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

THIRD EDITION

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

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

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) is a group of states working together to develop a set of assessments that measure whether students are on track to be successful in college and their careers. These high-quality, computer-based K-12 assessments in mathematics and English language arts (ELA)/literacy give schools, teachers, students, and parents better information on whether students are on track in their learning and for success after high school, and tools to help teachers customize learning to meet student needs. The first full administration of the PARCC assessments will occur during the 2014-2015 school year.

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Third Edition

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Third Edition

This is the third edition of the *PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual* (fall 2014). The *PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual* (the "Manual") will continue to be revised as research is conducted during the early years of PARCC assessment administration. This iterative process will ensure that the accessibility features and 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 guidance on the accessibility features and accommodations for the PARCC Diagnostic Assessment and Speaking and Listening Assessment is forthcoming. This third edition of the Manual includes additional information on the Personal Needs Profile, assessment administration, and specifics on the availability of accessibility features and accommodations during the first full administration of the PARCC assessments.

Throughout this edition of the *PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual,* attention is focused on providing accessibility features and accommodations using the PARCC technology platform. However, the need for administration of paper-based assessments remains for certain students who require this format and presentation of the assessment. Details on accessibility features and accommodations for students taking paper-based assessments can be found in Appendix A: Accessibility Features and Accommodations for Students Taking the Paper-Based PARCC Assessments.

Background

Audience and Purpose

Developed by the PARCC states, the third 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 states regard assessments as tools for enhancing teaching and learning. PARCC is 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, 21st century assessments. By applying principles of universal design, leveraging technology, embedding accessibility features, and allowing a broad range of accommodations, PARCC provides opportunities for the widest possible number of students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. PARCC sets and maintains high expectations that all students will have access to the full range of grade-level and course content standards. Additionally, the PARCC states created and adopted common policies for accessibility features, accommodations, and participation in PARCC assessments. Together, these elements will increase student access to PARCC assessments, 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 the 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 the assessments;
- Building accessibility throughout the test 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 third 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 students to address their individual learning needs, and that accommodations are provided to eligible students (including students with disabilities, English learners, and English learners with disabilities); and
- Accessibility features and accommodations used on PARCC assessments are generally consistent with those used in daily instruction.

This manual provides information on the accessibility features and accommodations that will be available during the PARCC assessments, based on careful review of the following:

- Current[1] and field test research on effective practices for assessing diverse student groups and backgrounds (including needs of students with disabilities and English learners, culture, region, linguistic needs, dialect, and socio-economic background);
- Feedback from PARCC state leads and state experts on students with disabilities and English learners;
- Content experts; and
- National technical advisors on PARCC's Technical Working Group for Accessibility, Accommodations, and Fairness.

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

How PARCC Member States Set Policy

PARCC is a consortium of states working together to develop a set of common assessments that measure whether students are on track to be successful in college and their careers. The PARCC Governing Board, comprised of the K-12 chief state school officer from each Governing State, makes all major policy and operational decisions on behalf of the consortium. State education agency experts from all PARCC Governing States lead the policy and content development, and management of the PARCC assessment system.

Key policies set by the Governing Board, with input of working groups comprised of representatives from the PARCC member states, include:

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

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[1] 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. Refer to the reference list for the research foundation for this Manual.

Structure of the PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual

The Manual consists of the following sections:

Background and Introduction

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 and Accessibility Features for All Students Taking the 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 and English Learners: This section outlines the accommodations for students with disabilities and English learners taking the PARCC assessments.

Section 4: Decision-Making Process for Selecting, Using, and Evaluating Accessibility Features and Accommodations 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 and Course Academic Content Standards;
- **Learn** About Accessibility Features and Accommodations;
- **Select** Accessibility Features and Accommodations for Individual Students;
- **Administer** Accessibility Features and Accommodations during Assessments; and
- **Evaluate** and Improve Accessibility Features and Accommodations Use.

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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 Common Core State Standards (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.

The PARCC assessment system includes five components:

- 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 for ELA/Literacy only: *Optional, non-summative, flexible administration*
- Performance-Based Assessment for ELA/Literacy and Mathematics: *Required, summative, administered after approximately 75% of instruction*
- End-of-Year Assessment for ELA/Literacy and Mathematics: *Required, summative, administered after approximately 90% of instruction*

Formative Tools
Designed to pinpoint learning needed to inform instruction during the school year

Diagnostic Assessments

Mid-Year / Interim Assessments

Speaking & Listening Assessments

End-of-Year Assessment
- ELA/L – reading, vocabulary
- Math – concepts & short applications

Performance-Based Assessment
- ELA/L - writing to sources
- Math - reasoning & modeling

Summative Assessments
PBA and EOY results are combined to report student achievement and growth
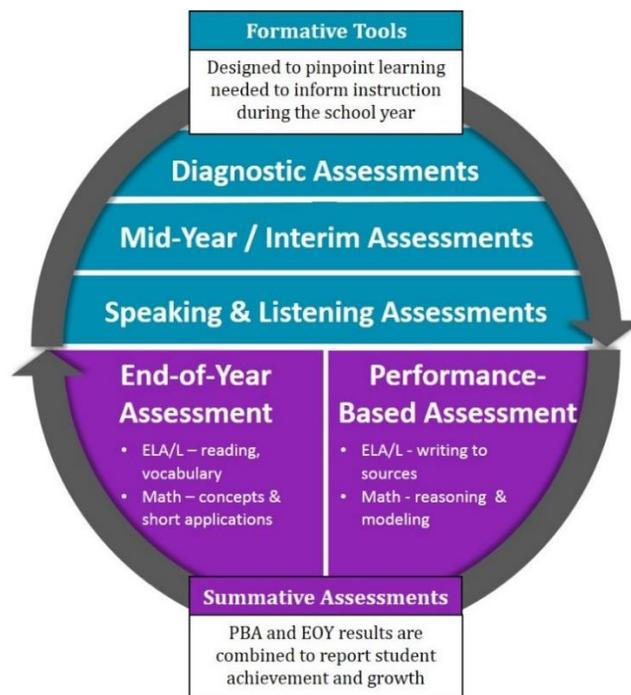
The PARCC summative assessments in English language arts/literacy and mathematics will include a rich set of performance-based tasks that address a long-standing concern among educators about large-scale student assessments: that they have been unable to capture some of the most important skills that 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 parents 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, 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-performing and underperforming students. To effectively carry out the PARCC design, summative assessments in both content areas will be administered in two components:

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

Scores from the PBA and EOY components will be combined to produce an overall performance level score. Performance level scores will be reported according to five levels. More information about the PARCC performance levels can be found by visiting http://www.parcconline.org/policies-and-guidance.

PARCC ELA/Literacy Assessments
The ELA/literacy PBA at each grade level will include three tasks: a literary analysis, a research simulation, and a narrative task. For each task, students will be asked to read or view 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). PARCC will use both printed and multimedia texts. The ELA/literacy EOY 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 drive the design of the PARCC ELA/literacy summative assessments.

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 PBA 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 assessments.

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-level/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
  - o Where helpful making sense of problems and persevering to solve them (MP.1);
  - o Reasoning abstractly and quantitatively (MP.2);
  - o Using appropriate tools strategically (MP.5);
  - o Looking for and making use of structure (MP.7); and/or
  - o Looking for and expressing regularity in repeated reasoning (MP.8).

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 Accessible Portable Item Profile (APIP) and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0. PARCC has released technology guidelines to inform schools and districts as they make technology decisions to best meet the instructional and assessment needs of their students.

The PARCC Technology Guidelines can be found here: http://www.parcconline.org/technology

Participation Guidelines for PARCC Assessments

All students, including students with disabilities and English learners, are required to participate in statewide assessments and have their 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 4), and certain students with disabilities who have been identified by the Individualized Education Program team to take their state's alternate assessment. All other students will participate in the PARCC ELA/literacy and mathematics performance-based and end-of-year 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 is summarized in Appendix K: Legal Background. Please consult your state's assessment department to determine which alternate and English language proficiency assessments are offered in your state.

All students can receive accessibility features on PARCC assessments.

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

1. **Students with disabilities who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP);**
2. **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;
3. **Students who are English learners;** and
4. **Students who are English learners 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.
- **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." Legal language is included in Appendix K: Legal Background.
- **Former English learner:** A student who is no longer classified as an English learner, although progress will continue to be tracked for two years after they have achieved the standards of fluency as identified by the state English proficiency assessment.

General Testing Procedures

For information about coordinating or administering the PARCC assessments, including test security policies, administration procedures, and tasks to complete before, during, and after testing, refer to the *Test Coordinator Manual* and the *Test Administrator Manuals.* Manuals specific to the fall block administration are available now at http://parcc.pearson.com/. Manuals specific to the spring administration of the PARCC assessments will be available mid-December.

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.[2] Universal design[3] 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

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[2] Maryland State Board of Education. (2011). "A Route for Every Learner Report."

[3] 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).

