public comment from April 18 to May 13, 2013.

### Lead Writers

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Trinell Bowman, Program Manager for Assessments for Students with Disabilities, Maryland State Department of Education

Daniel Wiener, Administrator of Inclusive Assessment, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Tamara Reavis, Senior Adviser for Assessment Accessibility and Equity, Achieve

Danielle Griswold, Program Associate for PARCC Policy, Research, and Design, Achieve

### Core Writing Team

We would like to acknowledge the core writing team to include Lori Nixon, TN; Mira Monroe, CO; Mary O’Brian, IL; Boon Lee, IL; Chane Eplin, FL; Leila Williams, AZ; Phyllis Lynch, RI, and Andrew Hinkle, OH.

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Sheryl Lazarus, NCEO

Laurene Christensen, NCEO

Charlene Rivera, AAF TWG member and the George Washington University Center for Equity and Excellence in Education

Lynn Shafer Willner, West Ed

Gary Cook, AAF TWG member and University of Wisconsin-Madison

Diane August, AAF TWG member and AIR

Ed Bosso, AAF TWG and Gallaudet University

Dave Edyburn, AAF TWG member and University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

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<sup>1</sup> Important note: In fall 2013, PARCC states and key stakeholders will review and vet a number of appendices designed to support states in the implementation of the policies mentioned in the manual for release.

## First Edition

This is the first edition of the *PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual* (summer 2013). The *PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual* will undergo a number of iterations, as data on student performance is collected during PARCC item development research (being conducted this spring and summer), field testing in spring 2014, and the first operational year of administration in school year 2014-2015. This iterative process will ensure that the accommodations students receive on PARCC assessments provide a valid reflection of what they know and can do and do not alter the construct of what is being assessed. Additional accommodations guidance for the PARCC Diagnostic Assessment and Speaking and Listening Assessment is forthcoming (fall 2013).



Throughout this edition of the *PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual*, attention has been given to addressing issues related to providing accommodations on the PARCC technology platform. However, the need for a paper-and-pencil administration of the assessments will remain for certain students who require this format and presentation of the assessment.

## Background

### Audience and Purpose

Developed by the PARCC states, the first edition of the *PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual* is a comprehensive policy document that provides guidance to districts and decision-making teams to ensure that the PARCC Mid-Year, Performance-Based, and End-of-Year Assessments provide valid results for all participating students.

### Introduction

PARCC member states regard assessments as tools for enhancing teaching and learning, and are committed to providing all students, including but not limited to, students with disabilities, English learners, English learners with disabilities, and underserved populations with equitable access to high-quality, twenty-first century assessments. By applying principles of universal design, leveraging technology, embedding accessibility features, and allowing a broad range of accommodations, PARCC intends to provide opportunities for the widest possible number of students to demonstrate knowledge and skills while maintaining high expectations for all students to achieve the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Additionally, the claims of the PARCC summative assessments and the common policies for accommodations, participation, and supports will increase access, fidelity of implementation, and comparability across PARCC states.

PARCC's goals for promoting student access include:

- Applying principles of universal design for accessible assessments during every stage of the development of assessment components, items, and performance tasks;
- Minimizing/eliminating features of the assessment that are irrelevant to what is being measured so that all students can more accurately demonstrate their knowledge and skills;
- Measuring the full range of complexity of the standards;
- Leveraging technology for the accessible delivery of assessment;
- Building accessibility throughout the test itself without sacrificing assessment validity;
- Using a combination of 'accessible'-authoring and accessible technologies from the inception of items and tasks; and
- Engaging state and national experts throughout the development process through item review, bias and sensitivity review, policy development and review, and research.

The first edition of the *PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual* has been created to ensure that:

- Participation in the assessments is consistent across PARCC states for students with disabilities and English learners;
- Appropriate tools are used by all students to address their individual learning needs, and accommodations are provided to eligible students (including students with disabilities, English learners, and English learners with disabilities); and
- Accommodations and features used on PARCC assessments are generally consistent with those used in daily instruction.



PARCC is disseminating this manual with information on the accessibility features and accommodations that will be available during the PARCC assessments, after carefully reviewing the following:

- Current research<sup>2</sup> on effective practices for assessing diverse student groups and backgrounds (including needs for students with disabilities and English learners, culture, region, linguistic needs, dialect, and socio-economic background);
- Feedback from PARCC state leads, state experts for students with disabilities, and English learners;
- Content experts; and
- National technical advisors on PARCC's Technical Working Group for Accessibility, Accommodations, and Fairness.

PARCC member states have all agreed to implement the principles, policies, and procedures set forth in this manual.

### PARCC's Authority to Make Policy Decisions

PARCC is an alliance of states serving approximately 23 million students, working together to develop common assessments. The PARCC Governing Board, comprised of the K-12 chief state school officer from each Governing State, considers input from all PARCC states and makes major policy and operational decisions on behalf of PARCC, including decisions related to the overall design of the assessment system, PARCC's procurement strategy, common achievement levels for the assessments, and modifications to PARCC's governance structure and decision-making process as necessary. State education agency experts from all PARCC Governing States lead the policy and content development, and management of the PARCC assessment system.

The PARCC grant application, accepted by the U.S. Department of Education, states:

*Because of their strong commitment to the Partnership's work, Governing States' chief state school officers will serve on the Partnership's Governing Board ... and have the right to make decisions on behalf of the Partnership on major policies and operational procedures ... The Governing Board will form design committees and other working groups necessary to carry out the Partnership's work, and through the charters of these committees and the By-Laws of the Partnership, the Board will agree to processes for adopting key policies and definitions related to governing the Partnership and designing, developing, and implementing the proposed assessment system.*

Included in the key policies referenced above are:

1. A common set of policies and procedures for providing assessment accommodations for English learners;
2. A common set of policies and procedures for providing assessment accommodations for students with disabilities;
3. A common set of policies and procedures for participation of English learners in the assessment system; and

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<sup>2</sup> Abedi, J. & Ewers, N. (2013). Accommodations for English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities: A Research-Based Decision Algorithm.; Christensen, L., C. Johnston, and C. Rogers (2012). Common Core Accommodations Guidance. PARCC State Consortium.; Please refer to the attached reference list for the research foundation for this Manual.



4. A common set of policies and procedures for participation of students with disabilities in the assessment system.

As such, PARCC has the authority to act on behalf of all its member states, as it relates to accommodation policies and test administration procedures.

### Structure of the PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual

The Manual consists of the following sections:

**Background and Introduction:** This section is an introduction and overview of the Manual.

**Section 1: Overview of the PARCC Assessment, Claims, and Design:** This section summarizes the various PARCC assessments and provides the approaches used for universal design.

**Section 2: PARCC Accessibility System & Accessibility Features for All Students Taking PARCC Assessments:** This section provides an overview of the PARCC Accessibility System and defines the accessibility features that will be offered to all students taking the PARCC assessments.

**Section 3: Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** This section outlines the accommodations for students with disabilities taking the PARCC assessments.

**Section 4: Accommodations for English Learners:** This section outlines the accommodations for English learners taking the PARCC assessments.

**Section 5: Steps in the Decision-Making Process for Students with Disabilities, English Learners, and English Learners with Disabilities:** This section describes a five-step process for selecting, administering, and evaluating the use of accommodations for PARCC assessments, as follows:

- **Expect** Students to Achieve Grade-Level Academic Content Standards;
- **Learn** About Accommodations for Instruction and Assessment;
- **Select** Accommodations for Individual Students;
- **Administer** Accommodations During Assessment; and
- **Evaluate** and Improve Accommodations Use.





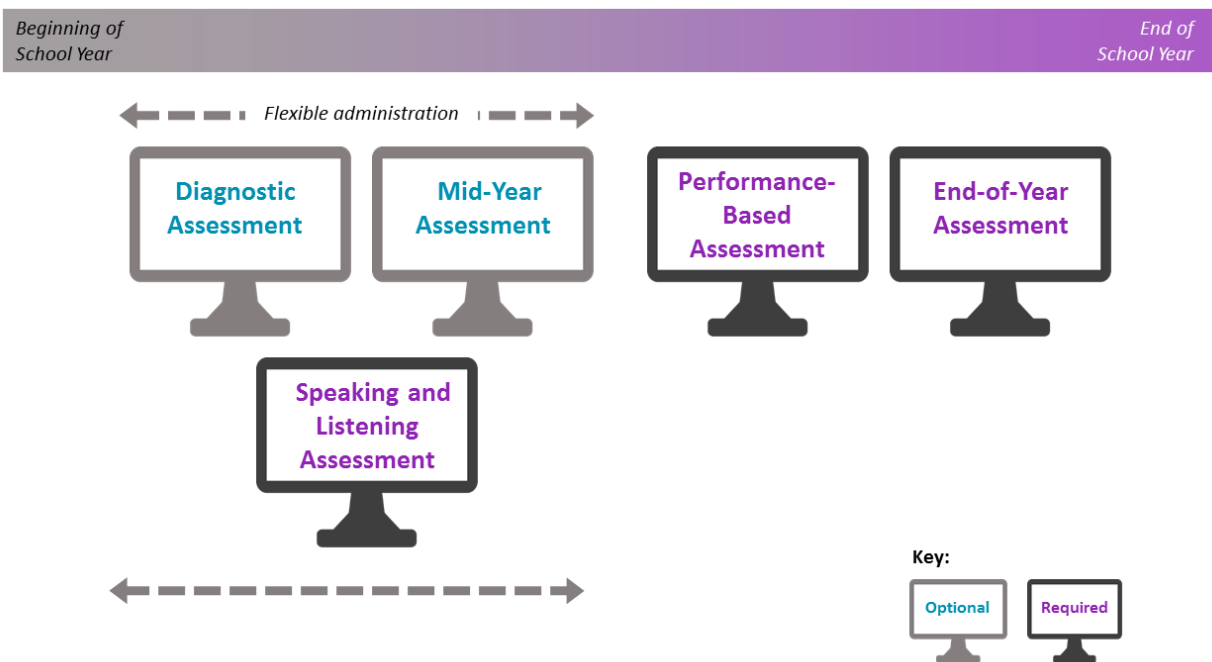
# **Section 1 – Overview of the PARCC Assessment, Claims, and Design**

## Overview of the PARCC Assessment

The PARCC assessment system is designed to determine whether students are college- and career-ready or on track, assess the full range of the CCSS, measure the full range of student performance, and provide timely data throughout the academic year to teachers to help inform instruction, interventions, and professional development.

There will be five components of the PARCC assessment system:

- Diagnostic Assessment for ELA/Literacy and Mathematics: *Optional, non-summative, early indicator of student knowledge, flexible administration*
- Mid-Year Assessment for ELA/Literacy and Mathematics: *Optional, non-summative, performance-based items and tasks, emphasis on hard-to-measure standards, flexible administration*
- Speaking and Listening Assessment: *Required, non-summative, flexible administration*
- Performance-Based Assessment for ELA/Literacy and Mathematics: *Required, summative, administered after approximately 75% of the school year*
- End-of-Year Assessment for ELA/Literacy and Mathematics: *Required, summative, administered after approximately 90% of the school year*



The PARCC summative assessments in English Language Arts (ELA)/Literacy and Mathematics will include a rich set of performance-based tasks that address a long standing concern among educators about large scale student assessments – which have been unable to capture some of the most important skills that we strive to develop in students. The PARCC assessments are being carefully crafted to accomplish this important goal. They will enable teachers, schools, students and their parents to gain important insights into how well critical knowledge, skills and abilities essential for young people to thrive in college and careers are being mastered. PARCC assessments in ELA/Literacy and Mathematics



will be administered in grades 3-11 beginning in the 2014-2015 school year. The assessments at each grade level will assess the CCSS for that grade. However, in mathematics, a small portion of the assessments will assess securely-held content from the previous grade. Also, the high school mathematics assessments will be based on the CCSS designated for two course sequences – a traditional sequence including Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II; and an integrated sequence including Mathematics 1, 2, and 3. For more information regarding high school mathematics sequences, please refer to the Mathematics Model Content Frameworks at <http://www.parcconline.org/parcc-model-content-frameworks>.

In order to promote improvements in curriculum and instruction and support various forms of accountability, the PARCC assessments are designed to measure the full range of the CCSS and full continuum of student abilities, including the performance of high and underperforming students. To effectively carry out the PARCC design, assessments in both content areas will be administered in two components:

- **A performance-based assessment (PBA)** component, administered after approximately 75% of the school year, and
- **An end of year assessment (EOY)** component, administered after approximately 90% of the school year.

