RSE-TASC REPORTER

LOWER HUDSON REGIONAL SPECIAL EDUCATION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT CENTER
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What Are the New Changes in Testing Accommodations?

By Ann Narcisse & Laurie Levine, Regional Special Education Training Specialists

In a few months, many of our students with disabilities will be taking the Grades 3-8 New York State English Language Arts Assessments. As a result of a new State Education Department (SED) policy there have been changes in allowable testing accommodations, specifically with the accommodation "Tests-read." Now students with disabilities can have the entire ELA test read aloud if it is documented on their IEPs or 504 Plans. In the past, only *directions* were to be read aloud on the Grades 3-8 ELA Assessment. This new New York State Education

Department memo, (11/16/17) replaces all previous guidance from the department.

It is important for us to remember that this is a low-incidence accommodation, impacting a small percentage of students with disabilities. These are students whose "disability severely limits or precludes the ability to decode print". It will be up to the Committee on Special Education or Section 504 Committee to determine for which students this is an appropriate accommodation based upon the student's individual disability-related needs and current

information and evaluations.

Based upon the child's unique needs, the CSE or 504 Team needs to determine if the student with a disability has such a severe problem decoding print that he/she needs to receive the tests-read accommodation for all state and local tests **including** tests of reading comprehension. If the CSE/504 Team determines that the student's disability *moderately* impacts the ability to decode print, that student **would not** receive the tests-read accommodation on the Grades 3-8 ELA Assessment. For

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Come Learn with us at our upcoming Regional Trainings!

School-Wide Systems

Transition

February
- Transition Planning Tools and Resources, 2/6
- Putnam County Transition Consortium, 2/9
- School-Based Enterprises (2-Day), 2/13 & 3/17 ***WAIT LIST***
- Transition Planning (High School and Beyond) for English Language Learners who have IEPs, 2/14

March
- Putnam County Transition Consortium, 3/9

April
- Graduation Options, 4/5
- Putnam County Transition Consortium, 4/6
- Transition Specialist Network, 4/20
- Transition Assessment and Planning, 4/25

Behavior & Discipline Supports

February
- PBIS Booster: Data Tools, 2/2
- Teaching Social Skills to Preschoolers, 2/7 ***WAIT LIST***
- FBA-BIP: Tier 3 Behavioral Interventions (3-Day), 2/13, 3/1 & 3/21 ***WAIT LIST***
- PBIS Essential Elements, 2/16

March
- PBIS Coaches' Forum, 3/9
- New Coaches' PBIS Basic Training, 3/9
- Building Your Tier 2 Curriculum for PBIS Coaches, 3/9 ***WAIT LIST***

- Team Implementation Guidance for Social & Behavioral Supports, 3/28
- Proactive Classroom Management (with special guest Brandi Simonsen), 3/29

April
- Function-Based Thinking: Making Sense of Preschoolers Challenging Behavior, 4/6
- Developing Behavior Plans for Preschoolers, 4/19

Individualized Education Planning and the CSE Process

February
- IEPs for English Language Learners, 2/2
- IEP Study Group, 2/3
- Student Directed IEPs (Invitation Only), 2/10
- IEP Institute 1: Developing Quality IEPs (2-Day), 2/28 & 3/14 ***WAIT LIST***

March
- CSE Part 2: Next Steps, 3/2 ***WAIT LIST***
- Testing Accommodations, 3/17 ***WAIT LIST***
- IEP Institute 2: Developing Quality IEP Goals (2-Day), 3/22 & 3/28 ***WAIT LIST***
- Student Directed IEPs (INVITATION ONLY) 3/30

April
- IEP Institute 1: Developing Quality IEPs, 4/3
- New CSE/CPSE Chairperson Training, 4/5 ***WAIT LIST***

> **View our Training Calendar and Register at**
> http://rsetasc.pnwboces.org/events/

Instructional Practices

February
- Language Acquisition vs. Learning Disability, 2/13 ***WAIT LIST***
- Understanding Specially Designed Instruction—Turning Research into Practice (3-Day), 2/14, 3/8 & 4/26
- Literacy for English Language Learners with Disabilities: What's Different?, 2/16