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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.:

> 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.[4]

Universal design emphasizes that in order to increase access, assessment designers cannot use a "one size fits all" approach, but must build in and 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.[5]

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[4] 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

[5] Thompson, Johnstone, & Thurlow (2002). The National Center for Educational Outcomes (NCEO).

- 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 item presentation, expression, and student engagement have been considered with regard to 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.

In addition to the universal design requirements, PARCC has provided item developers with comprehensive accessibility guidelines for writing items to ensure that all items/tasks 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 performance levels of students with disabilities and English learners, as well as the performance of their peers.

Universally designed general assessments cannot eliminate, but may reduce the need for accommodations and alternate assessments.

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 diverse students being assessed.

What are Accessibility Features?

On the PARCC computer-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 that include accessibility features are being made available for teacher and student use throughout the year.

To practice now, go to http://parcconline.org/practice-tests.

Accessibility Features Identified in Advance

A relatively small number of students will require additional accessibility features for their particular needs (e.g., changing the background or font color onscreen, or listening to text-to-speech for the mathematics assessments). 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.[6] Furthermore, the on-off controls for these features might distract some students if they were shown onscreen, or interfere with other features or accommodations. Therefore, some accessibility features will be selected ahead of time by students, in collaboration with educators, and based on the individual needs and preferences of the student. Students must practice using these features, either in a classroom or real world application or setting. Students can decide whether or not to use a pre-selected support, without any consequence to the student, school, or district.

Individualizing access needs on the assessment for each student 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.

The list of available PARCC accessibility features is provided in Table 1, which differentiates those that are available onscreen to all students, and those that must be identified in advance via a Personal Needs Profile.

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[6] 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 (PNP)?

The PNP is a collection of student information regarding a student's testing condition, materials, or accessibility features and accommodations that are needed to take a PARCC assessment.

Why Collect Student Information Prior to the Assessment?

Prior to the assessment, the following student information should be collected so students receive the appropriate accessibility features and accommodations on testing day:

1. Embedded accessibility features in the TestNav 8 online platform that need to be enabled for students during administration (e.g., color contrast [background/font color], text-to-speech for mathematics, etc.) *(via the PNP File Layout)*;
2. Embedded accommodations in the TestNav 8 online platform that need to be enabled for students during administration (e.g., ASL, closed captioning, text-to-speech for ELA/literacy, etc.) *(via the PNP File Layout)*
3. Externally-provided accessibility features identified in advance, and accommodations for students with disabilities and English learners *(via the PNP File Layout)*; and
4. Hard copy accommodated forms that require advance shipping (braille edition, paper-based edition, large print edition, etc.) *(via the Student Registration File).*

The PNP File Layout and the Student Registration File provide a record for school test coordinators and test administrators to ensure that students receive individualized accessibility features and accommodations during the assessments.

How is Information Collected for the PNP?

The PNP will be based on observations and stated preferences by the student or parent/guardian regarding a student's testing needs that have been determined to increase access during instruction and assessment. Observations based on a student's interaction with the online testing platform can be made during 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.

Process for Collecting PNP Information
- For *students with disabilities*, the IEP team or 504 plan coordinator will collect information to populate the student's PNP.
- For *English learners*, the educators responsible for selecting accommodations (or an English learner team, if available) will identify which accessibility features and accommodations should be identified in the student's PNP.
- For *English learners with disabilities*, the IEP team (which includes an adult familiar with the language needs of the student) or 504 plan coordinator will make decisions about which features and accommodations should be identified in the PNP.
- For students *without* disabilities, and who are *not* English learners, decisions about which accessibility features identified in advance (if any and if allowed) will be included in the student's PNP 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; and
  c. Student's primary educator in the subject of the assessment.

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An optional tool for educators to record information about a student who needs to use accessibility features and accommodations can be found online here: http://parcconline.org/parcc-accessibility-features-and-accommodations-manual. This tool can be used to capture the information needed to fill out a student's PNP File Layout.

How Do You Fill Out and Submit the PNP File Layout?

| Local educators/teams collect individual student data to populate the PNP | Local educators/teams capture individual student PNP data on the PARCC planning tool | Data are uploaded into the PNP File Layout and Student Registration File & submitted |
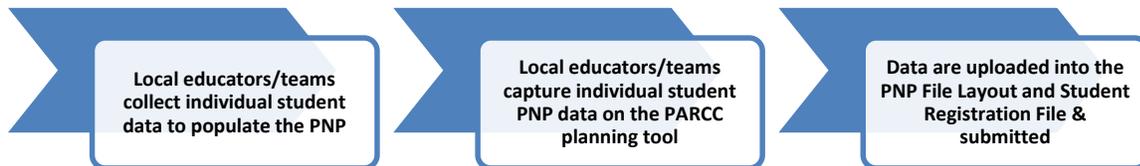
* Note: Refer to your state's specific policy on how student information will be captured.

- Step 1: Local educators/teams collect individual student data to populate the PNP
- Step 2: Local educators/teams capture individual student PNP data in a central location such as the PARCC planning tool.
- Step 3: The individual(s) responsible for student data upload at the school/district/state level receive the information from step 2 and upload the information into the PNP File Layout and the Student Registration File.

Note: States may choose to submit blank PNP File Layouts for students who require no accessibility features in advance and no accommodations.

Any paper-based accessibility feature or accommodation which requires materials to be shipped will need to be requested in the Student Registration File import. (e.g., large print, braille with tactile graphics, human reader or human signer for ELA/literacy Kits, paper test for online students, and Spanish paper mathematics assessments).

All other information in the student's PNP will be submitted via the PNP File Layout in PearsonAccess[next]. For guidance on how to upload student information in the PNP File Layout, refer to pages 4-12 of the Personal Needs Profile Field Definitions Version 1.0 document posted on http:/parcc.pearson.com.[7] Administrators with the appropriate access will also be able to manually enter PNP data via the User Interface in PearsonAccess[next] once a student's test registration is completed.

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[7] PARCC will also provide training on uploading student PNPs.

The PARCC Accessibility System
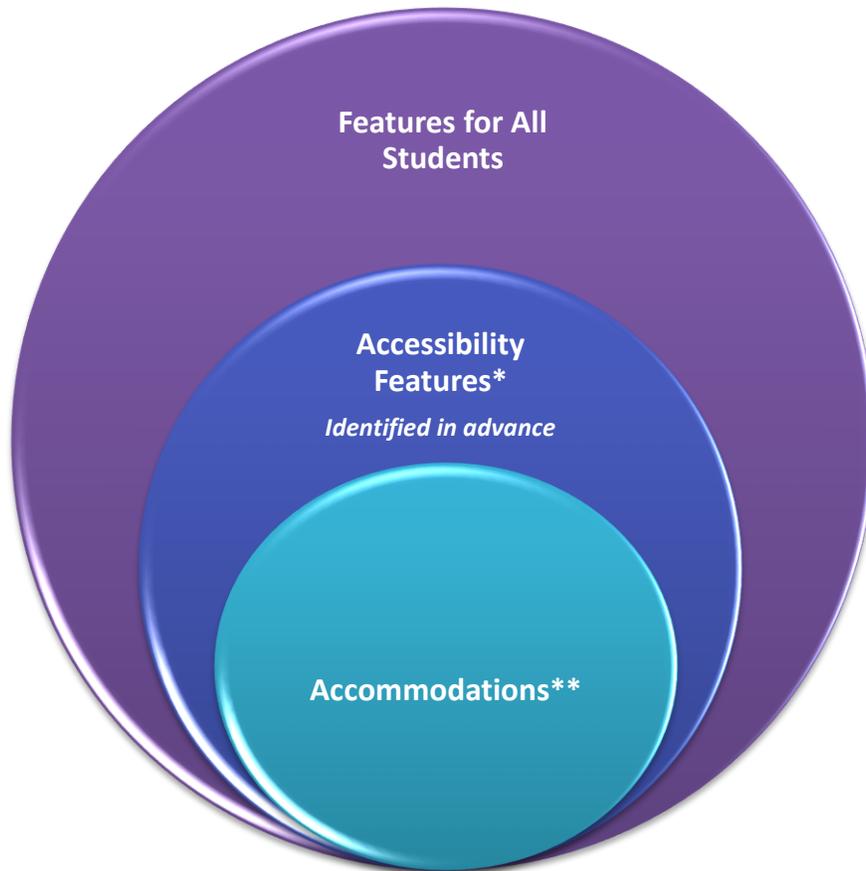
* Available to all participating students
**For students with disabilities, English learners, and English learners with disabilities

Accessibility Features for All Students

Table 1 lists the accessibility features that PARCC will make available to **all students**. These features are available through the online platform, or may be 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 of Table 1 must be identified in advance as part of the student's PNP when indicated as "Yes."