#### **PARCC ELA/Literacy Assessments**

The ELA/Literacy PBAs at each grade level will include three tasks: a research simulation, a literary analysis, and a narrative task. For each task, students will be asked to read one or more texts, answer several short comprehension and vocabulary questions, and write an essay that requires them to draw evidence from the text(s). The ELA/Literacy EOYs at each grade level will include 4-5 texts, both literary and informational (including social science/historical, scientific, and technical texts at grades 6-11). A number of short-answer comprehension and vocabulary questions will also be associated with each text.

The claims listed below are the claims that are driving the design of the PARCC ELA/Literacy Summative Assessment.

**Master Claim:** On track for college and career readiness; the degree to which students are “on track” for college and career readiness in ELA/Literacy. Under the master claim, there are two major claims: (1) reading complex text (students read and comprehend a range of sufficiently complex texts independently), and (2) writing (students write effectively when using and/or analyzing sources).

Further delineation in what is being measured is indicated by the following six sub-claims:

- (1) Vocabulary, Interpretation, and Use (RL/RI.X.4 and L.X.4-6)
  - a. Students use context to determine the meaning of words and phrases
- (2) Reading Literature (RL.X.1-10)
  - a. Students demonstrate comprehension and draw evidence from readings of grade-level, complex literary text.
- (3) Reading Informational Text (RI.X.1-10)

- a. Students demonstrate comprehension and draw evidence from readings of grade-level, complex informational texts.
- (4) Written Expression (W.X.1-10)
  - a. Students produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience.
- (5) Conventions and Knowledge of Language (L.X.1-3)
  - a. Students demonstrate knowledge of conventions and other important elements of language.
- (6) Research (data taken from Research Simulation Task)
  - a. Students build and present knowledge through integration, comparison, and synthesis of ideas.

Results of the ELA/Literacy assessments will be reported in three major categories: (1) ELA/Literacy; (2) reading and comprehending a range of sufficiently complex texts independently (reading) and (3) writing effectively when using and/or analyzing sources (writing). ELA/Literacy results will be based on a composite of students' reading and writing scores.

Students will receive both a scale score and performance level scores for ELA/Literacy, and scale scores for the reading and writing categories.

### **PARCC Mathematics Assessments**

The mathematics PBAs at each grade level will include both short- and extended-response questions focused on applying skills and concepts to solve problems that require demonstration of the mathematical practices with a focus on modeling, reasoning, and precision. The mathematics EOY assessments will be comprised primarily of short-answer questions focused on conceptual understanding, procedural skills, and application.

The claims listed below are the claims that drive the design of the PARCC Mathematics Assessment.

**Master Claim:** On Track for College and Career Readiness; the degree to which a student is college- and career-ready (or, on-track to being ready) in mathematics. The student solves grade-level/course-level problems in mathematics as set forth in the Standards for Mathematical Content with connections to the Standards for Mathematical Practice.

- **Sub Claim A:** Major Content with Connections to Practices. The student solves problems involving the Major Content for her grade/course with connections to the Standards for Mathematical Practice.
- **Sub Claim B:** Additional and Supporting Content with Connections to Practices. The student solves problems involving the Additional and Supporting Content for her grade/course with connections to the Standards for Mathematical Practice.
- **Sub Claim C:** Highlighted Practices MP.3, 6 with Connections to Content: expressing mathematical reasoning. The student expresses grade/course-level appropriate mathematical reasoning by constructing viable arguments, critiquing the reasoning of others and/or attending to precision when making mathematical statements.
- **Sub Claim D:** Highlighted Practice MP.4 with Connections to Content: modeling/application. The student solves real-world problems with a degree of difficulty appropriate to the grade/course



by applying knowledge and skills articulated in the standards for the current grade/course (or, for more complex problems, knowledge and skills articulated in the standards for previous grades/courses), engaging particularly in the Modeling practice, and where helpful making sense of problems and persevering to solve them (MP.1), reasoning abstractly and quantitatively (MP.2), using appropriate tools strategically (MP.5), looking for and making use of structure (MP.7), and/or looking for and expressing regularity in repeated reasoning (MP.8).

- **Sub Claim E:** Fluency in applicable grades (3-6): The student demonstrates fluency as set forth in the Standards for Mathematical Content in her grade.

Performance level scores will be reported according to five levels. More information about the PARCC's performance levels can be found by visiting <http://www.parcconline.org/parcc-assessment-policies>.

### Use of Technology to Deliver PARCC Assessments

PARCC assessments will use a computer-based Assessment Delivery Platform that is easy for students to learn, intuitive to use, and provides an opportunity for results to be reported quickly and accurately. The PARCC Assessment Delivery Platform will be compliant with the new Accessible Portable Item Profile (APIP) which will be able to read an individually-programmed student APIP Personal Needs Profile (PNP), and provide specified features to increase accessibility and accommodations to each student on the assessment, based on their PNP. See Section 2 for additional information on PNPs.

### Participation Guidelines for PARCC Assessments

All students, including students with disabilities and English learners, are required to participate in statewide assessments and have his or her assessment results be part of the state's accountability systems, with narrow exceptions for English learners in their first year in a U.S. school (described in Section 5), and certain students with disabilities who have been identified by the IEP team to take their state's alternate assessment. All other students will participate in the PARCC ELA/Literacy and Mathematics performance-based and summative assessments. Federal laws governing student participation in statewide assessments include the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (reauthorized in 2008), and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, as amended. Specific provisions under these laws for students with disabilities and English learners will be summarized in a supporting appendix to be released in fall 2013. Please consult your state's assessment department to determine which alternate and English language proficiency assessments are offered in your state.

Four distinct groups of students may receive accommodations on PARCC assessments:

- **Students with disabilities who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP);**
- **Students with a Section 504 plan** who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, have a record of such an impairment, or are regarded as having such an impairment, but who do not qualify for special education services;
- **Students who are English learners;** and
- **Students who are English learners and with disabilities who have an IEP or 504 plan.** These students are eligible for both accommodations for students with disabilities and English learners.

The following definitions will help users of the Manual to understand and implement accommodations appropriately:

- **Student with a disability:** One who has been found eligible based on the definitions provided by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504).
- **English learner:** Assessment consortia are currently collaborating to develop a comprehensive definition. Traditionally, English learner students have also been termed “limited English proficient” students and “English language learners.” In fall 2013, PARCC will release a legal summary appendix, including the federal definition of English learner.
- **Former English Learners:** Students who are no longer classified as English learners (progress is tracked after they achieved the standards of fluency as identified on the state English proficiency assessment).

### General Testing Procedures

For information about general testing guidelines and procedures, including (1) ethical testing practices; (2) standardization; and (3) test security policies, please refer to the *PARCC Test Administration Manual* which will be released in fall 2013.

### Universal Design

Universal design when applied to assessment is analogous to universal design in architecture, where for example, ramps and curb cuts designed for people in wheelchairs are also considered essential for people without disabilities, such as parents pushing strollers or people moving heavy furniture.<sup>3</sup> Universal design<sup>4</sup> describes a concept or philosophy that, when applied to assessments, provides all students with equal opportunities to demonstrate what they have learned. The purpose of universally designed assessments is to provide access for the greatest number of students during assessment, and to minimize the need for individualized design or accommodations. Universal design acknowledges differences among individuals, and that for accurate assessment to occur, a range of methods and materials are needed to measure learning. Universal design builds flexibility into assessments at the development stage, which enables flexible adjustments for a broad range of students. All students are intended to benefit from assessments that are universally designed, including students who are gifted and talented; English learners, students with physical, cognitive, and/or sensory disabilities; students with emotional or language/learning disabilities; students with more than one of these characteristics; students with unique linguistics needs; other underperforming students; and students without disabilities.

The principles of universal design for assessment are described by Thurlow, et al.:

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<sup>3</sup> Maryland State Board of Education. (2011). “A Route for Every Learner Report.”

<sup>4</sup> The term “universal design” is defined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) as having the same definition as that found in the Assistive Technology Act of 1998: The term “universal design” means a concept or philosophy for designing and delivering products and services that are usable by people with the widest possible range of functional capabilities, which include products and services that are directly accessible (without requiring assistive technologies) and products and services that are interoperable with assistive technologies. (20 U.S.C. §1401(35)(IDEA); 20 U.S.C. §1003(23)(HEOA), both referencing the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended, 29 U.S.C. §3002).

Universally designed assessments are designed and 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. 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 must 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.<sup>5</sup>

Universal design emphasizes that in order to increase access, assessment designers cannot use a “one size fits all” approach, but must make available opportunities for choice and create multiple alternatives and approaches for individuals to express their knowledge. Using these principles, item writers consider the full range of students in the assessment population and develop items, tasks, and prompts that measure the desired construct for the greatest number of students without the need for accommodation or adaptation. Guided by universal design, assessment developers design the assessment to meet the specific needs of as many students as possible and minimize the number of necessary accommodations, while acknowledging that the need for accommodations cannot be eliminated entirely.

PARCC has included the following universal design requirements for item development in the *PARCC Accessibility Guidelines*:

- The item or task takes into consideration the diversity of the assessment population and the need to allow the full range of eligible students to respond to the item/stimulus.
- Constructs have been precisely defined and the item or task measures what is intended.
- Assessments contain accessible, non-biased items.
- Assessments are designed to be amenable to accommodations.
- Instructions and procedures are simple, clear, and intuitive.
- Assessments are designed for maximum readability, comprehensibility, and legibility.<sup>6</sup>
- The item or task material uses a clear and accessible text format.
- The item or task material uses clear and accessible visual elements (when essential to the item).
- The item or task material uses text appropriate for the intended grade level.
- Decisions will be made to ensure that items and tasks measure what they are intended to measure for English learner students with different levels of English proficiency and/or first language proficiency.
- All accessibility features have been considered that may increase access while preserving the targeted construct.
- Multiple means of presentation, expression, and engagement have been considered with regard to individual items/tasks for both students with disabilities and English learners.
- Changes to the format of an item will be considered that do not alter the item/task meaning or difficulty.

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<sup>5</sup> Thompson, S. J., Johnstone, C. J., & Thurlow, M. L. (2007). *Universal design applied to large scale assessments* (Synthesis Report 44). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes. Retrieved [April 1, 2013], from the World Wide Web: <http://education.umn.edu/NCEO/OnlinePubs/Synthesis 44.html>

<sup>6</sup> Thompson, Johnstone, & Thurlow (2002). The National Center for Educational Outcomes (NCEO).



In addition to the universal design requirements, PARCC has provided item developers with comprehensive accessibility guidelines for writing items that are bias-free, sensitive to diverse cultures, stated clearly, of appropriate linguistic complexity, and consistently formatted.

Principles of universal design, when applied to assessment, may provide educators with more valid inferences about the achievement levels of students with disabilities and English learners, as well as the achievement of their peers.

Universal design cannot eliminate the need for accommodations and alternate assessments. However, universally designed general assessments may reduce the need for accommodations and alternate assessments.

### Accommodations

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 that are unrelated to the content being assessed. For PARCC assessments, accommodations are adjustments to the testing situation, test format, or test administration that provide equitable access during assessments for students with disabilities and students who are English learners. The administration of an assessment should not be the first time an accommodation is introduced to the student. To the extent possible, accommodations:

- Provide equitable access during instruction and assessments;
- Mitigate the effects of a student's disability;
- Do not reduce learning or achievement expectations;
- Do not change the construct being assessed; and
- Do not compromise the integrity or validity of the assessment.

Accommodations are intended to reduce or even eliminate the effects of a student's disability and/or English language proficiency level; however, **accommodations do not reduce learning expectations**. The accommodations provided to a student on the PARCC assessments must be *generally consistent* with those provided for classroom instruction and classroom assessments. There are some accommodations that may be used for instruction and for formative assessments but are not allowed for the summative assessment because they impact the validity of the assessment results – for example, allowing a student to use a thesaurus or access the Internet during a PARCC test. There may be consequences (e.g., lowering or excluding a student's test score) for the use of unallowable accommodations during PARCC assessments. It is important for educators to become familiar with PARCC policies regarding accommodations used for assessments.

The accommodations and conditions in this manual are provided to ensure a valid and reliable score on the PARCC assessments, not to provide an unfair advantage to those students who receive accommodations. Accommodations or other conditions provided outside these guidelines may change the construct of what is intended to be assessed and will call into question the reliability and validity of the score and may not report what a student knows and is able to do as measured on the assessment.



To the extent possible, accommodations adhere to the following principles:

- Accommodations enable students to participate more fully in instruction and assessments and to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.
- Accommodations should be based upon individual student needs and not upon a category of disability, English language proficiency alone, level of instruction, amount of time spent in a general classroom, program setting, or availability of staff.
- Accommodations should be based on a documented need in the instruction/assessment setting and should not be provided for the purpose of giving the student an enhancement that could be viewed as an unfair advantage.
- Accommodations for students with disabilities should be described and documented in the student's appropriate plan (i.e., either the IEP, 504 plan).
- Accommodations for English learners should be described and documented
- Students who are both English learners and students with disabilities may qualify for students with disabilities and English learner accommodations, and should have all accommodations listed in an IEP/504 plan and other documentation deemed appropriate.
- Accommodations should be implemented as soon as possible after completion and approval of the appropriate plan and become part of daily instruction.
- Accommodations should not be introduced for the first time during the testing of a student.
- Accommodations should be monitored for effectiveness.
- Accommodations used for instruction should also be used, if allowable, on local district assessments and state assessments.

