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Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS) Summative & Alternate Accessibility Manual

How to Select, Administer, and Evaluate Use of Accessibility Supports for Instruction and Assessment of All Students

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The *Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS) Summative Accessibility Manual* was adapted from the *CCSSO Accessibility Manual: How To Select, Administer, and Evaluate Use of Accessibility Supports for Instruction and Assessment of all Students.*

http://www.ccsso.org/Resources/Publications/CCSSO_Accessibility_Manual_How_To_Select_Administer_And_Evaluate_Use_Of_Accessibility_Supports_For_Instruction_And_Assessment_Of_All_Students.html

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Section I: Background

The *Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System Summative & Alternate Accessibility Manual* is a tool for districts to use for the selection, administration, and evaluation of accessibility supports for instruction and assessment of all students, including students with disabilities, English learners (ELs), ELs with disabilities, and students without an identified disability or EL status.

Accessibility supports discussed herein include:

- **both embedded (digitally-provided) and non-embedded (non-digitally or locally provided) universal features that are available to all students as they access instructional or assessment content,**
- **linguistic supports that are available for those students designated as English Learners, and**
- **accommodations that are generally available for students for whom there is documentation on an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 accommodation plan.**

This manual replaces all NeSA Approved Accommodations documents for ELs and students with disabilities.

Intended Audience and Recommended Use

The *NSCAS Summative & Alternate Accessibility Manual* applies to all students who use accessibility supports and accommodations for instruction and assessment. The manual is also intended for assessment staff and administrators serving all students who currently have the potential to benefit from accessibility supports on the Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS) Summative and Alternative tests. It is intended for general education, ELL and special education teachers, school administrators, test administrators, school coordinators, and related services personnel to use in determining and administering accessibility supports for those students who need them.

This manual emphasizes an individualized approach to the implementation of accessibility practices for those students who have diverse needs in the classroom. It recognizes the critical connection between accessibility supports in instruction and accessibility supports during assessment.

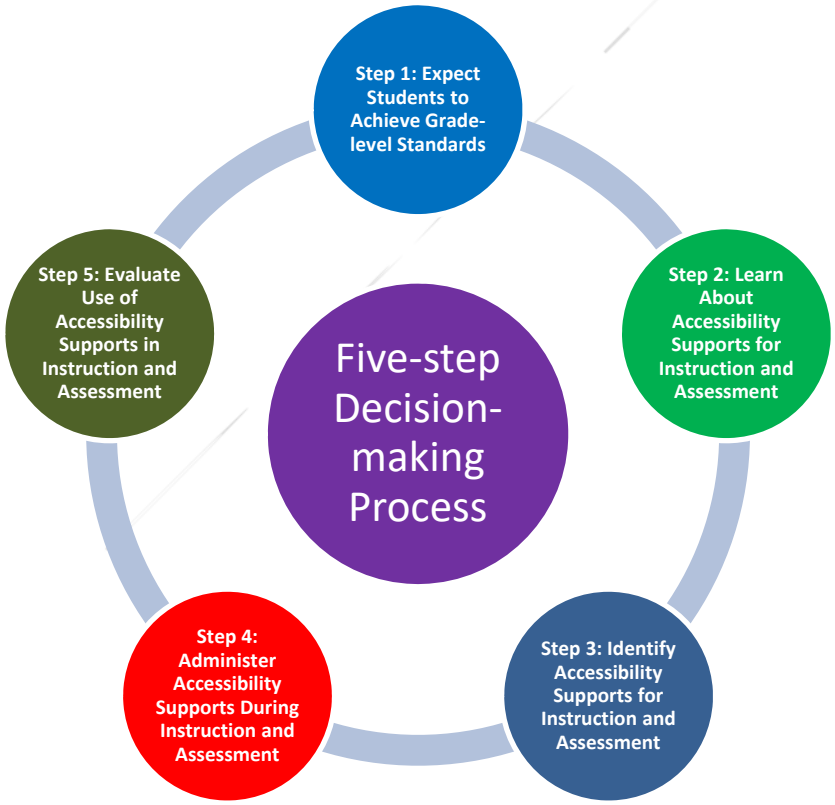
The approach is a three-tier accessibility framework that includes universal features, linguistic supports for English learners, and accommodations on content assessments.