Table 1: Accessibility Features for All Students[8]

Support		Administration Guidelines	Identified in Advance in the PNP Online Layout *(During Test Registration Process)*
1a	**Answer Masking[9]**	The student electronically "covers" answer options, as needed. When enabled, answers will be masked. The student will uncover answer options when ready.	Yes
1b	**Audio Amplification**	The student raises or lowers the volume control, as needed, using headphones. Final volume must be set prior to testing. Student must be tested in a separate setting if unable to wear headphones.	
1c	**Color Contrast (Background/Font Color)**	Alternate onscreen background and/or font color is enabled via the PNP based on need or preference. Student can adjust during the assessment. Abc — Black on Cream Abc — Black on Light Blue Abc — Black on Light Magenta Abc — White on Black Abc — Light Blue on Dark Blue Abc — Gray on Green (Low Contrast)	Yes
1d	**Blank Paper (provided by test administrator)**	The student is provided blank scratch paper (graph, lined, or un-lined) to take notes and/or work through items during testing. Test Administrators must supply up to two pages total per student, per unit. Additional pages may be provided as needed.	

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

[9] PARCC is currently working on developing a general masking accessibility feature. When available, PARCC will update this policy document.

Support		Administration Guidelines	Identified in Advance in the PNP Online Layout *(During Test Registration Process)*
		In addition, students with visual impairments may also use braille paper, raised line paper, bold line paper, raised line graph paper, or bold line graph paper.	
1e	**Eliminate Answer Choices**	The student electronically "crosses out" possible answer choices (for multiple choice items only).	
1f	**Flag Items for Review**	The student electronically "flags" items to review later.	
1g	**General Administration Directions Clarified (by test administrator)**	The test administrator clarifies general administration directions only. No part of the test may be clarified, nor may any assistance be provided to the student during testing. For guidance, refer to the *Test Administrator Manuals*.	
1h	**General Administration Directions Read Aloud and Repeated as Needed (by test administrator)**	The test administrator reads aloud the general administration directions only. A student may raise his or her hand and request the directions be repeated. For guidance refer to the *Test Administrator Manuals*.	
1i	**Highlight Tool**	The student electronically highlights text as needed to recall and/or emphasize. Available colors include pink, blue, yellow, and white.	
1j	**Headphones or Noise Buffers**	The student uses headphones or noise buffers to minimize distraction, access embedded text-to-speech, or filter external noise during testing (in addition to when headphones are required for the ELA/literacy assessment).	

Support		Administration Guidelines	Identified in Advance in the PNP Online Layout *(During Test Registration Process)*
1k	**Line Reader Tool**	The student uses an onscreen tool to assist in reading by raising and lowering the tool for each line of text onscreen.	
1l	**Magnification/Enlargement Device**	The student enlarges text and graphics onscreen via a magnification square (200%). The student can also use keyboard shortcuts (e.g., Ctrl+) for PCs or pinch/zoom for tablets to magnify what's displayed on the screen (while preserving clarity, contrast, and color). Current browser magnification limits are as follows: • Chrome: 500% • Internet Explorer: 1000% • Firefox: 300% • iOS: 400% Note: Magnifying beyond 300% may affect heading formatting and may cause text-wrapping, and therefore it is not recommended.	
1m	**NotePad**	The student writes notes using embedded NotePad application.	
1n	**Pop-up Glossary**	The student is able to view definitions of pre-selected, construct-irrelevant words by hovering over underlined words. The definition appears in a pop-up text box.	
1o	**Redirect Student to the Test (by test administrator)**	The test administrator redirects the student's attention to the test without coaching or assisting the student in any way.	

Support		Administration Guidelines	Identified in Advance in the PNP Online Layout *(During Test Registration Process)*
1p	**External Spell Check Device**	The student uses an external spell check device. Device may not have embedded grammar check, connect to the internet, or save information.	
1q	**Text-to-Speech for the Mathematics Assessments**	Test 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
1r	**Human Reader or Human Signer for the Mathematics Assessments**	In special cases where a test administrator reads aloud to a student (human reader or human signer), the student must be tested in a separate setting. Human Readers providing this accessibility feature must refer to Appendix B: Test Administration Protocol for the Human Reader Accommodation for English Language Arts/Literacy Assessments, and the Human Reader Accessibility Feature for Mathematics Assessments; and Appendix J: PARCC Mathematics Audio Guidelines Version 3.0.	Yes
1s	**Writing Tools**	The student uses writing process tools for written responses, including cut and paste, copy, underline, bold, and insert bullets. Writing tools are available in the constructed response items on the ELA/literacy performance-based assessment.	

Administrative Considerations for All Students

Detailed guidelines on the administration of the PARCC assessments will be included in the *Test Administrator Manuals.*

Students are generally tested in their regular classroom following the test administration schedule for the grade and content area 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 *Test Administrator Manuals*. Decisions may be considered, for example, that benefit students who are easily distracted in large group settings by testing them in a small group or individual setting. In general, changes to the timing, setting, or conditions of testing are left to the discretion of the principal or test coordinator.

In accordance with principles of universal design for assessment, PARCC is providing the following administrative guidance regarding the timing and scheduling of assessments, and setting/locations for testing. These administrative considerations are available to all students.

School-based teams (including the IEP team, 504 plan coordinator, or EL team if required by your state) may determine that <u>any student</u> can receive 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 and English Learners

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities and English Learners

It is important to ensure that performance in the classroom and on assessments is influenced minimally, if at all, by a student's disability or linguistic/cultural characteristics that are unrelated to the content being assessed. For PARCC assessments, accommodations are considered to be adjustments to the testing conditions, test format, or test administration that provide equitable access during assessments for students with disabilities and students who are English learners. In general, the administration of the assessment should not be the first occasion in which an accommodation is introduced to the student. To the extent possible, accommodations should:

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

Accommodations are intended to reduce and/or eliminate the effects of a student's disability and/or English language proficiency level; however, **accommodations should never reduce learning expectations by reducing the scope, complexity, or rigor of an assessment.** Moreover, 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 assessment. There may be consequences (e.g., excluding a student's test score) for the use of non-allowable accommodations during PARCC assessments. It is important for educators to become familiar with PARCC policies regarding accommodations used for assessments.

The guidelines provided in this manual are intended to ensure that valid and reliable scores are produced on the PARCC assessments, and that an unfair advantage is not given to students who receive accommodations. Outside of the guidance provided in this manual, changes to an accommodation or the conditions in which it is provided may change what the assessment is measuring, and will likely call into question the reliability and validity of the results regarding what a student knows and is able to do as measured by the assessment.

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

- Accommodations enable students to participate more fully and fairly in instruction and assessments and to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.
- Accommodations should be based upon an individual student's needs rather than on the category of a student's disability, level of English language proficiency alone, level of or access to grade-level instruction, amount of time spent in a general classroom, current 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 or 504 plan).
- Accommodations for English learners should be described and documented
- Students who are English learners with disabilities qualify to receive accommodations for both students with disabilities and English learners.
- Accommodations should become part of the student's program of daily instruction as soon as possible after completion and approval of the appropriate plan.
- 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 was not 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 any of the accommodations listed in this manual will be aggregated with the scores of other students and those of relevant groups, and 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 (e.g., use of calculation devices, reading aloud the ELA/literacy assessment). 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.

Note: For the first year of operational administration PARCC accommodations have not been coded. Further guidance will be included in future editions of the Manual. Refer to your state policy for state-specific information on coding PARCC accommodations.

Unique Accommodations

PARCC has developed a comprehensive list of accessibility features and accommodations that are designed to increase access to PARCC assessments and that will result in valid, comparable assessment scores. However, students with disabilities or English learners may require additional accommodations that are not found in this manual. PARCC states will individually 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. Refer to Appendix F: Unique Accommodation Request Form.

Emergency Accommodations

An emergency accommodation may be appropriate for a student who incurs a temporary disabling condition that interferes with test performance shortly before or during the PARCC assessment window. 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. Cases include students who have a recently-fractured limb (e.g.,

arm, wrist, or shoulder); whose only pair of eyeglasses has broken; or a student returning after a serious or prolonged illness or injury. An emergency accommodation should be given only if the accommodation will result in a valid score for the student (i.e., does not change the construct being measured by the test[s]). If the principal (or designee) determines that a student requires an emergency accommodation on the day of the PARCC assessment, an Emergency Accommodation Form must be completed and maintained in the student's assessment file. No state approval is required for emergency accommodations. If required by your PARCC state, consult with the district office for approval. **The parent must be notified that an emergency accommodation was provided.** If appropriate, the Emergency Accommodation Form may also be submitted to the district assessment coordinator to be retained in the student's central office file. Requests for emergency accommodations will be approved after it is determined that use of the accommodation would result in a valid score for the student. Refer to Appendix G: Use of an Emergency Accommodation on a PARCC Assessment.

Student Refusal Form

If a student refuses an accommodation listed in his or her IEP, 504 plan, or if required by the PARCC member state, an English Learner plan, the school should document in writing that the student refused the accommodation, and the accommodation must be offered and remain available to the student during testing. This form must be completed and placed in the student's file and a copy must be sent to the parent on the day of refusal. Principals (or designee) should work with test administrators to determine who, if any others, should be informed when a student refuses an accommodation documented in an IEP, 504 plan, or if required by the PARCC member state, an English Learner plan. Refer to Appendix H: Student Accommodation Refusal Form.