In the event that a student was provided a test accommodation that was **not listed** in his or her IEP, 504 plan, or documented for an English learner, or if a student was **not provided** a test accommodation listed in his or her IEP/504 plan/documentation for an English learner, the school must follow each state's policies and procedures for notifying the state assessment office.

### Scoring and Reporting

Summative assessment scores for students who receive all accommodations will be aggregated with the scores of other students and those of relevant groups. These scores can be included for accountability purposes. Confidential parent/guardian reports, non-public rosters of school- and district-level results, and other non-public reports will include notations in cases where certain accommodations were provided. District and school reports available to the public will not include the notations in cases where these accommodations were used. PARCC states will monitor the number and percentage of students using these accommodations at the school, district, and state level.



**Section 2 –  
PARCC Accessibility System and Accessibility  
Features for All Students Taking the PARCC  
Assessments**



## PARCC Accessibility System

Through a combination of universal design principles and computer-embedded accessibility features, PARCC has designed an inclusive assessment system by considering accessibility from initial design through item development, field testing, and implementation of the assessments for all students, including students with disabilities, English learners, and English learners with disabilities. Although accommodations may still be needed for some students with disabilities and English learners to assist in demonstrating what they know and can do, the computer-embedded accessibility features should minimize the need for accommodations during testing and ensure the inclusive, accessible, and fair testing of the diversity of students being assessed.

### What are Accessibility Features?

On PARCC technology-based assessments, accessibility features are tools or preferences that are either built into the assessment system or provided externally by test administrators. Accessibility features can be used by any student taking the PARCC assessments (i.e., students with and without disabilities, gifted students, English learners, and English learners with disabilities). Since the accessibility features are intended for *all* students, they are not classified as accommodations. Students should be exposed to these features prior to testing, and should have the opportunity to select and practice using them. Accessibility features are intended to benefit a wide range of students, and are available to any student at his or her discretion during testing. Practice tests with accessibility features will be made available for teacher and student use throughout the year.

### Accessibility Features Identified in Advance

A relatively small number of students may require additional accessibility features for their particular needs, but are not required by the vast majority of students (e.g., changing the background or font color onscreen, or using a screen reader for the math assessment). The on-off controls for these features might distract other students if they were shown onscreen or interfere with other features or accommodations, and therefore must be “turned on” for a particular student by a test administrator or other adult prior to testing. Accessibility features can be identified either by students, teachers, and/or parents, whichever is most beneficial to the student, and the student can decide whether or not to use the support, without any consequence to the student, school, or district. Recent research suggests that providing too many tools onscreen may lead to ineffective use of the tools provided and/or an impact on a student’s test performance.<sup>7</sup> Students, in collaboration with educators, should select these accessibility features ahead of time, based on their needs and preferences, and must practice using them, either in a classroom setting or in real world application.

Individualizing access needs for each student on the assessment provides increased opportunities to accurately demonstrate knowledge and skills, and will reduce the likelihood of giving students incorrect accommodations or accessibility features on the day of the test.

Examples of accessibility features are provided in Table 1 below, which differentiates those that are available onscreen to all students, and those that must be turned on by an adult.

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<sup>7</sup> Higgins, J., Fedorchak, G., & Katz, M. (2012). Assignment of Accessibility Tools for Digitally Delivered Assessments: Key Findings. White Paper for Enhanced Assessment Grant # S368A100008.

### What is a Personal Needs Profile?

In order to individualize the testing experience, and enhance access to the PARCC assessments for all students, a Personal Needs Profile of each student's testing needs will be embedded within the technology platform before the PARCC assessments are administered. The PNP is a collection of student information, including student demographic information, the computer-based accessibility features that are needed by each student, and accommodations (if needed).

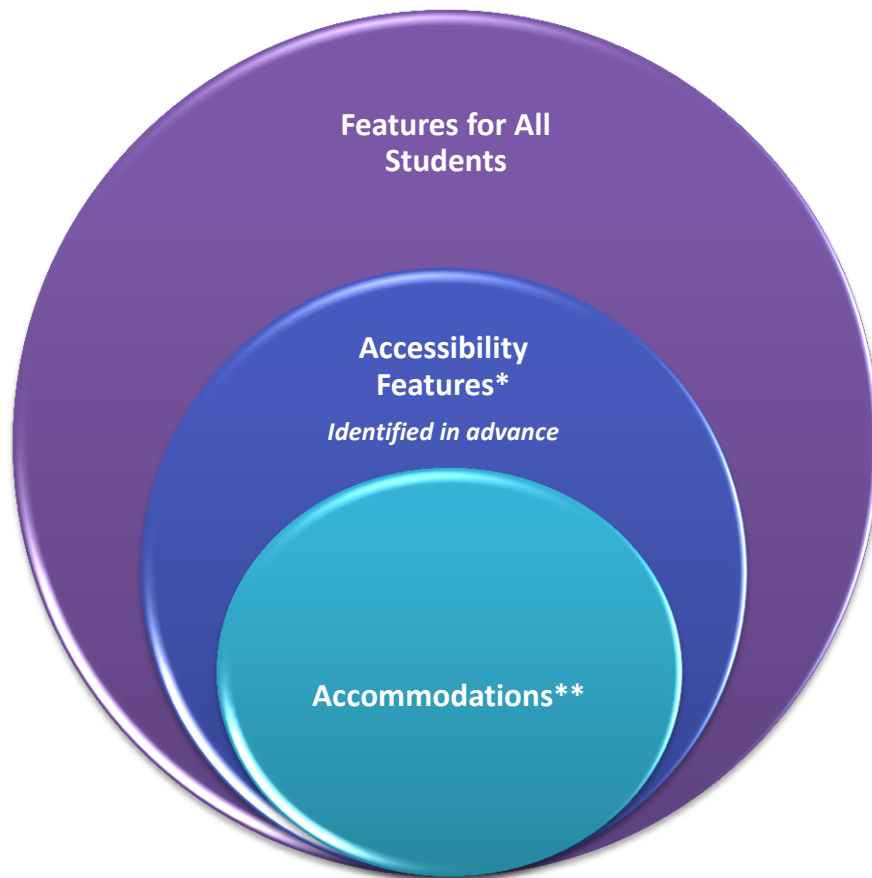
The PNP should be based on observations and stated preferences by the student or parent/guardian on a student's testing needs that have been found to increase access during instruction and assessment. Observations based on a student's interaction with the online testing platform can be made through the practice tests. A student's testing needs should be reviewed at least annually, and revised as appropriate, to reflect current education-related needs or preferences.

### Who creates the PNP for a student?

- For *students with disabilities*, the IEP or 504 team will create the PNP.
- For *English learners*, the educators responsible for selecting accommodations (or an English learner team, if available) will identify the accessibility features in the PNP for the student.
- For *English learners with disabilities*, the IEP or 504 team (which includes an adult familiar with the language needs of the student) will make PNP decisions.
- For students *without* disabilities, and who are *not* English learners, PNP decisions will be made based on the student's education-related needs and preferences by an informal team, which may include the:
  - a. Student (as appropriate)
  - b. Parent/guardian
  - c. Student's primary educator in the subject of the assessment

Guidance for schools on the technology platform and how to develop a Personal Needs Profile (PNP) will be included in the Test Administration Manual.

## The PARCC Accessibility System



*\* Available to all participating students*

*\*\*For students with disabilities, English learners, and English learners with disabilities*

### Accessibility Features for All Students

Table 1 lists the accessibility features that PARCC will make available to **all students**, either through the online platform or externally-delivered by a test administrator or other adult on the Mid-Year, Performance-Based, and End-of-Year Assessments. Students should determine whether they wish to use the feature on an item-by-item basis, based on the features they use during instruction and in daily life. The features in the third column must be identified in advance as part of the student’s PNP when indicated as “Yes.”

**Table 1: Accessibility Features for All Students<sup>8</sup>**

<b>Support</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Identified in Advance by a PNP (During Test Registration Process)</b>
<b>Answer Masking</b>	The student electronically “covers” answer options, as needed.	Yes
<b>Audio Amplification</b>	The student raises or lowers the volume control, as needed, using headphones. Student must be tested in a separate setting if unable to wear headphones.	
<b>Background/Font Color (Color Contrast)<sup>9</sup></b>	The student changes the onscreen background and/or font color based on need or preference.	Yes
<b>Blank Paper (provided by test administrator)</b>	The student may be provided blank sheet(s) of paper on which to plan or organize item responses.	
<b>Eliminate Answer Choices</b>	The student “crosses out” possible answer choices (for multiple choice items only).	
<b>Flag Items for Review</b>	The student highlights items to review later.	
<b>General Administration Directions Clarified (by test administrator)</b>	The test administrator clarifies general administration instructions only. No part of the test may be clarified, nor may any assistance be provided to the student during testing.	
<b>General Administration Directions Read Aloud and Repeated as Needed (by test administrator)</b>	The student clicks a button to read aloud or repeat instructions. Student must be tested in a separate setting, if unable to wear headphones.	
<b>General Masking</b>	The student creates a custom “mask” to electronically cover portions of test items, including passages, as needed.	Yes
<b>Highlight Tool</b>	The student highlights text as needed to recall and/or emphasize.	
<b>Headphones or Noise</b>	The student uses headphones or noise buffers	

<sup>8</sup> Abedi, J. & Ewers, N. (2013). Accommodations for English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities: A Research-Based Decision Algorithm.

<sup>9</sup> Available background/font color options will follow.

Support	Description	Identified in Advance by a PNP (During Test Registration Process)
<b>Buffers</b>	to minimize distraction, access embedded text-to-speech, or filter external noise during testing (in addition to required headphone for use on English Language Arts/literacy assessment).	
<b>Line Reader Tool</b>	The students uses onscreen tool to assist in reading by raising and lowering the tool for each line of text onscreen.	Yes
<b>Magnification/Enlargement Device</b>	The student enlarges text and graphics onscreen, up to 400% (while preserving clarity, contrast, and color).	
<b>NotePad</b>	The student writes and edits notes using embedded NotePad application.	
<b>Pop-up Glossary</b>	The student hovers cursor over pre-selected, construct-irrelevant words to view definition onscreen.	
<b>Redirect Student to the Test (by test administrator)</b>	The test administrator redirects the student's attention to the test without coaching or assisting the student in any way.	
<b>Spell Checker</b>	The student uses spell-check software.	
<b>Text-to-Speech for the Mathematics Assessments</b>	Text is read aloud to the student using embedded text-to-speech software. Student must be tested in a separate setting if unable to wear headphones.	Yes
<b>Writing Tools</b>	The student uses writing process tools for written responses, including cut and paste, copy, underline, bold, and insert bullets.	



### **Administrative Considerations for All Students**

Detailed guidelines on the administration of the PARCC assessments will be included in the *PARCC Test Administration Manual*.

While students are generally tested in their regular classrooms according to the test administration schedule for students in the grade in which the assessment is being administered, However, the principal has the authority to schedule students in testing spaces other than regular classrooms, and at different scheduled times, as long as all requirements for testing conditions and test security are met as set forth in the *PARCC Test Administration Manual*.

Accordingly, principals may determine that any student may require one or more of the following test administration considerations, regardless of the student’s status as a student with a disability or who is an English learner:

- Small group testing
- Frequent breaks
- Time of day
- Separate or alternate location
- Specified area or seating
- Adaptive and specialized equipment or furniture



## **Section 3 – Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

Presentation Accommodations

Response Accommodations

Timing and Scheduling Accommodations

Setting Considerations

## Accommodations for Students with Disabilities<sup>10</sup>

Although the accessibility features available on the PARCC Assessments are based on universal design principles as applied to assessments, and are intended to increase access for most students, many students with disabilities may need additional accommodations when taking the PARCC assessments. For students with disabilities, **IEP or 504 team members are responsible for making decisions about which accommodations the student will need, as well as which features to increase accessibility must be selected for a student's Personal Needs Profile (PNP)**. Please refer to Section 2 for a description of PNPs and **features** that are also available to students with disabilities on computer-delivered PARCC assessments. PARCC accommodations listed in this section are intended only for:

- Students with disabilities who have the accommodation documented in an approved IEP or 504 plan prior to the date of test administration; and
- Students who use the accommodation routinely (with rare exceptions) during classroom instruction and locally-administered assessments, both before and after the test is administered.