March
- Language Acquisition vs. Learning Disability, 3/3 ***WAIT LIST***
- Literacy for English Language Learners with Disabilities: What's Different?, 3/24
- Explicit Direct Instruction: Providing Access to Curriculum for Struggling Students (3-Day), 3/30, 4/6 & 4/19

April
- Understanding Specially Designed Instruction for Students With Disabilities, 4/25

Leadership

February
- CSE Roundtable, 2/9
- CPSE Colloquium, 2/16

March
- CAN*DO (CDOS Association of Networking Districts and Organizations) Consortium, 3/10

April
- Effective Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices for Students With Disabilities, 4/3
- CSE Roundtable, 4/20

To register for our Regional Workshops, please go to www.pnwboces.org/catalog**.** Click on the down arrow next to the box that says "Click one or more options…", select RSE-TASC and click "Search". Scroll down the webpage until you see the workshop in which you are interested and then click on its name to see details and enroll.

Community Trainings

From PNW BOCES, www.pnwboces.org/catalog**:**
- Enhancing Special Education with Google for Education, 2/4
- Strategies for Working with Students with Emotional Disabilities, 2/20
- Trauma & Resilience Among Diverse Students, 2/28

From Rockland BOCES, www.rocklandboces.org**:**
- Relationship and Sexuality Issues for People with Development Disabilities, 2/8
- Preparing for Your Child's Annual Review, 2/15

From SW BOCES, www.swboces.org**:**
- Nonviolent Crisis Intervention® Certification Training, 2/2
- Understanding Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): Moving Beyond the Surface Behaviors, 2/15

From Westchester Institute for Human Development, www.wihd.org**:**
- Pathways to Graduation: Understanding Diploma Options and Scoring for Students with Disabilities, 2/2
- Communication Matters: Time Tested Strategies to Reduce Conflict & Improve Outcomes for Students with Disabilities, 2/15

From Clarkstown Central School District, tsovik@ccsd.edu**:**
- Executive Functioning: What is it and Why is it so Important?, 2/6 **OR** 2/8

School Tool: Testing Accommodation Decision-Making Tool for "Tests-read"

In the November 16, 2016 NYSED memo entitled *Changes in Allowable Testing Accommodations on the Grades 3-8 New York State English Language Arts Assessments* (www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/documents/changes-in-allowable-testing-accommodations-grade-3-8-ela.pdf), there is a "Testing Accommodation Decision-Making Tool for Tests-read".

This simple tool contains nine questions that school personnel can use to "facilitate collaborative decision-making related to the recommendation of 'tests-read' (via human reader or technology) as a testing accommodation for students with disabilities in grades 3 through 8." The memo recommends that these questions be considered each time a student's IEP or 504 Plan is reviewed to determine the appropriateness of this accommodation.

Attachment
Testing Accommodation Decision-Making Tool for "Tests Read"

The chart below may be used by school personnel to facilitate collaborative decision-making related to the recommendation of "tests-read" (via human reader or technology) as a testing accommodation for students with disabilities in grades 3 through 8. The questions in this tool should be considered each time a student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 Accommodations Plan (504 Plan) is reviewed to determine the appropriateness of this accommodation. After completing the chart, check the box below indicating the recommended testing accommodation for the Committee on Special Education (CSE) or 504 Committee to review and consider when developing the student's IEP/504 Plan. This tool is for local use, only. Do **not** submit this form to the New York State Education Department (NYSED).

Student:				Date:

Persons Involved in Decision-Making:

Questions	YES	NO	N/A	Comments/Evidence
Is there evaluative information indicating that, even after explicit and systematic reading instruction, the student's **disability precludes or severely limits** the student's ability to decode print?	☐	☐	☐	
Has the student been provided systematic, explicit, research-based reading intervention(s) to improve decoding skills?	☐	☐	☐	
If the student is blind or visually impaired, is he or she learning to read braille?	☐	☐	☐	
If the student is blind or visually impaired, has it been determined that his or her disability **precludes or severely limits** the ability to access and/or develop proficiency in braille?	☐	☐	☐	
If the student is deaf or hard of hearing, is there evidence demonstrating that the student's disability **precludes or severely limits** his or her ability to decode printed text (possibly due to other co-occurring disabilities or long-term language deprivation in early childhood)?*	☐	☐	☐	
Is there evidence that the student's access to and/or performance on print-based tasks improves when information is presented to the student in auditory formats (by way of human reader or the use of assistive technology)?	☐	☐	☐	
Does the student use read-aloud accommodations during instruction and/or classroom testing (by way of human reader or the use of assistive technology)?	☐	☐	☐	
Is the student provided instructional materials in auditory formats?	☐	☐	☐	
Has the student provided input to inform specific recommendations related to the "tests-read" testing accommodation?	☐	☐	☐	