Ongoing Research and Data Collection on Use of Accommodations

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

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities[10]

The availability of accessibility features for all students taking PARCC assessments is based on universal design principles as applied to assessments and is intended to increase access for most students. However, many students with disabilities may need additional accommodations for use on the PARCC assessments. For students with disabilities, the **IEP team (or 504 coordinator) is responsible for making decisions about which accommodations the student will need, as well as which features the student will need to increase accessibility. This information will need to be added to the student's PNP.** Refer to Section 2 for a description of PNPs and the features that are available to students with disabilities on computer-based PARCC assessments.

PARCC accommodations listed in this section are intended 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.

Presentation Accommodations

What are Presentation Accommodations?
Presentation accommodations alter the method or format used to administer a PARCC assessment to a student, by changing either the auditory, tactile, visual, and/or a combination of these characteristics. For students taking computer-based assessments, all presentation accommodations must be identified in advance both in the student's IEP or 504 plan and in the 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 that describe changes in the assessment format and method in which the assessment is administered.

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[10] 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
2a	**Assistive Technology**	Students may use a range of assistive technologies on the PARCC assessments, including devices that are compatible with the PARCC online testing platform, and those that are used externally (i.e., on a separate computer). For information on how to test assistive technology devices and software for use on the PARCC assessments with the TestNav 8 platform via an "Infrastructure Trial," refer to the Assistive Technology Guidelines available at www.parcconline.org/parcc-accessibility-features-and-accommodations-manual.
2b	**Screen Reader Version for Mathematics**	A student who is blind or has a visual impairment takes the mathematics assessments using screen reader software. A student who is blind or visually impaired who uses a screen reader will also need a tactile graphics booklet, consisting only of the graphics portion of test questions, and visual descriptions (pictures and multimedia) when applicable for the assessment. If the student is not using headphones, the student must be tested in a separate setting. For additional information, refer to the PARCC Assistive Technology Guidelines and the PARCC Technical Assistance Bulletin available at www.parcconline.org/parcc-accessibility-features-and-accommodations-manual.
2c	**Refreshable Braille Display with Screen Reader Version for ELA/Literacy**	A student who is blind or has a visual impairment takes the ELA/literacy assessments using screen reader software with a refreshable braille display. A student who is blind or visually impaired who uses a screen reader with refreshable braille will also need a tactile graphics booklet, consisting only of the graphics portion of test questions, and visual descriptions (pictures and multimedia) when applicable for the assessment. If the student is not using headphones, the student must be tested in a separate setting. For additional information, refer to the PARCC Assistive Technology Guidelines and the PARCC Technical Assistance Bulletin available at www.parcconline.org/parcc-accessibility-features-and-accommodations-manual.

Accommodation	Administration Guidelines
2d	**Hard Copy Braille Edition**	A student who is blind or has a visual impairment and is unable to take the computer-based test with a refreshable braille display may take the ELA/literacy and mathematics assessments using a hard-copy contracted braille edition. Tactile graphics are embedded into the hard copy braille edition. Responses must be transcribed verbatim by a test administrator in a standard student answer booklet. Only transcribed responses will be scored.
2e	**Tactile Graphics**	A student who is blind or has a visual impairment who uses a screen reader or refreshable braille will also need a tactile graphics booklet, consisting only of the graphics portion of test questions, when applicable for the assessment. Tactile graphics will also be embedded in the hard copy braille edition assessments, when needed.
2f	**Large Print Edition**	A large print paper-based form of each assessment is available for a student with a visual impairment who is unable to take a computer-based assessment due to his or her disability. The font size for the PARCC large print edition will be 18 point on paper sized 11 x 17. Responses must be transcribed verbatim by a test administrator in a standard student answer booklet. Only transcribed responses will be scored. Refer to Appendix A: Accessibility Features and Accommodations for Students Taking the Paper-Based PARCC Assessments.
2g	**Paper-Based Edition**	A paper-based assessment is available for students who are unable to take a computer-based assessment due to a disability. Refer to Appendix A: Accessibility Features and Accommodations for Students Taking the Paper-Based PARCC Assessments.

Accommodation	Administration Guidelines
2h **Closed-Captioning of Multimedia on the ELA/Literacy Assessments[11]**	A student who is deaf or hearing impaired views captioned text on multimedia (i.e., video) segments of the ELA/literacy performance-based assessments. Captioning can be turned on/off within the video player as needed
2i **Text-to-Speech for the ELA/Literacy Assessments, including items, response options, and passages[12]** 2j **Screen Reader Version for ELA/Literacy, including items, response options, and passages[12]** 2k **ASL Video for the ELA/Literacy Assessments, including items, response options, and passages[12]** 2l **Human Reader/Human Signer for the ELA/Literacy Assessments, including items, response options, and passages[12]**	A student receives an audio representation of the ELA/literacy assessment via text-to-speech, screen reader software, embedded ASL video, or a human reader/signer. The text-to-speech, ASL video, human reader, and human signer accommodations are intended to provide access to printed or written texts on the PARCC ELA/literacy assessments to a very small number of students with print-related disabilities who would otherwise be unable to participate in the assessment because their disability severely limits or prevents their ability to access printed text by decoding. The screen reader accommodation is intended to provide access to the PARCC ELA/literacy assessments to students who are blind or have a visual impairment and have not learned (or are unable to use) braille. This accommodation is not intended for students reading somewhat (i.e., only moderately) below grade level. Note: If headphones are *not* used for text-to-speech, screen reader, or the ASL video, the student must be tested in a separate setting. In special cases where a test administrator reads aloud to a student due to a disability (human reader or human signer), the student must be tested in a separate setting.

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[11] 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.

[12] 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

	IEP teams and 504 coordinators should carefully review the following guidelines for identifying students to receive this accommodation.
	
	In making decisions on whether to provide a student with this accommodation, IEP teams and 504 plan coordinators should consider whether the student has:
	
	• Blindness or a visual impairment and has not learned (or is unable to use) braille;
	    OR
	• 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
	• 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.
	
	Before listing the accommodation in the student's IEP or 504 plan, teams/coordinators should also consider whether:
	
	• The student has access to printed text during routine instruction through a reader or other spoken-text audio format, or signer;
	• The student's inability to decode printed text or read braille is documented in evaluation summaries from locally-administered diagnostic assessments; or
	• 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.
	
	Decisions about who receives this accommodation will be made by IEP teams and 504 plan coordinators. However, PARCC will collect data on the frequency of its use for the purpose of carefully monitoring and determining appropriate decision-making.
	
	No claims should be inferred regarding the student's ability to demonstrate foundational reading skills (i.e., decoding and fluency).

Accommodation	Administration Guidelines
	Reporting Notation to Schools and Parents: 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). Human readers/human signers providing this accommodation must refer to Appendix B: Test Administration Protocol for the Human Reader Accommodation for English Language Arts/Literacy Assessments, and the Human Reader Accessibility Feature for Mathematics Assessments for administrative guidance. For a student who is blind or has a visual impairment, the student will also need a tactile graphics booklet, consisting only of the graphics portion of test questions, and visual descriptions (pictures and multimedia) when applicable for the assessment. Refer to Appendix D: Text-to-Speech, Screen Reader, ASL Video, or Human Reader/Human Signer Guidance for English Language Arts/Literacy Assessments.
2m **ASL Video for the Mathematics Assessments**	The student views an embedded video of a human interpreter for the mathematics assessments. If a student does not use ASL, a human interpreter and separate test setting will be required.
2n **Human Signer for Test Directions**	A human signer will sign the test directions to a student. The student may need to be tested in a small group or separate setting.
2o **Student Reads Assessment Aloud to Themselves[13]**	The student reads the assessment aloud to themselves. The student may use an external device such as a whisper phone. The student must be tested in a separate setting.

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[13] Note: While this accommodation is available for students taking the PARCC assessments, it is not currently listed in the PNP for year 1 administration.

Response Accommodations

What are Response Accommodations?
Response accommodations allow students to use an alternative method for providing responses to test items, such as through dictating to a scribe or using an assistive device. For students taking computer-based assessments, all response accommodations must be identified in advance both in the student's IEP or 504 plan and in the 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 who have difficulties with memory, fine-motor skills, sequencing, directionality, alignment, and organization.