### Accommodations Codes

Each accommodation will be assigned a code for use in data gathering and analysis. Further guidance will be included in future editions of the Manual and in the *PARCC Test Administration Manual*.

## Presentation Accommodations

### What are Presentation Accommodations?

Presentation accommodations alter the method or format used to administer a PARCC assessment to a student, including auditory, tactile, visual, and/or a combination of these, rather than having the student take the test in the same format as other students. For students taking computer-delivered assessments, all presentation accommodations must be identified in advance by a student's PNP (during the test registration process).

### Who Can Benefit from Presentation Accommodations?

Students who benefit most from presentation accommodations are those with disabilities that affect reading standard print, typically as a result of a physical, sensory, cognitive, or specific learning disability.

**Table 2** provides a list of **presentation accommodations** for students with disabilities on the PARCC Mid-Year, Performance-Based, and End-of-Year Assessments that describe changes in the assessment format and method in which the assessment is administered.

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<sup>10</sup> Abedi, J. & Ewers, N. (2013). Accommodations for English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities: A Research-Based Decision Algorithm.; Christensen, L., C. Johnston, and C. Rogers (2012). Common Core Accommodations Guidance. PARCC State Consortium.



**Table 2: Presentation Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

Accommodation	Administration Guidelines
<b>Additional Assistive Technology</b>	Guidelines will be provided in fall 2013.
<b>Braille Edition of ELA/Literacy and Mathematics Assessments</b>  <b>Note:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Hard-copy braille tests for ELA/Literacy and Mathematics)</b></li> <li>• <b>Refreshable braille displays for ELA/Literacy only)</b></li> </ul>	For students with visual impairments, a contracted braille <sup>11</sup> form will be available. Refreshable braille displays must be used in conjunction with screen reader software.
<b>Closed-Captioning of Multimedia Passages on the ELA/Literacy Assessments<sup>12</sup></b>	Students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing view captioned text on multimedia (i.e., video) on ELA/Literacy assessments.
<b>Descriptive Video</b>	Students who are blind or visually impaired listen to narrated audio description of key visual elements in multimedia (i.e., video) passages on ELA/Literacy assessments.
<b>Paper-and-Pencil Edition of the ELA/Literacy and Mathematics Assessments</b>	A paper-and-pencil form of each assessment is available for students who are unable to take a computer-delivered assessment due to a disability. The list of accommodations available for students who take the paper-pencil form will be included in an appendix, which will be released in fall 2013.
<b>Tactile Graphics</b>	Students who are blind or visually impaired and read braille, use tactile graphics.
<b>Text-to-Speech or Video of a Human Interpreter for the ELA/Literacy Assessments, including items, response options, and passages<sup>13</sup></b>	<p>The accommodation is intended to provide access to printed or written texts in the PARCC ELA/Literacy assessments to a very small number of students with disabilities who would otherwise be unable to participate in the assessment because their disability severely limits or prevents them from decoding printed text.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> If headphones are <i>not</i> used, the student must be tested in a</p>

<sup>11</sup> The use of uncontracted braille is under discussion among PARCC states.

<sup>12</sup> The CCSS call for comparisons between different media. An example of this is RI9-10.7: Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person’s life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account. Adding closed captioning to any students other than those who are deaf or hard of hearing affects the ability to effectively assess this type of standard, and therefore it is listed as an accommodation as opposed to a support for all.

<sup>13</sup> Note: There may be unintended consequences related to the use of this accommodation for some students. Review the adjacent Administration Guidelines carefully. PARCC will conduct additional research to provide PARCC states with data to substantiate the need for providing this level of access to a small number of students.

Accommodation	Administration Guidelines
	<p>separate setting.</p> <p>IEP or 504 plan teams may consider providing this accommodation to a student who has a print-related disability that severely limits or prevents his or her ability to access printed text by decoding, or who is blind and is unable to access braille to read text. This accommodation is not intended for students reading somewhat (i.e., moderately) below grade level.</p> <p><b>Guidelines are provided below for IEP and 504 Teams to identify students to receive this accommodation:</b></p> <p>In making decisions whether to provide the student with this accommodation, IEP and 504 teams are instructed to consider whether the student has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blindness or a visual impairment and has not learned (or is unable to use) braille;</li> <li style="text-align: center;">OR</li> <li>• A disability that severely limits or prevents him/her from accessing printed text, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so (e.g., student is unable to decode printed text or read fluently);</li> <li style="text-align: center;">OR</li> <li>• Deafness or a hearing impairment and is severely limited or prevented from decoding text due to a documented history of early and prolonged language deprivation</li> </ul> <p>Before listing the accommodation in the student’s IEP or 504 plan, teams should also consider whether:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student has access to printed text during routine instruction through a reader or other spoken-text audio format, or interpreter;</li> <li>• The student’s inability to decode printed text or read braille is documented in evaluation summaries from locally-administered diagnostic assessments;</li> <li>• The student receives ongoing, intensive instruction and/or interventions in the foundational reading skills to continue to attain the important college and career-ready skill of independent reading.</li> </ul> <p>Decisions about who receives this accommodation will be made by IEP and 504 teams. However, PARCC will collect data on the frequency of its use for the purpose of carefully monitoring and</p>

Accommodation	Administration Guidelines
	<p>determining appropriate decision-making.</p> <p>Administrative guidance and audio guidelines will be release in fall 2013.</p> <p><b>Reporting Notation to Schools and Parents:</b></p> <p>A notation will be provided on all confidential score reports to the school and parent (i.e., parent/guardian report, school roster, and district roster) stating that the student was given a reading access accommodation on the PARCC ELA/Literacy assessment and therefore, no claims should be inferred regarding the student’s ability to demonstrate foundational reading skills (i.e., decoding and fluency).</p>
<b>ASL Video for the Mathematics Assessments for a Student Who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing</b>	The student views an embedded video of a human interpreter for the Mathematics assessment. If a deaf student does not use ASL, an actual human interpreter and separate test setting will be required.
<b>ASL Video of Test Directions for a Student Who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing</b>	The student views an embedded video of a human interpreter for test directions. If a deaf student does not use ASL, an actual human interpreter and separate test setting will be required.

## Response Accommodations

### What are Response Accommodations?

Response accommodations allow students to use alternative methods to provide responses to test items, such as through dictating to a scribe or using an assistive device. For students taking computer-delivered assessments, all response accommodations must be identified in advance by a student’s PNP (during the test registration process).

### Who Can Benefit from Response Accommodations?

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

**Table 3** provides a list of *response accommodations* for students with disabilities on the PARCC Mid-Year, Performance-Based, and End-of-Year Assessments that are designed to allow students to respond to test items in different ways.

**Table 3: Response Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**



Accommodation	Administration Guidelines
<b>Additional Assistive</b>	Guidelines will be provided in fall 2013.

Accommodation	Administration Guidelines
<b>Technology</b>	
<b>Braille Note-taker</b>	<p>Student who is blind or has visual impairments will use an electronic braille note-taker. For PARCC assessments, grammar checker, Internet, and stored file functionalities must be turned off.</p> <p>The responses of a student who uses an electronic braille note-taker during PARCC assessments must be transcribed exactly as entered in the electronic braille note-taker. Responses that are not transcribed will not be scored. Transcription guidelines will be included in the <i>PARCC Test Administration Manual</i></p>
<b>Calculation Device and Mathematics Tools (on Non-calculator Sessions of Mathematics Assessments)</b>	<p>The student uses a calculation device (e.g., four-function calculator, large key or other adapted calculator), arithmetic table (including addition/ subtraction and/or multiplication/division charts), and/or manipulatives (IEP or 504 plan must specify which one) on the <b>non-calculator session</b> of the Mathematics test. If a talking calculator is used, the student must use headphones or test in a separate setting.</p> <p>Students with visual impairments may need other mathematical tools such as a large print ruler, braille ruler, tactile compass or braille protractor.</p> <p>For students with a disability that severely limits or prevents their ability to perform basic calculations (i.e., addition, subtraction, multiplication or division), this accommodation allows a calculation device to be used on non-calculator Mathematics assessment sessions. The accommodation would be permitted on test sessions for which calculators are not allowed for other students, with the exception of mathematics fluency items/tasks in grades 3-6 for which no calculation device may be used. If a calculation device were used for those test items that exclusively measure calculation skills, the validity of the test claim (<b>Sub Claim E – Mathematics fluency in grades 3-6: The student demonstrates fluency as set forth in the <i>Standards for Mathematical Content</i></b>) would be compromised, and the score invalid.</p> <p><b>Guidelines are provided below for IEP and 504 teams to identify students to receive the accommodation of a calculation device on non-calculator sessions of the PARCC Mathematics assessments:</b></p> <p>In making decisions whether to provide the student with this accommodation, IEP and 504 teams should consider whether the student has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A disability that severely limits or prevents the student’s</li> </ul>

Accommodation	Administration Guidelines
	<p>ability to perform basic calculations (i.e., addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division), even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so.</p> <p>Before listing the accommodation in the student’s IEP/504 plan, teams should also consider whether:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student is unable to perform calculations without the use of a calculation device, arithmetic table, or manipulative during routine instruction;</li> <li>• The student’s inability to perform mathematical calculations is documented in evaluation summaries from locally-administered diagnostic assessments.</li> <li>• The student should receive ongoing, intensive instruction and/or interventions to learn to calculate without using a calculation device, in order to ensure that the student continues to learn basic calculation and fluency.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Scribing or Speech-to-Text (i.e., Dictation/Transcription or Signing) for the Mathematics assessments; and for selected response (not constructed response) items on the English Language Arts/Literacy assessments<sup>14</sup></b></p>	<p>The student dictates responses either verbally, using a speech-to-text device, an augmentative/assistive communication device (e.g., picture/word board), or by signing, gesturing, pointing, or eye-gazing. The student must be tested in a separate setting.</p> <p>Student’s responses must be transcribed exactly as dictated/signed.</p>
<p><b>Scribing or Speech-to-Text (i.e., Dictation/Transcription) for constructed responses on the English Language Arts/Literacy Assessments<sup>15</sup></b></p>	<p>The student dictates responses either verbally, using a speech-to-text device, augmentative/ assistive communication device (e.g., picture/word board), or by signing, gesturing, pointing, or eye-gazing. Grammar checker, Internet, and stored files functionalities must be turned off. Word prediction must also be turned off for students who do not receive this accommodation. The student must be tested in a separate setting.</p> <p>In making decisions whether to provide the student with this accommodation, IEP and 504 teams are instructed to consider whether the student has:</p>

<sup>14</sup> This accommodation applies to Evidence Based Selected Response, and Technology Enhanced Constructed Response items (not Prose Constructed Response items) on the English Language Arts/Literacy assessments.

<sup>15</sup> This accommodation applies to Prose Constructed Responses on the ELA/Literacy assessments.

Accommodation	Administration Guidelines
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A physical disability that severely limits or prevents the student’s motor process of writing through keyboarding; OR</li> <li>• A disability that severely limits or prevents the student from expressing written language, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so.</li> </ul> <p>Before listing the accommodation in the student’s IEP/504 plan, teams should also consider whether:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student’s inability to express in writing is documented in evaluation summaries from locally-administered diagnostic assessments;</li> <li>• The student should receive ongoing, intensive instruction and/or interventions to learn written expression, as deemed appropriate by the IEP or 504 team.</li> </ul> <p><b>Reporting Notation to Schools and Parents:</b></p> <p>A notation will be provided on all confidential score reports to the school and parent (i.e., parent guardian report, school roster, district roster) stating that the student was provided a scribe on the PARCC ELA/Literacy assessment and therefore, no claims should be inferred regarding the student’s ability to demonstrate expressive writing skills. Ongoing instruction in the foundational skills may be needed to allow students to continue to attain the important college and career-ready skill of writing. (Note: Notations will <i>not</i> be provided for students who receive a scribe on the PARCC Mathematics assessment or for selected responses only on the ELA/Literacy assessment).</p> <p>Note: In fall 2013, PARCC will release the <i>PARCC Scribe Guidelines</i> and <i>PARCC Test Administration Manual</i>, which will provide administrative guidance.</p>
<p><b>Word prediction on the ELA/Literacy Performance-Based Assessment</b></p>	<p>The student uses word prediction software that provides a bank of frequently- or recently-used words onscreen as a result of the student entering the first few letters of a word.</p> <p>In making decisions whether to provide the student with this accommodation, IEP and 504 teams are instructed to consider whether the student has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A physical disability that severely limits or prevents the student</li> </ul>



Accommodation	Administration Guidelines
	<p>from writing or keyboarding responses; OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A disability that severely limits or prevents the student from recalling, processing, and expressing written language, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so.</li> </ul> <p>Before listing the accommodation in the student’s IEP/504 plan, teams are instructed to consider whether:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student’s inability to express in writing is documented in evaluation summaries from locally administered diagnostic assessments.</li> <li>• The student should receive ongoing, intensive instruction, and/or intervention in language processing and writing, as deemed appropriate by the IEP/504 plan team.</li> </ul>

## Timing and Scheduling Accommodations

### What are Timing and Scheduling Accommodations?

Timing and scheduling accommodations are changes in the allowable length of time for a student to complete the test and may also change the way in which the time is organized (e.g., frequent breaks or time of day). In accordance with principles of universal design for assessment, PARCC will provide administrative guidance around frequent breaks and testing time of day. Both of these will be considered as administrative considerations available to all students.<sup>16</sup>

### Who Can Benefit from Timing and Scheduling Accommodations?

Timing accommodations are helpful for students who need additional or extended time to complete the tests. Extra time may be needed by students to process information (e.g., a student who processes directions slowly or needs extra time to move to a different test question), write responses (e.g., a student with limited dexterity or difficulty with word retrieval), or use special devices or equipment (e.g., assistive technology, audio recording, or scribe). Students with disabilities may also need frequent or extended breaks. Scheduling changes may also benefit students with challenges remaining alert or who are more productive at certain times of the day. For students taking computer-delivered assessments, extended time must be identified in advance by a student’s PNP (during the test registration process).