Are there additional considerations for recommending "tests read" for this student, specific to his or her unique disability-related needs? If so, explain in the space below:

*If the answer to this question is "YES", and the student also understands sign language, the CSE may consider recommending a sign language interpreter to translate text if appropriate to the needs and skills of the student.

Check the recommendation that is most appropriate in meeting the needs of this student:
☐ "Tests read" is **not** an appropriate testing accommodation for this student.**
☐ "Tests read" should be recommended for this student on State and local tests, **except** tests of reading comprehension.**
☐ "Tests read" should be recommended for this student on all State and local tests, **including** tests of reading comprehension.

These recommendations indicate that the Grades 3-8 ELA Assessments will **not be read to the student.

(cont. from pg. 1)

many of our students with disabilities the tests-read accommodation is not appropriate at all, and in fact may have a negative impact on their test performance.

The New York State Education Department has developed a tool to help CSEs and 504 Teams in determining which students in grades 3 through 8 need the recommendation of tests-read, consisting of questions requiring a team to review data and evidence in order to make an informed decision. See the School Tool above for more information on this tool.

What does the research suggest about the effects of read-aloud accommodations? Although many studies have looked at the effects of read-aloud accommodations, the results are mixed. In a recent meta-analysis (Li, 2014) twenty-three studies were examined to determine the effect of read-aloud accommodations for students with and without disabilities. Here are the major results of their study:

⇒ Generally, both students with disabilities and students without disabilities benefit from the read-aloud accommodations. However, students with disabilities benefit more than students without disabilities.

⇒ The effect of using read-aloud accommodations was significantly stronger when the subject area was reading than when the subject area was math.

⇒ The effect of read-aloud accommodations were significantly stronger when the test was read by human proctors than when it was read by computers or video/audio players.

⇒ The effect of read-aloud accommodations appears to be stronger for elementary school students than the secondary school students.

Of course, once the decision is made that a student needs the tests-read accommodation, there are many additional questions to consider, including:

• How will educators ensure the accommodation is implemented appropriately?

• How will teacher aides/assistants be trained in provision of the

accommodation?

- How will the student be made aware of the accommodation?

As we enter our hectic annual review season, we are faced with many important decisions. One of them is the decision about which accommodations and supports our students need to be successful in participating in the general education curriculum and assessments.

References:
Hongli Li, (2014). The Effects of Read-Aloud Accommodations for Students with and Without Disabilities: A Meta-Analysis. Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice, Fall 2014, Vol33, No. 3, pp. 3-16.

Bright Spot!

This month our Bright Spot comes from the teachers at Boyce Thompson elementary school in Yonkers who worked with SESIS Martha Trujillo-Torp last year.

What were students able to achieve? From 1st to 6th grade, and from general education to self-contained, teachers reported these results from one simple strategy:

∗"Students now accept constructive criticism when their answer is incorrect and feel comfortable enough to try again." (4th grade ICT)

∗"Students are eager to share their work and aren't fearful of making any mistakes. They are eager to learn and collaborate." (6th grade ICT)

∗"Students have improved their handwriting and generally built up their confidence. They work out their thoughts before responding to the group." (12:1:1 self-contained)

∗"A child who always handed in a blank page for writing assignments wrote a strand of letters and put a period at the end. He 'read' it back to me. Although the letters were random, he is understanding the concept of a sentence and using punctuation at the end." (1st grade ICT)

What simple instructional practice had such a positive impact on students? Individual student white boards, that allow all students to respond all the time, in a flexible easily corrected modality. Teachers see multiple advantages; for example: "Students get extremely excited when I announce that we are using them and it provides me with a quick check formative assessment throughout the lesson"; "Students can simply erase their mistakes, with no trace whatsoever. The boards are confidence builders, enabling my students to try no matter what"; "It has been really helpful for my students who get OT"; and, "A white board is a great hands-on tool and keeps the students engaged!"

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