Table 3 provides a list of *response accommodations* for students with disabilities 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
3a	**Assistive Technology**	Students may use a range of assistive technologies on the PARCC assessments, including devices that are compatible with the PARCC online testing platform, and those that are used externally (i.e., on a separate computer). For information on how to test assistive technology devices and software for compatibility with the TestNav 8 platform via an "Infrastructure Trial," refer to the PARCC Assistive Technology Guidelines available at www.parcconline.org/parcc-accessibility-features-and-accommodations-manual.
3b	**Braille Note-taker**	A student who is blind or has a visual impairment may use an electronic braille note-taker. For PARCC assessments, grammar checker, internet, and stored file functionalities must be turned off. 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. Only transcribed responses will be scored. Transcription guidelines are available in Appendix C: Protocol for the Use of the Scribe Accommodation.
3c	**Braille Writer**	A student who is blind or has a visual impairment may use an electronic braille writer. The responses of a student who uses an electronic braille writer during PARCC assessments must be transcribed exactly as entered in the electronic braille writer. Only transcribed responses will be scored. Transcription guidelines are available in Appendix C: Protocol for the Use of the Scribe Accommodation.

Accommodation	Administration Guidelines
3d **Calculation Device and Mathematics Tools (on Calculator Sections of Mathematics Assessments)**	A student uses a specific calculation device (e.g., large key, talking, or other adapted calculator) on the **calculator section** of the mathematics assessments. If a talking calculator is used, the student must use headphones or be tested in a separate setting. Specific calculation devices must match the final PARCC Calculator Policy. Allowable calculators include: • Grades 3-5: No calculators allowed • Grades 6-7: Four-function with square root and percentage functions • Grade 8: Scientific calculators • High School: Graphic calculators (with functionalities consistent with TI-84 or similar models) A student with a visual impairment may need other mathematical tools such as a large print ruler (embedded PARCC ruler is designed in 18 point font), braille ruler, tactile compass, or braille protractor. Note that braille mathematics kits will include the appropriate grade-level braille ruler and braille protractors.
3e **Calculation Device and Mathematics Tools (on Non-Calculator Sections of Mathematics Assessments)**	A 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 device or manipulative) on the **non-calculator sections** of the mathematics assessments. If a talking calculator is used, the student must use headphones or be tested in a separate setting. For students with a disability that severely limits or prevents their ability to perform basic calculations (i.e., single-digit addition, subtraction, multiplication or division), this accommodation allows a calculation device to be used on non-calculator mathematics assessment sections. **The accommodation would be permitted on test sections for which calculators are not allowed for other students.** **IEP teams and 504 plan coordinators should carefully review the following guidelines for identifying students to receive this accommodation.**

Accommodation	Administration Guidelines
	In making decisions whether to provide the student with this accommodation, IEP teams and 504 plan coordinators should consider whether the student has: • A disability that severely limits or prevents the student's ability to perform basic calculations (i.e., single-digit addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division), even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so. Before listing the accommodation in the student's IEP/504 plan, teams should also consider whether: • The student is unable to perform calculations without the use of a calculation device, arithmetic table, or manipulative during routine instruction; • The student's inability to perform mathematical calculations is documented in evaluation summaries from locally-administered diagnostic assessments. • The student receives 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. When this accommodation is provided, no claims should be inferred regarding the student's ability to perform basic mathematical calculations without the use of a calculator. Note that PARCC will not report "fluency" sub-scores for any students taking the mathematics assessments. **Reporting Notation to Schools and Parents:** 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 calculation device accommodation on the PARCC mathematics assessment and therefore, no claims should be inferred regarding the student's ability to perform basic mathematical calculations without the use of a calculator. Specific calculation devices must match the final PARCC Calculator Policy. Allowable calculators include: • Grades 3-5: Four-function with square root and percentage functions • Grades 6-7: Four-function with square root and percentage functions • Grade 8: Scientific calculators

Accommodation		Administration Guidelines
		• <u>High School:</u> Graphic calculators (with functionalities consistent with TI-84 or similar models)
3f	**ELA/Literacy Selected Response Speech-to-Text[14]**	A student dictates responses either verbally, using an external speech-to-text device, an augmentative/assistive communication device (e.g., picture/word board), or by dictating, signing, gesturing, pointing, or eye-gazing. The student must be tested in a separate setting. The student must have experience using any assistive technology external device prior to assessment administration.
3g	**ELA/Literacy Selected Response Human Scribe[13]**	
3h	**ELA/Literacy Selected Response Human Signer[13]**	
3i	**ELA/Literacy Selected Response External Assistive Technology Device[13]**	Student's responses must be transcribed exactly as dictated/signed (e.g., the human scribe/signer may not change, embellish, or interpret a student's responses when transcribing). Only transcribed responses will be scored.
3j	**Mathematics Response Speech-to-Text[13]**	For administration guidance on scribing and post-test transcription, refer to Appendix C: Protocol for the Use of the Scribe Accommodation and the *Test Administrator Manuals*.
3k	**Mathematics Response Human Scribe[13]**	
3l	**Mathematics Response Human Signer[13]**	
3m	**Mathematics Response Assistive Technology Device[13]**	
3n	**ELA/Literacy Constructed Response Speech-to-Text[15]**	The student dictates responses either verbally, using a speech-to-text device, augmentative/ assistive communication device (e.g., picture/word board), or by dictating, 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.
3o	**ELA/Literacy Constructed Response Human Scribe[14]**	
3p	**ELA/Literacy Constructed Response Human Signer[14]**	
3q	**ELA/Literacy Constructed Response Assistive Technology Device[14]**	In making decisions whether to provide the student with this accommodation, IEP teams and 504 plan coordinators should consider whether the student has:

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[14] 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.
[15] This accommodation applies to Prose Constructed Responses on the ELA/Literacy assessments.

Accommodation	Administration Guidelines
	- A physical disability that severely limits or prevents the student's motor process of writing through keyboarding; OR - 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. Before listing the accommodation in the student's IEP or 504 plan, teams/coordinators should also consider whether: - The student's inability to express in writing is documented in evaluation summaries from locally-administered diagnostic assessments; - The student routinely uses a scribe for written assignments; and - The student receives ongoing, intensive instruction and/or interventions to learn written expression, as deemed appropriate by the IEP team or 504 plan coordinator. **Reporting Notation to Schools and Parents:** 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 *not* be provided for students who receive a scribe on the PARCC mathematics assessment or for selected responses only on the ELA/literacy assessment). Student's responses must be transcribed exactly as dictated/signed (e.g., the human scribe/signer may not change, embellish, or interpret a student's responses when transcribing). Only transcribed responses will be scored. For administration guidance on scribing and post-test transcription, refer to Appendix C: Protocol for the Use of the Scribe Accommodation and the *Test Administrator Manuals*.

Accommodation		Administration Guidelines
3r	**Word Prediction External Device**	The student uses an external word prediction device 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. The student must be familiar with the use of the external device prior to assessment administration. The device cannot connect to the internet or save information. In making decisions whether to provide the student with this accommodation, IEP teams and 504 plan coordinators are instructed to consider whether the student has: • A physical disability that severely limits or prevents the student from writing or keyboarding responses; OR • 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. Before listing the accommodation in the student's IEP/504 plan, teams/coordinators are instructed to consider whether: • The student's inability to express in writing is documented in evaluation summaries from locally administered diagnostic assessments; and • The student receives ongoing, intensive instruction, and/or intervention in language processing and writing, as deemed appropriate by the IEP team/504 plan coordinator.

Timing and Scheduling Accommodations

What are Timing and Scheduling Accommodations?
Timing and scheduling accommodations are changes in the allowable length of time in which a student may complete the test. Note: Changes in how the time is organized, such as use of frequent breaks or testing at a specific time of day, are test administration considerations that are available to any student.[16]

Who Can Benefit from Timing and Scheduling Accommodations?
Timing accommodations may benefit 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 who need breaks to remain alert or who are more productive at certain times of the day. For students taking computer-based 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 that is designed to increase the allowable length of time to complete an assessment.

Table 4: Timing and Scheduling Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

Accommodation	Administration Guidelines
4a **Extended Time**	Students have until the end of the school day to complete a single test unit administered during the prescribed testing window. It is recommended to test students with the extended time accommodation in a separate setting to minimize distractions to other students, and to schedule these students for testing in the morning to allow adequate time for completion of a test unit by the end of the school day. Refer to the *Test Administrator Manuals* for additional information regarding test units and timing since teams will need to consider if the original timing of the assessment will meet the students' needs. Refer to Appendix E: Guidance for Selecting and Administering the Extended Time Accommodation.

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[16] "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.

November 2014

Accommodations for English Learners[17]

The universal design of PARCC assessments is expected to enhance accessibility 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 also entitled to accommodations listed for students with disabilities earlier in this section.

Accommodations for English learners should be considered by a group of educators familiar with the student's learning needs, using the guidance provided in Section 4 – Decision-Making Process for Selecting, Using, and Evaluating Accessibility Features and 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 team (or consult with the 504 coordinator), in order to make effective accommodations decisions.

Educators familiar with the student should also consider which additional features will enhance accessibility for the English learner in order to determine what's included in the PNP. Section 2 describes the PNP and the additional accessibility features available to English learners on computer-based PARCC assessments.

Table 5 lists the accommodations on PARCC assessments that are available to English learners, cross-referenced with recommendations regarding the effectiveness of the accommodation based on the English Language Proficiency (ELP) level of the student. See Section 4 for how ELP is determined.