**Table 4** provides the *timing and scheduling accommodation* for students with disabilities on the PARCC Mid-Year, Performance-Based, and End-of-Year Assessments that is designed to increase the allowable length of time to complete an assessment or assignment.

<sup>16</sup> Frequent breaks refers to the administration of an assessment in short periods with frequent supervised breaks. Time of day refers to the test administration time, taking into account a student’s medical or learning needs. Consideration should be given to how these features interact with the extended time accommodation,

**Table 4: Timing and Scheduling Accommodation for Students with Disabilities**

Accommodation	Administration Guidelines
<b>Extended Time</b>	The student uses “extended time” to complete testing. A maximum of up to one school day is allowed to complete one test session during the prescribed testing window. Students who use this accommodation must be given a quiet location in which to complete the test.

### Setting Considerations

In accordance with principles of universal design for assessment, PARCC will provide administrative guidance around small group testing, specified area, and separate/alternate location. These will be considered as administrative setting considerations available to all students. Changes to the setting, including the location in which a student participates in an assessment, or the conditions within the assessment setting can benefit students who are easily distracted in large group settings and who concentrate best in a small group or individual 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 and other interruptions. Chairs should be comfortable and tables at an appropriate height with sufficient room for materials. Staff should check that all needed materials and equipment are available and in good and working condition.

Important note: Some students with disabilities will require small group or individual testing due to other accommodations they use on PARCC assessments (e.g., interpreter, human reader for the paper-based administration of the assessments, etc.). Students with physical disabilities may need a more accessible location, more space, specific room conditions, or special equipment.

### Unique Accommodations<sup>17</sup>

PARCC has developed a comprehensive list of accommodations and accessibility features that are designed to increase access for all students to PARCC assessments and that result in valid, comparable assessment scores. However, students may require additional accommodations that are not found on Tables 2-4, or a student who does not have an IEP or 504 plan may require an accommodation as a result of a recently-occurring accident or illness. PARCC states will review requests for unique accommodations in their respective states on an individual basis and will provide approval after determining whether the accommodation would result in a valid score for the student, using guidelines comparable across PARCC states.

### Emergency Accommodations<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> A sample unique accommodation request form and guidelines for states will be released in fall 2013.

<sup>18</sup> A sample emergency accommodation request form will be released in fall 2013.



If prior to or during testing, the school principal (or principal's designee) determines that a student requires an emergency accommodation, an emergency accommodation form must be completed and submitted to the appropriate state agency staff for approval. An emergency accommodation may be appropriate for a student who incurs a temporary disabling condition that interferes with test performance shortly before or within the testing window of a PARCC assessment (e.g., student breaks his/her arm and needs a scribe). A copy of this form must be filed in the student's assessment records and a copy must be retained at the state level. PARCC states will review requests for emergency accommodations in their respective states and will provide approval after determining whether the accommodation would result in a valid score for the student, using guidelines comparable across PARCC states.

### **Ongoing Research and Data Collection around Accommodations**

PARCC states will continue to research the effectiveness, validity, differential impact, relevance, and feasibility of the accommodations above, and revise as needed.

## **Section 4 – Accommodations for English Learners**

## Accommodations for English Learners<sup>19</sup>

The universal design of PARCC assessments is expected to increase access for most students through the availability of a range of accessibility features for all students (see Section 2). However, some English learners may need additional accommodations during PARCC assessment administration. Additionally, English learners with disabilities are entitled to accommodations listed for students with disabilities in Section 3.

Accommodations should be considered for English learners by a group of educators familiar with the student, using the guidance provided in Section 5 – Decision-Making Process for Selecting, Using, and Evaluating Accommodations for Students with Disabilities, English Learners, and English Learners with Disabilities. In cases of English learners with disabilities, at least one person familiar with the language needs of the student should be a participating member of the IEP or 504 team, where accommodations decisions are made.

Educators familiar with the student should also consider which additional features will enhance accessibility for the student in order to determine their Personal Needs Profile (PNP). Section 2 describes the PNP and the additional accessibility features available to English learners on computer-delivered PARCC assessments.

### **Table 5. Allowable Accommodations for English Learners on PARCC Assessments**<sup>20</sup>

Table 5 below lists the accommodations on PARCC assessments that are available to English learners, cross-referenced with English Language Proficiency (ELP) level of the student and other administration considerations that may impact the effective use of the accommodation. See Section 5 for how ELP is determined.

#### **KEY for Table 5 below:**

- **Highly recommended** for use by English learners at this English language proficiency level
- ⦿ **Recommended** for use by English learners at this English language proficiency level
- **May not be appropriate** for students at this ELP level

<sup>19</sup> Abedi, J. & Ewers, N. (2013). Accommodations for English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities: A Research-Based Decision Algorithm.

<sup>20</sup> Conflicting laws, regulations, and/or policies exist among PARCC states as to whether they will allow, require, or prohibit translations of state assessments. PARCC’s policy concerning translation of the mathematics assessments will be addressed in later editions of the manual. PARCC is considering developing a **native language glossary** for the pop-up glossary that is provided as an accessibility feature for all students. The glossary will include pre-selected, non-construct relevant words.

Accommodations	Most likely to benefit English learners at this ELP Level (Refer to Table 6)			Administration Guidelines
	Beginning	Inter- mediate	Advanced	
<b>Extended time</b>	●	●	●	The student uses “extended time” to complete testing. A maximum of up to one school day is allowed to complete one test session during the prescribed testing window. Students who use this accommodation must be given a quiet location in which to complete the test.
<b>General Administration Directions Clarified in Student’s Native Language (by test administrator)</b>	●	⊙	○	The test administrator clarifies general administration instructions only. No part of the test may be clarified or translated. Students should be given ample time to process directions and ask clarifying questions. Students must be tested in a separate setting with other students needing the same accommodation to minimize distractions. Test administrators providing this accommodation should be literate and fluent in English, as well as in the student’s native language.
<b>General Administration Directions Read Aloud and Repeated as Needed in Student’s Native Language (by test administrator)</b>	●	⊙	○	The test administrator reads aloud, and repeats as needed, test directions in students’ native language. Students should be given ample time to process directions and ask clarifying questions. Students must be tested in a separate setting with other students needing the same accommodation to minimize distractions. Test administrators providing this accommodation should be literate and fluent in English, as well as the student’s native language.
<b>Scribe or Speech-to-Text: Responses Dictated for Mathematics Assessment in English</b>	●	⊙	○	Student dictates responses to Mathematics test items either to a human scribe or through speech-to-text technology. Students must be tested in a separate setting.
<b>Word-to-Word Dictionary (English/ Native Language)</b>	○	●	●	Student uses bilingual, word-to-word dictionary or electronic translator. Dictionaries that include definitions or pictures are not allowed. The student should be familiar with the dictionary they will use on the test. Students should be given ample time to complete the test using the accommodation.  A list of bilingual word-to-word dictionaries

Accommodations	Most likely to benefit English learners at this ELP Level (Refer to Table 6)			Administration Guidelines
	Beginning	Inter- mediate	Advanced	
				authorized for use on PARCC assessments is available at: <a href="http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/lep_bilingual_dictionary.pdf">http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/lep_bilingual_dictionary.pdf</a> <sup>[10]</sup>

### Setting Considerations

In accordance with principles of universal design for assessment, PARCC will provide administrative guidance around small group testing, specified area, and separate/alternate location. These will be considered as administrative setting considerations available to all students. Changes to the setting, including the location in which a student participates in an assessment, or the conditions within the assessment setting can benefit students who are easily distracted in large group settings and who concentrate best in a small group or individual 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 and other interruptions. Chairs should be comfortable and tables at an appropriate height with sufficient room for materials. Staff should check that all needed materials and equipment are available and in good and working condition.

Important note: Some English learners or English learners with disabilities will require small group or individual testing due to other accommodations they use on PARCC assessments (e.g., scribe for the mathematics assessments, etc.).

### Unique Accommodations<sup>21</sup>

PARCC has developed a comprehensive list of accommodations and accessibility features that are designed to increase access for all students to PARCC assessments and that result in valid, comparable assessment scores. If a student requires additional accommodations that are not found on Table 5, PARCC states will each review requests for unique accommodations on an individualized basis and will provide approval after determining whether the accommodation would result in a valid score for the student, using comparable guidelines across all PARCC states.

### Ongoing Research and Data Collection around Accommodations

PARCC states will continue to research the effectiveness, validity, differential impact, relevance, and feasibility of the accommodations above, and revise as needed.

<sup>21</sup> A sample unique accommodation request form and guidelines for states will be released in fall 2013.

**Section 5 –  
Decision-Making Process for Selecting, Using, and  
Evaluating Accommodations for Students with  
Disabilities, English Learners, and English Learners  
with Disabilities**





## **Step 1: Expect all Students to Achieve Academic Grade-Level Content Standards**

In accordance with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA), PARCC expects that all students who are not taking an alternate assessment will be included in the PARCC assessments, including students with disabilities, English learners, and English learners with disabilities. The PARCC assessment system sets and maintains high expectations that all students will have access to the full range of grade-level CCSS, including the difficult-to-measure standards.

Several laws require the participation of students with disabilities and English learners (both with and without disabilities) in standards-based instruction and assessment initiatives. Detailed information will be included in a supporting appendix, to be released in fall 2013.

### **Including All Students in State Accountability Assessments**

#### **English Learners<sup>22</sup>**

Federal law requires that students not be excluded from assessments intended to hold schools accountable for the academic performance of all students, with a narrow exception granted to English learners in their first year of instruction in a U.S. school (see above). English learners in PARCC states may not be excluded from PARCC End-of-Year and Performance-Based Assessments in ELA/literacy (with the exception of English learners in their first year in a U.S. school) and mathematics assessments. English learners whose parents have waived services may not be excluded from state assessments and are eligible to receive accommodations allowed to English learners on PARCC assessments.

#### **Students with Disabilities**

The laws described above require that all students with disabilities be administered state assessments, either with or without accommodations, or through an alternate assessment. The results of those assessments are intended to hold schools accountable for the academic performance of all students. It is important that IEP and 504 teams actively engage in a planning process that includes:

- Participation of all students in the PARCC assessments at the grade level at which they are enrolled;
- Assurance of the provision of accommodations to facilitate student access to grade-level standards and state assessments; and
- Use of alternate assessments based on the content standards, where necessary to assess the achievement of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

### **Equal Access to Grade-Level Content**

The CCSS are educational targets for students to learn at each grade level. Teachers should regularly ensure that students are working toward grade-level learning standards by using instructional strategies that are appropriate for each student based on individual needs, strengths, and challenges. Providing

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<sup>22</sup> Assessment consortia are currently collaborating to develop a comprehensive definition of “English learner,” based on the work (in process) of H. Gary Cook and Robert Linquanti. In fall 2013, PARCC will release a supporting appendix which includes a summary of the legal language and the federal definition of English learner.



accommodations during instruction and assessments is likely to promote equal access to grade-level content. To accomplish the goal of equal access:

- Educators, including members of IEP, 504, and, if applicable, English learner teams should be familiar with the CCSS and the accountability system at the state and district level;
- Educators and team members should be familiar with the PARCC test administration procedures and the *PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual*;
- Educators should collaborate regularly (i.e., general educators, special educators, and educators specializing in English language services) to maximize and ensure the student’s access to grade-level standards.

All students must have access to grade-level academic learning standards. Most of these students will be able to achieve these standards when the following three conditions are met:

1. Classroom instruction is provided by teachers who are qualified to teach the CCSS and who know how to differentiate instruction and provide educationally appropriate instruction for diverse learners;
2. IEPs and 504 plans for students with disabilities, and English learner plans for English learners, where appropriate, are developed to ensure the provision of equal access to the general curriculum and state- and district-wide assessments; and
3. Appropriate accommodations and accessibility features are determined and provided to help students access grade-level content.

The Common Core State Standards can be accessed here: <http://www.corestandards.org/>

The PARCC Model Content Frameworks can be accessed here: <http://www.parcconline.org/parcc-model-content-frameworks>

## Step 2: Learn About Accessibility Features and Accommodations

### What are Accessibility Features?

All students are eligible to select certain technology tools (i.e., accessibility features) for use during PARCC assessments, based on their individual needs and preferences. A relatively small number of students may require the use of these accessibility features to address their particular needs, which may not be required by the vast majority of students (e.g., changing the background or font color onscreen, or using a screen reader for the math test). The on-off controls for these accessibility features might distract other students if they were shown onscreen, and therefore must be “turned on” for a particular student by a test administrator or other adult prior to testing, based on the features listed in their Personal Needs Profile (PNP) (see Section 2). Available accessibility features are listed in Section 2, including both the tools which are available for use by all students at any time during the PARCC assessments and those that need to be turned on in advance.

### What are Accommodations?

Accommodations are procedures and materials that are intended to provide equitable testing conditions for students with disabilities and English learners. Accommodations are changes in the **presentation** of the test, the way in which a student **responds** to test questions, and/or the

**timing/scheduling** of assessment administration. A brief description of each accommodations category is described below:

- **Presentation accommodations** include allowable changes in the method or format in which the test or test questions are provided to the student. These may include, for example, the use of braille or sign interpretation of test items.
- **Response accommodations** include allowable changes in the method used by the student to provide responses to test questions. These may include dictating responses to a scribe or using a braille note-taker.
- **Timing and Scheduling accommodations** include extending the duration of time allowed for testing
- **Setting considerations**, which were once considered accommodations, include changes to the location or conditions in which the test is administered, including separate location or group size.

#### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

Accommodations are intended to reduce or even eliminate the effects of a disability by allowing a student with a disability to demonstrate his or her knowledge and skills without reducing learning expectations. IEP and 504 team members are responsible for selecting accommodations for students with disabilities, and should attempt where possible to parallel the accommodations used for classroom instruction, classroom assessments, and PARCC assessments. It is important for educators to become familiar with the PARCC accommodations policies. Refer to Section 3 for a list of accommodations that are allowed on PARCC assessments for students with disabilities. There may be consequences (e.g., lowering or not counting a student's test score) for the use of non-allowed accommodations during PARCC assessments.

#### **Accommodations for English Learners**

Effective accommodations for English learners should meet the following three conditions:

- Reduce the linguistic load necessary to access the content of the curriculum or assessment;
- Retain that which is measured by the test (i.e., the construct), without altering the test itself; and
- Address the unique linguistic and socio-cultural needs of an English learner by reducing the effects of English language skills on the student's overall performance on the assessment (i.e., "construct irrelevant variance") (Acosta, Rivera, & Shafer Willner, 2008, p. 38).

Accommodations for English learners provide either (a) direct linguistic support by adjusting the language in which the instruction or assessment is delivered; or (b) indirect linguistic support by adjusting Instructional or assessment conditions. As English learners become more proficient in English, their need for accommodations will decrease. Once an English learner becomes English proficient, the accommodation may no longer be necessary. In the meantime, the use of accommodations ensures that developing English language proficiency does not prevent English learners from demonstrating their knowledge of the content, and should not reduce learning expectations or access to complex academic language associated with any content area.

Accommodations should be used during both specialized language instruction and content area instruction in reading, writing, mathematics, science, etc., to ensure that English learners have the tools and supports necessary to access grade-level content area instruction. The accommodations provided to a student for classroom instruction and local assessments should be generally consistent with accommodations provided on PARCC and other state assessments, to the extent that the accommodation is permitted on those tests.

### **Accommodations for English Learners with Disabilities**

Students classified as English learners who also have a disability are eligible to receive **both** English learner accommodations **and** accommodations for students with disabilities on the PARCC assessments as determined by their IEP or 504 team. Each accommodation decision should be based on the disability-related and linguistic needs of the individual student.

### **Modifications and Accommodations for PARCC Assessments**

Modifications involve changes in the conditions under which a student takes an assessment that result in unacceptable changes to the test itself, or what the test measures (e.g., reducing or changing expectations for students) and are therefore *not permitted* on PARCC assessments.

Examples of modifications that will result in invalidated results on PARCC include:

- Requiring a student to be assessed on less content matter than other students because he has been taught less material;
- Reducing the scope of assessments so a student needs to complete only a limited number of problems or items;
- Modifying the complexity of assessments to make them easier (e.g., deleting half of the response choices on a multiple-choice test so that a student selects from two options instead of four);
- Giving hints, clues, or other coaching that directs the student to correct responses on assignments and tests;
- Adults defining vocabulary on the test or explaining test items;
- Allowing the student to complete an assessment of English language arts in a language other than English; and
- Using dictionaries that provide definitions (rather than an acceptable word-to-word dual-language dictionary).

Providing modifications to students during statewide assessments may have the unintended consequence of reducing their opportunities to learn critical content and may result in adverse effects on the student throughout his or her educational career. Moreover, **providing a student with modifications during a PARCC assessment may constitute a test irregularity and result in an invalidated score (i.e., the score will not be counted) and/or an investigation by the state into the school's or district's testing practices.**

### Step 3: Select Accessibility Features and Accommodations for Individual Students

The team or group responsible for selecting accessibility features for *all* students, and accommodations for English learners and/or students with disabilities should:

- Discuss which accommodations and accessibility features might assist a student during daily instruction in the classroom;
- Determine which accommodations and accessibility features to “try out” with the student during instruction in each content area;
- Document and evaluate the effectiveness of the accommodations and accessibility features used over time;
- Adjust the use of accommodations and accessibility features as needed for the future; and
- Based on the effectiveness of the supports used in the classroom, determine which accommodations and accessibility features should also be used on PARCC assessments, and whether they are allowed.

In selecting appropriate accommodations and accessibility features for PARCC assessments, it is important that educators be aware of the following:

- Accommodations and accessibility features should not be broadly assigned across all assessments, but considered and discussed separately for each PARCC content-area assessment.
- Students should receive the accommodation they need to participate in the assessment, but should not receive more accommodations than are necessary to participate meaningfully.
- Accommodations should not be used to compensate for a student’s lack of knowledge and skills.
- Students need opportunities beforehand to try out accommodations and learn which are most helpful in classroom instruction, as well as on large-scale assessments.
- The more input students have in selecting their accommodations, the more likely the accommodation will be used.
- The use of an accommodation should be considered in light of the student’s classroom performance and ability to access the assessment based on his or her disability or linguistic needs.
- Team should be careful to avoid selecting accommodations using a “kitchen-sink” approach that provides the student with unnecessary or mutually-contradictory accommodations in an attempt to provide every possible advantage on the test.

#### The Decision-Making Process

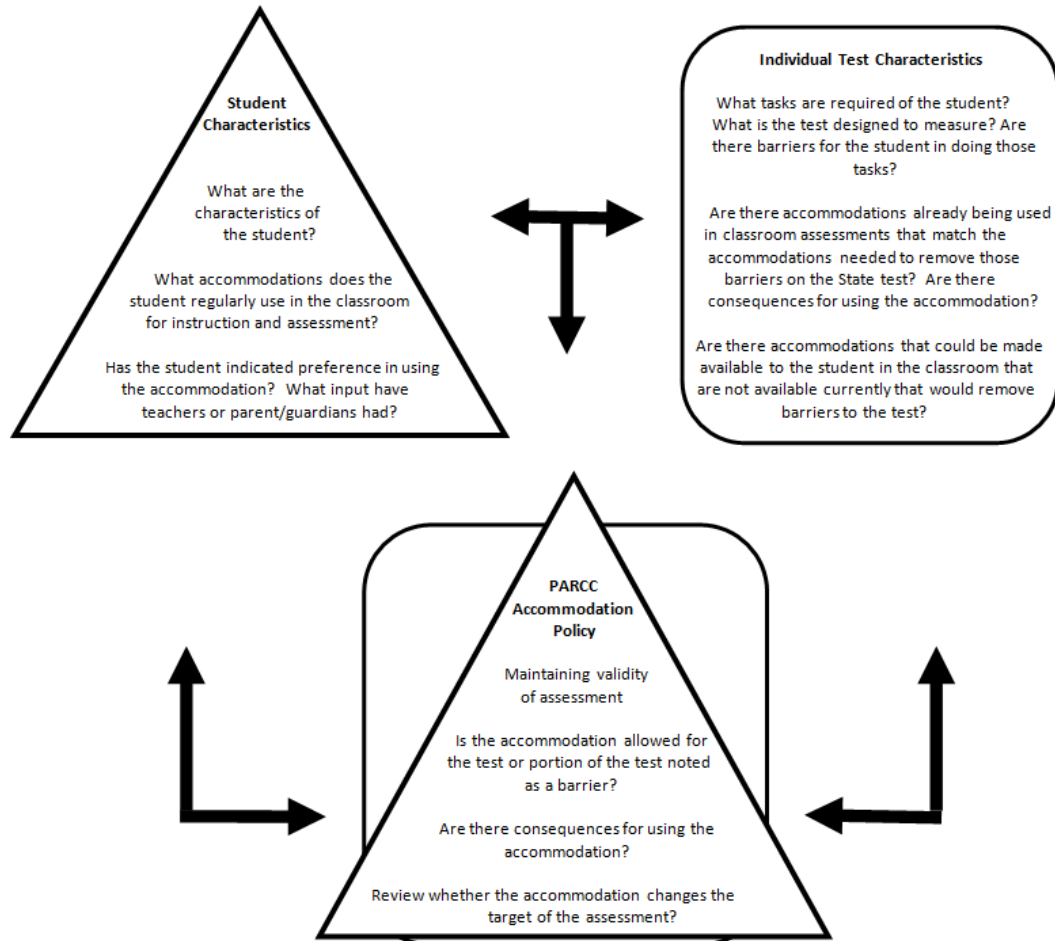
The decision-making process for selecting PARCC assessment accommodations for students with disabilities, English learners, and English learners with disabilities should include consideration of at least the following three factors:

**Factor 1:** Student characteristics and learning needs (e.g., disabilities, language proficiency, accommodations used in classroom instruction/assessments to access and perform in academic standards and State tests)

**Factor 2:** Individual test characteristics (i.e., knowledge about what tasks are required on PARCC assessments and ways to remove physical and other barriers to students’ ability to perform those tasks)

**Factor 3:** PARCC accommodations policies that maintain the validity of assessment results.

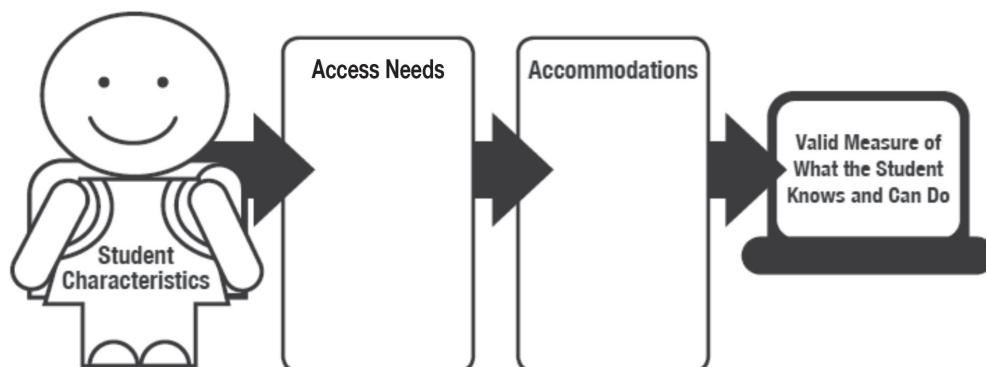
**Figure 1. Considerations When Making Decisions for Assessment Accommodations**



### Decision-Making Process – Factor #1: Student Characteristics and Learning Needs

Accommodations should be selected based on the individual student’s learning characteristics linguistic needs (as appropriate), and the student’s ability to benefit from strategies that support and remove barriers to learning.

Figure 2. Student Characteristics and Learning Needs



### Decision-Making Process – Factor #2: Individual Test Characteristics

It is important to examine the tasks students are being asked to do on the PARCC assessments by asking the following questions:

- What are the characteristics of the test that the student needs to take and what will the tasks and items look like?
- Are the test tasks similar to classroom assessment tasks, and does the student have the opportunity to practice similar tasks prior to testing?
- Does the student use an accommodation for a classroom task that is allowed for similar tasks on the PARCC tests?
- Do other barriers exist that could be removed by using an accommodation that is not already offered or used by the student?