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[17] Abedi, J. & Ewers, N. (2013). Accommodations for English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities: A Research-Based Decision Algorithm.

Table 5. Guidance on Selection of Accommodations for English Learners on PARCC Assessments[18]

KEY for Table 5:
● **Highly recommended** for use by English learners at this ELP level
◉ **Recommended** for use by English learners at this ELP level
○ **May not be appropriate** for students at this ELP level

Accommodations	Most likely to benefit English learners at this ELP Level		
	Beginning	Intermediate	Advanced
Extended time	●	●	●
Word-to-Word Dictionary (English / Native Language)	○	●	●
Mathematics Response Speech-to-Text **Mathematics Response Human Scribe**	●	◉	○
General Administration Directions Read Aloud and Repeated in Student's Native Language (by test administrator)	●	◉	○
General Administration Directions Clarified as Needed in Student's Native Language (by test administrator)	●	◉	○
Online Translation of the Mathematics Assessment in Spanish (or other translated languages as needed)[19]	●	◉	○
Paper-Based Edition of the Mathematics Assessment in Spanish (or other translated languages as needed)	●	◉	○

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[18] Differing laws, regulations, and policies exist among PARCC states as to whether they will allow, require, or prohibit translations of state assessments.

[19] PARCC is developing online and paper Spanish translations of the mathematics assessments for use in states that permit the translation of the assessment. States may also offer translations in additional languages.

Accommodations	Most likely to benefit English learners at this ELP Level		
	Beginning	Intermediate	Advanced
Large Print Edition of the Mathematics Assessments in Spanish (or other translated languages as needed)	●	◉	○
Text-to-Speech for the Mathematics Assessments in Spanish (or other translated languages as needed) **Human Reader for the Mathematics Assessments in Spanish** (or other translated languages as needed)	●	◉	○

Table 6. Accommodations for English Learners on PARCC Assessments

	Accommodation	Administration Guidelines
6a	**Extended time**	Students have until the end of the school day to complete a single test unit administered during the prescribed testing window. It is recommended to test students with the extended time accommodation in a separate setting to minimize distractions to other students, and to schedule these students for testing in the morning to allow adequate time for completion of a test unit by the end of the school day. Refer to the *Test Administrator Manuals* for additional information regarding test units and timing since teams will need to consider if the original timing of the assessment will meet the students' needs. Refer to Appendix E: Guidance for Selecting and Administering the Extended Time Accommodation.
6b	**Word-to-Word Dictionary (English/ Native Language)**	The student uses an approved bilingual, word-to-word dictionary. Dictionaries that include definitions, phrases, sentences, or pictures are not allowed. The student should be familiar with the dictionary they will use during testing. Students should be given ample time to complete the test using the accommodation. If no hard copy word-to-word dictionary can be found for a specific language, an electronic translator may be used. The device cannot connect to the internet or store information.

Accommodation		Administration Guidelines
6c	**Mathematics Response Speech-to-Text** 6d **Mathematics Response Human Scribe**	The student dictates responses verbally, using an external speech-to-text device or to a human scribe. The student must be tested in a separate setting. The student must be familiar with any external devices prior to assessment administration. Student's responses must be transcribed exactly as dictated. For administration guidance on scribing and post-test transcription, refer to Appendix C: Protocol for the Use of the Scribe Accommodation.
6e	**General Administration Directions Read Aloud and Repeated in Student's Native Language (by test administrator)**	The test administrator, or state approved interpreter, reads aloud the general administration instructions in the student's native language. The student may request that directions be repeated. The student must be tested in a separate setting. Test administrators providing this accommodation should be literate and fluent in English, as well as in the student's native language, if an administrator who speaks the language is available. Hard copy directions will be translated into the highest-incidence languages across PARCC states: (1) Spanish; (2) Arabic; (3) Navajo; (4) Chinese Mandarin; (5) Vietnamese; (6) Portuguese; (7) Haitian Creole; (8) Polish; (9) Somali; and (10) Marshallese. States may request translations into other languages as needed.
6f	**General Administration Directions Clarified in Student's Native Language (by test administrator)**	The test administrator, or state approved interpreter, clarifies general administration instructions in the student's native language. No part of the test may be clarified, nor may any assistance be provided to the student during testing. The student must be tested in a separate setting. Test administrators providing this accommodation should be literate and fluent in English, as well as in the student's native language, if an administrator who speaks the language is available. For guidance, refer to the *Test Administrator Manuals.*
6g	**Online Translation of the Mathematics Assessment in Spanish (or other translated languages as needed)[20]**	A student takes the online mathematics assessment in their native language, if approved by the PARCC state's policy.

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[20] PARCC will provide online and paper translations of the mathematics assessments in Spanish for use at the discretion of PARCC states. If other languages are needed, states may request additional translations.

Accommodation		Administration Guidelines
6h	**Paper-Based Edition of the Mathematics Assessment in Spanish (or other translated languages as needed)**	The student takes a hard-copy mathematics assessment in their native language, if approved by the PARCC state's policy. Refer to [Appendix A: Accessibility Features and Accommodations for Students Taking the Paper-Based PARCC Assessments](#).
6i	**Large Print Edition of the Mathematics Assessments in Spanish (or other translated languages as needed)**	A large print paper-based form of each assessment is available for a student with a visual impairment who is unable to take a computer-based assessment due to his or her disability and needs a translation. Refer to [Appendix A: Accessibility Features and Accommodations for Students Taking the Paper-Based PARCC Assessments](#).
6j	**Text-to-Speech for the Mathematics Assessments in Spanish (or other translated language as needed)**	The student listens to an oral translation of mathematics assessment via text-to-speech in the translated language. If unable to wear headphones, the student must be tested in a separate setting.
6k	**Human Reader for the Mathematics Assessments in Spanish (or other translated language as needed)**	In special cases where a test administrator reads aloud to a student in their native language, the student must be tested in a separate setting. Human Readers providing the read aloud accommodation must refer to [Appendix B: Test Administration Protocol for the Human Reader Accommodation for English Language Arts/Literacy Assessments, and the Human Reader Accessibility Feature for Mathematics Assessments](#); and [Appendix J: PARCC Math Audio Guidelines Version 3.0](#) for administrative guidance.

Section 4 –
Decision-Making Process for Selecting, Using, and Evaluating Accessibility Features and Accommodations for Students with Disabilities, English Learners, and English Learners with Disabilities

Step 1: Expect All Students to Achieve Academic Grade-Level and Course 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 in PARCC states who are not taking an alternate assessment will participate in the PARCC assessments. The PARCC assessment system sets and maintains high expectations that all students will have access to the full range of grade-level and course content standards.

Several laws require the participation of students with disabilities and English learners in standards-based instruction and assessment. Refer to [Appendix K: Legal Background](#) for additional information.

Including All Students in State Accountability Assessments

English Learners
Federal law requires that students not be excluded from assessments with the intention of holding 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 performance-based and end-of-year 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 still eligible to receive accommodations allowed to English learners on PARCC assessments.

Students with Disabilities
The ESEA and IDEA 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 teams and 504 plan coordinators actively engage in a planning process that includes:

- Participation of all students in the PARCC assessments at the grade level or course in which they are enrolled;
- Assurance of the provision of appropriate accommodations to facilitate student access to instruction and assessments based on grade-level or course standards; and
- Use of alternate assessments based on the content standards, where necessary to assess the academic performance 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 or course. 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 appropriate accommodations during instruction and assessments is likely to promote equal access to grade-level and course content.

To accomplish the goal of equal access, educators (including general educators, special educators, educators specializing in English language acquisition, other members of IEP teams, 504 plan

coordinators, and English learner teams, if applicable) should:

- Be familiar with the CCSS and the accountability system, including applicable assessments, at the state and district level;
- Be familiar with the PARCC assessment administration procedures and the *PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual*; and
- Collaborate regularly to maximize and ensure the student's access to grade-level or course standards.

All students must have access to grade-level or course 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 accessibility features and/or accommodations are determined and provided to help students access grade-level or course 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

It is critical that educational teams learn about accessibility features and accommodations that provide increased access for students or reduce or eliminate the effects of a student's disability, or English learner status, and provide equitable access to grade-level or course content for diverse learners. For information on which accessibility features and accommodations are available on the PARCC assessments, refer to Section 2 of this manual.

Modifications for PARCC Assessments
Modifications, as contrasted with accessibility features and accommodations, involve changes in the PARCC assessment or in the conditions in which a student takes the assessment that would result in unacceptable changes in what the assessment is designed to measure (e.g., reducing or changing expectations for students), or provide an unfair advantage to a student. Therefore, modifications are *not permitted* on the PARCC assessments*.*

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

- Allowing a student to be assessed off grade-level;
- Instructing a student to skip selected items, 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 response choices on a multiple-choice assessment so that a student selects from two or three options instead of four);
- Providing hints, clues, or other coaching that directs the student to correct responses;
- Defining vocabulary on the assessment, for non-glossed words, or explaining assessment items;
- Allowing the student to complete an assessment of English language arts in a language other than English; and
- Using a bilingual dictionary that provides definitions (rather than an acceptable word-to-word dual-language dictionary).