### Decision-Making Process – Factor #3: PARCC Accommodations Policies That Maintain the Validity of Assessment Results

It will be important for educators, parents, and teams selecting accommodations for the PARCC assessments to review the test security, test administration, and test accommodation policies in order to determine whether the accommodation is allowed on the PARCC test(s), and if there will be any consequences for the school, district, or student if the accommodation is used. For example, if certain instructional accommodations are used for testing, the validity of test results may be compromised if the accommodation involves modifying the test, giving assistance to the student to respond to questions during testing, or providing an accommodation that gives the student an unfair advantage on all or part of the test. Test policies must be reviewed thoroughly before accommodations are selected for the assessments, and any discrepancies between instructional and assessment accommodations communicated to the parent and the educators working with the student,

### Questions to Guide Accommodation Selection

Teams should use the questions below to guide the selection of appropriate accommodations for SWDs:

- What are the student’s learning strengths and challenges, and are these based on language needs, a disability, or both?
- How do the student’s learning and/or language needs affect the achievement of grade level CCSS?
- What specialized instruction, if any (e.g., learning strategies, organizational skills, reading skills) is required by the student to achieve grade-level CCSS?
- Which accommodations are regularly used by the student during instruction and assessments?
- Which new accommodations, if any, would increase the student’s access to instruction and assessment by addressing the student’s learning needs and reducing the effects of the student’s disability?
- Should an existing accommodation be implemented differently?
- What were the outcomes when accommodations were used and when they were not used during classroom assignments and on assessments?
- What is the student’s perception of how well an accommodation “works”?
- What difficulties did the student experience when using accommodations?
- What are the perceptions of parents, teachers, and specialists about the effectiveness of accommodation?
- Should the student continue to use an accommodation “as is,” are changes needed, or should the use of the accommodation be discontinued?

The following should also be considered in the selection of accommodations:

- Whether the accommodation is respectful of a student’s age and grade (e.g., older students may prefer accommodations provided through use of technology, rather than those administered by an adult);
- Student’s willingness to learn to use the accommodation;
- Explicit instruction in how to use the accommodation in classroom and testing settings; and
- The conditions for use of the accommodation on PARCC assessments.

### Selecting Accessibility Features and Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

To ensure that students with disabilities are engaged in standards-based instruction and assessments, all IEP/504 team members should be knowledgeable about the CCSS and the PARCC assessments. Effective decision-making on the provision of appropriate accommodations and accessibility features begins with gathering and reviewing information about the student’s disability, present level of academic achievement, and functional performance in relation to the CCSS. The process of selecting accommodations is one in which members of the IEP/504 team attempt to remove barriers and “level the playing field” for a student with a disability so he or she can participate in the general education curriculum. Team meetings should include discussions about providing the student equal learning opportunities, and identifying practices and approaches intended to help the student overcome learning obstacles during instruction and assessment.



Test accommodations should not be broadly assigned to all students with the same disability. Accommodations should be selected based on the student’s learning preferences, previous record of success using the accommodation, disability-related needs, and level of the student’s comfort using the accommodation in question. The selected accommodations must be listed in the student’s IEP or 504 plan and consistently provided in the classroom in order to obtain useful feedback on their effectiveness. Providing accommodations that the student does not need may actually adversely impact his or her performance on the test and interfere with the test’s ability to measure the student’s achievement. IEP and 504 teams should consider whether the recommended accommodation(s):

- Are necessary to access the test items;
- Have been useful to other students with similar profiles; and
- Will negatively affect the integrity, validity, and security of the assessment.

### **Individuals Involved in Selecting Accessibility Features and Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

The role of key individuals and suggestions for carrying out their respective responsibilities are described below. All IEP/504 team members should provide information and perspectives for the entire team to consider during team meetings regarding the selection, implementation, and evaluation of appropriate accommodations.

#### **Students**

Students can provide valuable information to the IEP or 504 Team on their strengths and areas of challenge, the effectiveness of the accommodations they use, and their degree of comfort in using them. This information can greatly assist team decision-making regarding which accommodations to recommend. Including students in decision-making will enhance their self-advocacy, their understanding of the need for the accommodation, and may result in an increased willingness to use the accommodation consistently. Students can also signal when they are outgrowing the need for an accommodation.

#### **School Administrator (Principal/Assistant Principal)**

The school administrator promotes the expectation that students with disabilities are capable learners who can and will achieve at high levels in all local, State, and PARCC assessments if they are included in high-quality standards-based instruction. The principal is responsible for:

- implementing the district’s policies that provide equal access to instructional and assessment programs for all students;
- ensuring that test accommodations are fully, consistently, and appropriately implemented during the administration of PARCC assessments, as specified in each student’s IEP or 504 plan; and
- exercising leadership and discretion in resolving circumstances in which last-minute changes occur in a student’s status, for example:
  - allowing test accommodations for a student with a recently occurring disability that interferes with test performance, such as facilitating the provision of a scribe on the test for a student who recently fractured his or her writing arm.



Principals should be familiar with the policies and procedures outlined in the *PARCC Test Administration Manual* and the *PARCC Accessibility Features & Accommodations Manual*.

### **General Educator (Content Area Teacher)**

General education teachers are important team members who should be familiar with and knowledgeable of the accommodations required by each student, and how to administer them appropriately.

The general education teacher plays an active and significant role in the determination and use of instructional and testing accommodations for SWDs. General educators are familiar with curriculum content and the purposes of the PARCC assessments. In collaboration with special education teachers, general educators provide appropriate instructional and test accommodations to ensure that students with disabilities have full access to the programs and services that are available to their nondisabled peers. The results of the assessments, in turn, can provide teachers with information that will support individual students in achieving the CCSS.

### **Special Educator**

The special education teacher plays an important role in providing information on how to match the learning characteristics of many students with disabilities to the appropriate instructional and testing accommodations, ensuring that the student is able to demonstrate his or her knowledge and skills without barriers or restrictions due to his or her disability.

### **Related Service Providers**

Related service providers, such as speech-language pathologists, school psychologists, physical therapists, and occupational therapists, serve vital roles in supporting the education of SWDs in school environments. As members of IEP teams (and 504 teams, as appropriate), related service providers can lend their unique expertise and perspectives to discuss how to improve learning for students with disabilities.

### **Parents/Guardians**

Students who use accommodations will often need them at home, in the community, and as they get older, in postsecondary education and at work. Parents are familiar with the strengths and needs of their children and can provide valuable information to enhance discussions about the appropriateness of selected instructional and test accommodations. Parents also have information and perspectives on the strategies their child uses routinely to complete homework assignments and other tasks around the home. To enable parents to participate in meaningful discussions, it is important that they receive information about the:

- Need and rationale for testing accommodations;
- Types of available test accommodations and how tests will be administered; and
- Purpose of tests, what they measure, and how the results will be used.

### **Documenting Accommodations on a Student's IEP**

For students with disabilities served under IDEA, determining appropriate instructional and assessment accommodations should not pose any particular problems for IEP teams that follow good IEP team practices. With information obtained from the required summary of the student's "present levels of academic achievement and functional performance," the decision of identifying and documenting

accommodations is a fairly straightforward process. The term “present levels of achievement and functional performance” refers to a federal requirement in which IEP team members must state “how the child’s disability affects the child’s involvement and progress in the general education curriculum—the same curriculum as nondisabled children” [20 USC § 1414(d)(1)(A)(i)(I)].

There are three areas in which accommodations can potentially be addressed in the IEP:

1. “Participation in Assessments” [20 USC § 1412(a)(16)]. This section of the IEP documents accommodations needed to facilitate the participation of students with disabilities in State and district assessments.
2. “Consideration of Special Factors” [20 USC § 1414(d)(3)(B)]. This is where communication and assistive technology supports are considered.
3. “Supplementary Aids and Services” [20 USC §1401(33)and 20 USC §1414(d)(1)(A)(i)]. This area of the IEP includes “aids, services, and other supports that are provided in regular education classes or other education related settings to enable students with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled students to the maximum extent appropriate.

### **Documenting Accommodations on a Student’s 504 Plan**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, specifies that no otherwise qualified person with a disability shall, solely by reason of his or her disability, be excluded from participating in federally-funded programs or activities, including elementary, secondary, or postsecondary schooling. “Disability” in this context refers to a “physical, sensory, or mental impairment, which substantially limits one or more major life activities.” This can include physical impairments; illnesses or injuries; communicable diseases; chronic conditions like asthma, allergies and diabetes; and learning problems. A 504 plan spells out the accommodations that will be needed for these students to have an opportunity to *access* the test to the same extent as his/her nondisabled peers, and might include such things as wheelchair ramps, blood sugar monitoring, interpreting/transliteration services, preferential seating, an extra set of textbooks, a peanut-free lunch environment, home instruction, or a tape recorder or keyboard for taking notes.

Each student who meets the eligibility guidelines for accommodations under Section 504 will have a Section 504 plan developed for him/her to use in school. The plan specifies the nature of the impairment, the major life activity affected by the impairment, accommodations necessary to meet the student’s needs, and the person(s) responsible for implementing the accommodations. It is recommended that accommodations be listed separately in the 504 plan for instruction and for assessments, since they may differ or be allowed for one and not the other.

### **Selecting Accommodations and Accessibility Features for English Learners**

Determining appropriate linguistic support for English learners during classroom instruction and on assessments is facilitated by gathering and reviewing information about the student and the student’s level of performance in relation to district and state academic standards and current English language proficiency level. The process of determining the amount and types of instructional and assessment supports involves attempts by members of the educational team to remove barriers and “level the playing field” for the student so that he or she can participate in the general education curriculum and assessments.

Decisions about test accommodations for English learners should be made by a group of individuals familiar with the student who can identify the appropriate accommodations for each English learner. In some states, this is called an “English learner team;” in other states, it will be an informal group of educators familiar with the student who makes accommodations decisions. In either case, the educators working with the student should document the accommodations made available to the student.

Individuals involved in the decision-making process may include any of the following:

### **Students**

Students can provide valuable information on their strengths and areas of challenge based on linguistic needs, the effectiveness of the accommodations they use, if any, and their degree of comfort in using them. This information can greatly assist decision-making regarding which accommodations to recommend. Including students in decision-making will enhance their self-advocacy, their understanding of the need for the accommodation, and may result in an increased willingness to use the accommodation consistently. Students can also signal when they are outgrowing the need for an accommodation due to their maturation or increased language proficiency.

### **ESL/Bilingual Educator**

The ESL/bilingual teacher can apply his or her knowledge of teaching language with familiarity with the individual student’s linguistic needs to devise strategies and supports that accelerate learning the English language.

### **School Administrator (Principal/Assistant Principal)**

The school administrator promotes the expectation that English learner students are capable learners who can and will achieve at high levels in all local, State, and PARCC assessments if they are included in high-quality standards-based instruction. The principal is responsible for:

- implementing the district’s policies that provide equal access to instructional and assessment programs and resources for all students;
- ensuring that test accommodations are fully, consistently, and appropriately implemented during the administration of PARCC assessments; and
- exercising leadership and discretion in resolving circumstances in which last-minute changes occur in a student’s status, for example:
  - allowing a student to be tested in a separate setting apart from other students.

### **General Educator (Content Area Teacher)**

General education teachers are important team members who should be familiar with and knowledgeable of the linguistic accommodations required by each student, and how to administer them appropriately. They are familiar with curriculum content and the purposes of the PARCC assessments. In collaboration with ESL/bilingual teachers (and special education teachers, if appropriate), general educators provide appropriate instructional and test accommodations to ensure that English learners have full access to the programs and services that are available to their nondisabled peers. The results of the assessments, in turn, can provide teachers with information that will support individual students in achieving the CCSS.

### **Special Educator**

If the English learner student has a disability, the special education teacher plays an important role in providing information on how to match the learning characteristics of students to the appropriate instructional and testing accommodations, ensuring that the student is able to demonstrate his or her knowledge and skills without barriers or restrictions due to his or her disability.

### **Parents/Guardians**

Students who use accommodations will often need them at home, in the community, and as they get older, in postsecondary education and at work. Parents are familiar with the strengths and needs of their children and can provide valuable information to enhance discussions about the appropriateness of selected instructional and test accommodations. Parents also have information and perspectives on the strategies their child uses routinely to complete homework assignments and other tasks around the home. To enable parents to participate in meaningful discussions, it is important that they receive information about the:

- Need and rationale for testing accommodations;
- Types of available test accommodations and how tests will be administered; and
- Purpose of tests, what they measure, and how the results will be used.