Providing a student with modifications during a PARCC assessment may constitute a test irregularity and will 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. Moreover, 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.

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

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

- Accessibility features and accommodations should not be broadly assigned across all assessments, but considered and discussed separately for each PARCC content-area assessment.
- Students should receive the accessibility features and accommodation they need to participate in the assessment, but should not receive more accessibility features and accommodations than are necessary to participate meaningfully.
- Accessibility features and accommodations should not be used to compensate for a student's lack of knowledge and skills.

- Students need opportunities beforehand to try out accessibility features and 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 accessibility features and accommodations, the more likely the accessibility features and/or accommodations will be used.
- Accommodations that provide access to students on assessments should be based on their needs as students with disabilities or English learners.
- Teams should be careful to avoid selecting accessibility features and 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 assessment.

The Decision-Making Process

Figure 1 shows considerations for selecting PARCC assessment accommodations for students with disabilities, English learners, and English learners with disabilities. This process could be replicated for selecting accessibility features. The decision-making process 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 assessments)

Factor 2: Individual assessment 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 accessibility features and accommodations policies that maintain the validity of assessment results.

Figure 1. Considerations When Making Decisions for Assessment Accommodations
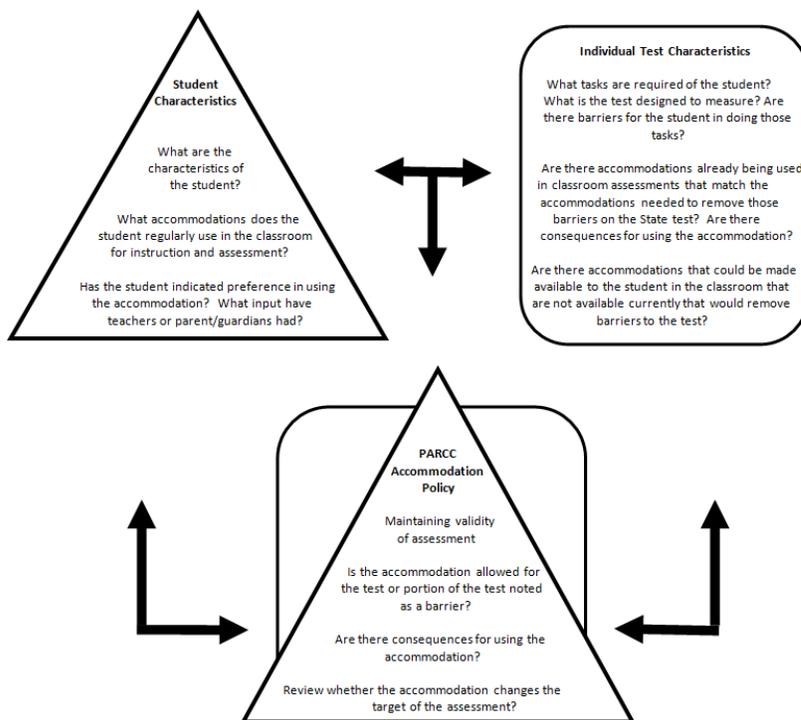
Decision-Making Process – Factor #1: Student Characteristics and Learning Needs

Figure 2 shows the process of how student characteristics and access needs impact the selection of accessibility features and accommodations. Accessibility features and accommodations should remove barriers to learning.

Figure 2. Student Characteristics and Learning Needs
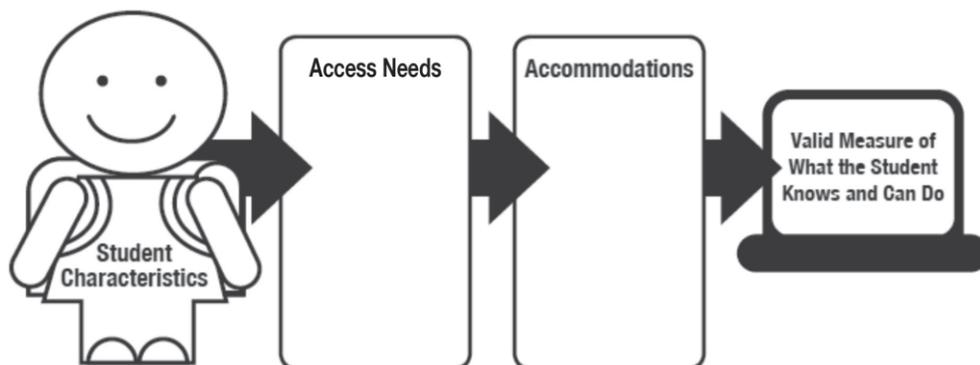
Decision-Making Process – Factor #2: Individual Test Characteristics

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 assessment and what will the tasks and items look like?
- Are the assessment 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 accessibility feature and/or accommodation for a classroom task that is allowed for similar tasks on the PARCC assessments?
- Do other barriers exist that could be removed by using accessibility features and/or accommodations that are not already offered or used by the student?

Decision-Making Process – Factor #3: PARCC Accessibility Features and 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 assessments(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 assessment results may be compromised if the accommodation involves modifying the assessment, 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 assessment. Assessment policies must be reviewed thoroughly before accommodations are selected for the assessments, and any discrepancies between instructional and assessment accommodations should be communicated to the parent and the educators working with the student.

Questions to Guide Accessibility Feature and Accommodation Selection for Students with Disabilities

Teams should use these questions to guide the selection of appropriate accessibility features and accommodations for students with disabilities:

- 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 or course content CCSS?
- What specialized instruction, if any (e.g., learning strategies, organizational skills, reading skills) is required by the student to achieve grade-level or course content CCSS?
- Which accessibility features and/or accommodations are regularly used by the student during instruction and assessments?
- Which new accessibility features and/or 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 accessibility feature and/or accommodation be implemented differently?
- What were the outcomes when accessibility features and/or 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 accessibility feature and/or accommodation "works"?
- What difficulties did the student experience when using accessibility features and/or accommodations?
- What are the perceptions of parents, teachers, and specialists about the effectiveness of the accessibility feature and/or accommodation?
- Should the student continue to use an accessibility feature and/or accommodation "as is," are changes needed, or should use be discontinued?

The following should also be considered in the selection of accessibility features and/or accommodations:

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

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

Effective decision-making on how a student will participate in the PARCC assessments, including the provision of appropriate accessibility features and accommodations, begins with gathering and reviewing information about the student's disability, present level of academic achievement, and

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functional performance in relation to the CCSS. This process is best accomplished by a team of people who know the student best. The team should include individuals who can present information to the 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 accessibility features and accommodations should not be assigned broadly to all students with the same disability. Accessibility features and accommodations should be selected based on the student's learning preferences, previous record of success using the accessibility feature or accommodation, disability-related needs, and level of the student's comfort using the accessibility feature or accommodation in question. The selected accessibility features and 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 accessibility features and 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 teams and 504 plan coordinators should consider whether the recommended accessibility feature(s) and/or 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.

All IEP team members/504 plan coordinators, and other key individuals should provide information and perspectives for the entire team to consider during team meetings regarding the selection, implementation, and evaluation of appropriate accessibility features and accommodations.

Students
Students can provide valuable information to the IEP team or 504 plan coordinator on their strengths and areas of challenge, the effectiveness of the accessibility features and accommodations they use, and their degree of comfort in using them. This information can greatly assist team decision-making regarding which accessibility features and/or accommodations to recommend. Including students in the decision-making process will enhance their self-advocacy, their understanding of the need for the accessibility feature and/or accommodation, and may result in an increased willingness to use the accessibility feature and/or accommodation consistently. Students can also signal when they are outgrowing the need for an accessibility feature and/or 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 assessment accessibility features and/or 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, if a student no longer is eligible for special education

services, changes in accessibility features and/or accommodations for the assessment may be needed.

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

General Educator (Content Area Teacher)
General education teachers are important team members who should be familiar with and knowledgeable of the accessibility features and/or 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 assessment accessibility features and accommodations for students with disabilities. 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 assessment accessibility features and/or accommodations to ensure that students with disabilities have full access to grade-level and/or course content that is 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 students to the appropriate instructional and assessment accessibility features and/or 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 essential roles in supporting the education of students with disabilities in school environments. As members of IEP teams (and 504 plan coordinator discussions, as appropriate), related service providers can lend their unique expertise and perspectives to discuss how to improve learning and assessment opportunities for students with disabilities.

Parents/Guardians
Students who use accessibility features and/or 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 assessment accessibility features and/or 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 in a language that is accessible to them about the:

- Need and rationale for assessment accessibility features and/or accommodations;
- Types of available assessment accessibility features and accommodations and how assessments will be administered; and
- Purpose of assessments, 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.

Individuals Involved in Selecting Accessibility Features and Accommodations 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

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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 assessment accessibility features and accommodations for English learners should be made by a group of individuals familiar with the student who can identify the appropriate accessibility features and 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 decisions. In either case, the educators working with the student should document the accessibility features and/or 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 accessibility features and/or accommodations they use, if any, and their degree of comfort in using them. This information can greatly assist decision-making regarding which accessibility features and/or accommodations to recommend. Including students in decision-making will enhance their self-advocacy, their understanding of the need for the accessibility feature and/or accommodation, and may result in an increased willingness to use the accessibility feature and/or accommodation consistently. Students can also signal when they are outgrowing the need for an accessibility feature and/or accommodation due to their maturation or increased language proficiency.

ESL/Bilingual Educator
The ESL/bilingual educator can apply his or her knowledge of language acquisition with familiarity with the individual student's linguistic needs to devise strategies and supports that facilitate learning the English language during instruction and provide accessibility during assessment.

School Administrator (Principal/Assistant Principal)
The school administrator promotes the expectation that English learners 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 assessment accessibility features and 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 for assessment are needed. 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 assessment accessibility features and accommodations to ensure that English learners have full access to the programs and services that are available to their native English speaking peers. The results of the assessments, in turn, can provide teachers with information that will support individual students in achieving the CCSS.

Special Educator (for English learners with a disability)
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 the student to the appropriate instructional and assessment accessibility features and/or 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 accessibility features and/or 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 assessment accessibility features and/or 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 assessment accessibility features and/or accommodations;
- Types of available assessment accessibility features and/or accommodations and how assessments will be administered; and
- Purpose of assessments, what they measure, and how the results will be used.

Educators responsible for selecting accessibility features and accommodations for English learners can use the guidance found in this section to make appropriate decisions on assigning accessibility features and accommodations to English learners in the 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 assessments. Educators should also review and select appropriate accessibility features available for English learners on the computer-based PARCC assessments and design a PNP for the student.

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

Guidelines for Selecting Appropriate Accessibility Features and Accommodations for English Learners
Because English learner status itself is transitional in nature, there are accessibility features and accommodations specific to English learners that provide different degrees and types of linguistic support to English learners as they progress through levels of English language proficiency. Appropriate

accessibility features and accommodations enable English learners to more effectively demonstrate their knowledge of the content.

The following process can be used to select accessibility features and 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 accessibility feature and/or accommodation help the student overcome the barrier posed by his/her developing English language proficiency? Is the student comfortable using the accessibility features and/or accommodation?*

    The student's teacher should observe the student in the classroom (or range of classrooms/school settings) using the accessibility feature(s) and/or accommodation(s) and inform members of the team of educators as to which accessibility features and/or 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.

3. Once classroom information and data are compiled about the student's background, instructional needs, and use of the accessibility features and/or accommodation(s), the educators selecting accessibility features and/or accommodations for the English learner can help the classroom teacher and student evaluate whether to continue using the accessibility feature(s) and/or accommodation and/or suggest additional accessibility feature(s) and/or accommodations, supports, or approaches that may be effective for use with the student.

    Based on the accessibility feature(s) and/or accommodations used successfully in the classroom, and the list of Allowable Accommodations for English Learners on PARCC Assessments (Table 6), educators can select appropriate accessibility features and/or accommodations for use on the PARCC assessments.

    These considerations should also be used to match each English learner's unique linguistic needs with PARCC English learner accessibility features and/or accommodations:

When selecting accessibility features and/or 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 English and/or 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 include:

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 test (Table 7), and select appropriate English learner accessibility features and/or accommodations for each content area assessment that is most likely to benefit students at that ELP level.[21]

Table 7. Composite ELP Levels Linked with Commonly-Used State English Proficiency Assessments[22]

WIDA *ACCESS for ELLs*® 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	Beginning
Level 3	Developing	Level 3	Intermediate
Level 4	Expanding	Level 4	Intermediate
Level 5	Bridging	Level 5	Advanced
Level 6	Reaching	Level 6	Advanced

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[21] 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.

[22] Many States use WIDA *ACCESS for ELLs*® and *ELDA* ELP assessments to determine English language proficiency.

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 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:

- **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 orally-dominant in his/her developing English language proficiency. In this case, consider providing the English learner with **oral language support** accessibility features and/or 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 accommodations use
   Selecting accessibility features and/or accommodations based on the background of the student increases the likelihood that use of the accessibility feature and/or 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 accessibility feature and/or 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 EL, 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. Refer to Section 3 for accommodations that are allowable on PARCC assessments for English learners.

Selecting Accessibility Features and/or Accommodations for English Learners with Disabilities

English learners with disabilities are eligible for accessibility features and/or accommodations allowed for English learners, as well as accessibility features and/or accommodations allowed for students with disabilities. The IEP team or 504 plan coordinator 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.

Making assessment accessibility features and accommodations decisions in isolation can result in providing inappropriate access to the student. Therefore, an English learner staff familiar with the student should be a member of, or collaborate with, the IEP team or 504 plan coordinator 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 Accessibility Features and Accommodations during Assessments

Planning to Administer Accessibility Features and Accommodations during PARCC Assessments

Once decisions have been made about which accessibility features and accommodations will be provided, the logistics of providing the accessibility features and 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 accessibility features and accommodations on test day. Student PNP information should be compiled with the names of students, the accessibility features and/or accommodations they require, test locations, and staff responsible for administering tests with accessibility features and accommodations. Special educators and English language educators are often given the responsibility for arranging, coordinating, and providing assessment accessibility features and/or accommodations in a school and to assist general educators in understanding how to properly provide specific accessibility features and/or accommodations. It is essential for test administrators to know and understand the requirements for

providing accessibility features and/or accommodations on PARCC assessments. Staff must adhere to specific guidelines for correctly administering accessibility features and accommodations 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.

For the computer-based PARCC assessments, school or district staff will need to enter data into a student's PNP in advance of testing to enable all necessary accessibility features and accommodations and ensure they are provided on test day. Finally, it is important to monitor the provision of accessibility features and accommodations on test day to ensure that they 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 Students to Accessibility Features and Accommodations

Whether a student has a specific accessibility need, a disability, is an English learner, or all of the above, accessibility features and accommodations should be introduced to students long before the PARCC assessments are administered, during routine instruction to determine their effectiveness. Typically, accessibility features and accommodations should never be used for the first time on an assessment.

It is highly recommended that students who need accessibility features and accommodations on the PARCC assessments be provided time to interact with the accessibility features and/or accommodations on the available practice assessments. Allowing this practice time will help the student learn to use the accessibility features and/or accommodation in a new environment and can help determine if the available accessibility features and/or accommodation is effective for the student.

Monitoring Accommodations Use by PARCC States

Most PARCC states currently collect information on which accommodations were used on state assessments by individual students. As described in Section 2, PARCC states will capture their own data via the PNP File Layout. However, PARCC states differ as to how accessibility features and accommodations monitoring occurs. In some PARCC states, representatives may visit schools to monitor assessment 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.

Step 5: Evaluate and Improve Accessibility Features and Accommodations Use

It will be necessary to collect and analyze data on the use and effectiveness of accessibility features and accommodations to ensure that the participation of all students in assessments is meaningful, and to carefully document decisions and information on the selection, use, and evaluation of accessibility features and accommodations. Data on the use and impact of accessibility features accommodations during assessments may support continuing to use some 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 teams, 504 plan coordinators, and English learner educators 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 accessibility features and accommodations use at the school, district, and student levels. Information on the use of accessibility features and 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 accessibility features and accommodations data at the school, district, and student level.

Questions to Guide Evaluation of Accessibility Features and 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 accessibility features and accommodations?
2. Are students receiving accessibility features and accommodations as documented in their IEP, 504 plan, English learner plan (if applicable), or other documentation used for English learners?
3. Are procedures in place to ensure that test administrators comply with directions for the administration of accessibility features and accommodations?
4. What is the frequency of use of different types of accessibility features and accommodations?

Questions to Guide Evaluation at the Student Level

1. What accessibility features and accommodations are used by the student during instruction and assessments?
2. What are the results of classroom assignments and assessments when accessibility features and accommodations are used versus when accessibility features and 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 accessibility feature and/oraccommodation; or is using an accessibility feature and/or accommodation that was not effective?
4. What is the student's perception of how well the accessibility feature and/or accommodation worked?
5. What combination of accessibility features and/or accommodations seems to be effective?
6. What are the perceptions of teachers, parents, and others about how the accessibility feature and/or accommodation appears to be working?

7. What difficulties, if any, were encountered in the use of the accessibility feature(s) and/or accommodation(s)?

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

Gathering information on selected accessibility features accommodations use on technology-based assessments will be accomplished largely through the collection of information on each student's Personal Needs Profile. However, educators and teams at the local level may have additional questions they want researched based on the collection of this data, which will assist in applying district- and school-based resources effectively in the future.