Educators responsible for selecting accommodations for English learners can use the guidance found in this section to make appropriate decisions on assigning accommodations and accessibility features to English learners in their PNP. To be effective, accommodations must address the unique linguistic needs of the students for whom they are provided and should assist the student in overcoming the language barriers that prevent him or her from learning in the classroom and accessing the content of the PARCC tests. Educators should also review and select appropriate accessibility features available for English learners on the computer-delivered PARCC assessments and design a PNP for the student.

Decision-making teams are encouraged to determine and assign accommodations to English learners as early as possible in the school year to ensure that the student is familiar with their use. Accommodations should be evaluated over time for their effectiveness. The student should not be introduced to an accommodation on the day of the assessment.

### **Guidelines for Selecting Appropriate Accommodations and Accessibility Features for English Learners**

Because English learner status itself is transitional in nature, there are accommodations specific to English learners that provide different degrees and types of linguistic support to English learners as they progress through beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels of English language proficiency. Appropriate accommodations enable English learners to more effectively demonstrate their knowledge of the content.

The following process can be used to select accommodations for English learners:

1. The classroom teacher examines the types of support that help a student access the curriculum, and tries them out to determine whether they meet the student's needs: *Does the accommodation help the student overcome the barrier posed by his/her developing English language proficiency? Is the student comfortable using the accommodation or support?*

The student's teacher should observe the student in the classroom (or range of classrooms/school settings) using the accommodation(s) and inform members of the team of educators selecting accommodations as to which accommodations are most appropriate and

effective.

2. The teacher should document and provide information on a student's use of linguistic accommodations during classroom instruction and assessment.<sup>23</sup>
3. Once classroom information and data are compiled about the student's background, instructional needs, and use of the accommodation(s), the educators selecting accommodations for the English learner can help the classroom teacher and student evaluate whether to continue using the accommodation and/or suggest additional accommodations, supports, or approaches that may be effective for use with the student.

Based on the accommodations used successfully in the classroom, and the list of Allowable Accommodations for English Learners on PARCC Assessments, educators can select appropriate accommodations for use on the PARCC assessments.

The considerations shown in the following box should also be used to match each English learner's unique linguistic needs with PARCC English learner accommodations:

**When selecting accommodations for English learners, consider the student's**

- 1. Level of English language proficiency (ELP) on the state ELP test**
  - Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced
- 2. Literacy development in the native language**
  - Native language literacy
  - Interrupted schooling/literacy background
- 3. Background factors that impact effective accommodations use**
  - Grade/age
  - Affective filter (i.e., level of student anxiety/comfort with English)
  - Time in U.S. schools

Additional considerations for selecting accommodations are described below.

**1. Level of English language proficiency (ELP) on state ELP test.**

Determine the student's Composite ELP Level based on the overall performance level on the state's ELP performance test, as shown in Table 6, and select appropriate English learner accommodations for each content area assessment that is most likely to benefit students at that ELP level.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Note: PARCC will release tools to support the documentation process.

<sup>24</sup> The considerations for determining level of English language proficiency may be modified as states move toward adoption of a common English learner definition in the future.

**Table 6. Composite ELP Levels Linked with Commonly-Used State English Proficiency Assessments<sup>25</sup>**

WIDA ACCESS for ELLs <sup>®</sup> English Language Proficiency (ELP) Levels		Proficiency Levels on individual State’s English proficiency tests (approximate)	Composite ELP Level (Acosta et al., 2008)
Level 1	Entering	Level 1	Beginning
Level 2	Emerging	Level 2	
Level 3	Developing	Level 3	Intermediate
Level 4	Expanding	Level 4	
Level 5	Bridging	Level 5	Advanced
Level 6	Reaching	Level 6	

**Guidelines for Matching Accommodations to a Student’s Overall ELP Level**

**English learners with Beginning ELP**

English learners at the beginning level have very limited proficiency in reading and writing. These students tend to experience the greatest need for accommodations but are often least equipped to use them. In general, the use of oral supports (in English) is recommended, rather than written accommodations, but even oral accommodations may not produce an effect for students at the lowest proficiency levels.

**English learners with Intermediate ELP**

English learners at the Intermediate level typically have developed *some* literacy in English and can benefit from a wider range of written and oral accommodations. Decision makers should note that the need for accommodations at this level varies considerably depending upon the unique background and characteristics of the student, as well as the literacy demands of the test. Research suggests that native language accommodations, such as bilingual word-to-word dictionaries, as well as English-language accommodations, are useful at the Intermediate level. Where possible, and as needed, it may be beneficial to have *selected portions* of the text on the mathematics assessments read aloud to these students. Scribing responses may also be appropriate for these students.

**English learners with Advanced ELP**

English learners at the advanced level would be expected to have a decreased need for most accommodations. Native language support such as bilingual word-to-word dictionaries (and extra time to use them) may be helpful if the English learner is literate in his/her native language and has received recent instruction in that language (whether in the United States or abroad).

**2. Literacy development in English and/or the native language**

Factors that influence the selection of accommodations include the following:

<sup>25</sup> Many States use WIDA ACCESS for ELLs<sup>®</sup> and ELDA ELP assessments to determine English language proficiency.

- **Native Language Literacy**  
For students with literacy in their native language, consider providing the student with a **word-to-word bilingual dictionary**, along with **extended time** in which to use it.
- **Interrupted Schooling/Literacy Background**  
For students who have experienced interrupted formal education and, as a result, have comparatively low levels of literacy in both their native language and in English, it is likely that the English learner will be more oral-dominant in his/her developing English language proficiency. In this case, consider providing the English learner with **oral language support** accommodations that are more likely to benefit English learners at the Beginning ELP, such as **verbatim reading of the mathematics assessment**.

### 3. Background factors that impact effective usage of accommodations

Select accommodations based on the background of the student that increase the likelihood that use of the accommodation will be successful. Such factors include: grade/age of student, time in U.S. schools, and the affective needs of the student (i.e., comfort level and/or anxiety with English). In addition, the following may also impact a student's ability to use and benefit from English learner accommodations:

- Students who have recently arrived in the U.S. will need to gain familiarity with U.S. testing practices and expectations.
- Anxiety can increase the student's "affective filter" and adversely impact test performance.
- Older students may refuse an accommodation because they do not want to draw attention to themselves in front of classmates for receiving special attention or consideration.

### Eligibility for English Learner Accommodations

Only students currently classified as English learners (or ELL, LEP) are eligible to receive accommodations designated for English learners on PARCC assessments, including students classified as English learners whose parent/guardian has refused language support program services. Please refer to Section 4 for accommodations that are allowable on PARCC assessments for English learners.

### Selecting Accommodations for English Learners with Disabilities

English learners with disabilities are eligible for accommodations allowed for English learners, as well as accommodations allowed for students with disabilities. The Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 plan team should collaborate with school English learner (i.e., language) staff and evaluation professionals to determine the English language development needs of an English learner with an identified disability. An English learner with a disability that affects his/her language acquisition may need support from staff who provide both language services and special education.

Making accommodations selection decisions in isolation can result in providing inappropriate accommodations to the student. Therefore, an English learner staff familiar with the student should be a member of, or collaborate with, the IEP or 504 team in order to:

- Determine the appropriate accommodation(s) that address both the student's linguistic needs and disability;
- Discuss the effective implementation of the accommodations; and
- Determine the effectiveness of such accommodations.



## **Step 4: Administer Accommodations during Assessments**

### **Planning to Administer Accommodations during PARCC Assessments**

Once decisions have been made about which accommodations will be provided, the logistics of providing the accommodations during PARCC assessments must be coordinated well ahead of the test administration. It is important to engage the appropriate personnel in planning the logistics regarding the provision of assessment accommodations on test day. A list (e.g., table, grid, spreadsheet, or chart) should be compiled with the names of students, the accommodations they require, test locations, and staff responsible for administering tests with accommodations. Special educators and English language educators are often given the responsibility for arranging, coordinating, and providing assessment accommodations in a school and to assist general educators to understand how to properly provide specific accommodations. It is essential for test administrators to know and understand the requirements for providing accommodations on PARCC assessments. Staff administering accommodations such as reading aloud the test or scribing responses must adhere to specific guidelines so that accommodations are administered correctly and given to the correct students so that scores are valid. Test administrators should also anticipate whether a student will be allowed extra time to complete the test once the official testing time is ended and where the student will continue to work after other students have completed the test.

For the computer-delivered PARCC assessments, school staff, including members of the IEP, 504, or EL team, will need to program a student's Personal Needs Profile (PNP) ahead of time to "turn on" all necessary accessibility features and accommodations to ensure that errors are minimized in providing accommodations on test day. Finally, it is important to monitor the provision of accommodations on test day to ensure that accommodations are delivered properly and that the technology is operating appropriately.

### **Involving Students in Using Accommodations**

The more students are involved in the accommodation selection process, the more likely the accommodations will be used, especially as students reach adolescence and the desire to be more independent increases. Students need self-advocacy skills to learn how to make certain those accommodations are provided on the assessments, in instructional settings, and outside of school. Teachers and other team members can play a key role in working with students to advocate for themselves in the context of using their accommodations.

### **Introducing the Student to Accommodations**

Whether the student has a disability, is an English learner, or both, accommodations should be introduced to the student long before the PARCC tests are administered, during routine instruction to determine their effectiveness. Accommodations should never be used for the first time on a state test. It is important that the following steps occur before the test is administered:

- Plan time for the student to learn how to use the accommodation.
- Practice using accommodations in a technology-based setting, if the assessment will be given using a computer or other technology.
- Plan for the evaluation and possible revision of the accommodation(s).

### Monitoring Accommodations Use by PARCC States

Most PARCC states currently collect information on which accommodations were used on State tests by individual students. However, PARCC states differ as to how accommodations monitoring occurs. In some PARCC states, representatives may visit schools to monitor testing procedures and observe the use of accommodations to ensure they are implemented appropriately. In other states, districts require their own trained staff to observe and report on accommodations provided during instruction and assessment. In still other states, test administration and accommodations discrepancies are reported to the state and result in the investigation of the irregularities.



Gathering information on accommodations use may be simplified on technology-based assessments since the accommodations are “programmed” into the system. However, educators and teams selecting accommodations at the local level should decide in advance what questions should be answered through the collection of accommodations data in order to apply resources effectively in the future.

### Step 5: Evaluate and Improve Accommodations Use

It will be necessary to collect and analyze data on the use and effectiveness of accommodations to ensure that the participation of all students in State and district assessments is meaningful, and to carefully document decisions and information on the selection, use, and evaluation of accommodations. Data on the use and impact of accommodations during assessments may support continuing to use some accommodations while rethinking others, and may also reveal patterns of accommodation use in a school or district. Examination of the data may also indicate areas in which the IEP, 504, and English learner teams and/or test administrators need additional training and support.

Observations conducted during test administration, interviews with test administrators, and talking with students after testing is likely to yield data that can be useful in guiding the formative evaluation process of accommodations use at the school, district, and student levels. Information on the use of accommodations is collected through coding on the PARCC assessment answer documents, along with other demographic information in each PARCC member state. The following questions should guide the analysis of accommodations data at the school, district, and student level.

#### Questions to Guide Evaluation of Accommodation Use at the School and District Levels

1. Are procedures in place to ensure that test administration procedures are not compromised due to provision of accommodations?
2. Are students receiving accommodations as documented in their IEP, 504 plan, English learner plan, or other documentation used for English learners?
3. Are procedures in place to ensure that test administrators comply with directions for the administration of accommodations?
4. What is the frequency of use of different types of accommodations?

#### Involving Students in Evaluating Accommodations

Students need opportunities to learn which accommodations are most helpful for them, and then need self-advocacy skills to learn how to make certain those accommodations are provided in all instructional settings and outside of school. It is critical for students with disabilities, English learners, and English learners with disabilities to understand their disabilities and learn self-advocacy strategies for success in school and throughout life.

Teachers and other team members can play a key role in working with students to help them advocate for themselves in determining ultimately which accommodations will be effective.

### Questions to Guide Evaluation at the Student Level

1. What accommodations are used by the student during instruction and assessments?
2. What are the results of classroom assignments and assessments when accommodations are used versus when accommodations are not used?
3. If the student is not meeting the expected levels of performance, is it because he or she is not receiving access to the necessary instruction; did not receive the accommodation; or is using an accommodation that was not effective?
4. What is the student's perception of how well the accommodation worked?
5. What combination of accommodations seems to be effective?
6. What are the perceptions of teachers, parents, and others about how the accommodation appears to be working?
7. What difficulties, if any, were encountered in the use of the accommodation(s)?

The responses to these questions can guide an ongoing (formative) process to evaluate the use and effectiveness of accommodations used by students. It is critical that, to the extent possible, all individuals involved in accommodations selection and delivery be involved in gathering information and making subsequent decisions on whether to continue, modify, or discontinue the use of an accommodation.