Some accessibility supports allowable on NSCAS assessments may be prohibited on other assessments**. This manual is not intended to be used with the ELPA21 or ACT.** See the *ELPA21 Accessibility and Accommodations Manual* for support specific to the ELPA21 test. See the *ACT Test Administration Accommodations Manual: State and District Testing* for support specific to the ACT test.

NDE encourages districts to offer similar supports/accommodations to students tested with the Interim MAP Growth assessment. Some supports/accommodations may not be available for MAP Growth or may function differently. See the *MAP Growth Accessibility FAQ* for support specific to the MAP Growth test.

The manual outlines a five-step decision-making process for administering accessibility supports. Figure 1 highlights the five steps discussed in the manual.

Figure 1. Five-step Decision-making Process for Administering Accessibility Supports



Recognizing Accessibility Needs for All Students

In the context of new technology-based instruction and assessments, various accessibility supports are available for students to meet their individualized needs and preferences. These new individualized approaches to accessibility place greater responsibility on educator teams and individuals who make decisions about which students need and should receive specific supports among a variety of accessibility choices. Educators should also ensure that students have ample opportunity to practice using accessibility supports. If the supports students are used to having in the classroom are not allowed on the assessment, students should have instructional opportunities in class without these supports.

For the purposes of this manual, the following definitions are used:

Students with disabilities are students who are eligible to receive services identified through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

English learners (ELs) are students whose native language is not English and who do not yet possess sufficient English language proficiency to fully access curriculum that is in English.

English learners with disabilities (ELs with disabilities) are students whose native language is not English, who do not yet possess sufficient English language proficiency to fully access content that is in English, and who have disabilities and are served by IDEA or Section 504.

General education students are students who do not have an identified disability or EL status. Although we understand that students with disabilities, ELs, and ELs with disabilities are also general education students, we use this term as a simple way to refer to students who do not have a disability, are not identified as an EL, or who are not identified as an EL with a disability.

Section II: Three-tiered Approach to Accessibility

This section highlights the three-tiered approach to accessibility currently employed by Nebraska: universal features, linguistic supports for English learners, and accommodations. Educators should be mindful that other terms sometimes are used to describe these tiers. Tools 1- 3 include universal features, linguistic supports for English learners, and accommodations currently used in NSCAS Summative Tests. Tool 4 is an optional planning resource that may be utilized by accessibility decision makers to track needed supports for individual students.

NDE encourages districts to formalize methods of tracking accessibility decisions and communicating those decisions to test administrators/proctors.

Universal Features

Universal features are accessibility supports that are either: embedded and provided digitally through instructional or assessment technology (e.g., answer choice eliminator), or non-embedded and provided non-digitally at the local level (e.g., scratch paper). Universal features are available to all students as they access instructional or assessment content. Tool 1 includes embedded and non-embedded universal features currently used on the NSCAS Summative Tests.

Making Decisions About Universal Features

Educators may need to pay special attention to non-embedded universal features to ensure that they are available to meet individual student needs. Students should be provided adequate opportunity to practice the features prior to the taking the assessment.

Linguistic Supports for English Learners

Linguistic supports for English Learners are features that are available for use by students who have been designated as English learners (ELs). Linguistic supports can be embedded and provided digitally through instructional or assessment technology, or non-embedded and provided non-digitally at the local level. Tool 2 describes the embedded and non-embedded linguistic supports for English learners currently used on NSCAS Summative Tests.

Making Decisions about Linguistic Supports for English Learners

Educators (or teams of educators also including parents/guardians and the student, if appropriate) who are familiar with the student's characteristics and needs should make decisions about linguistic supports. Decisions should reflect those supports that the student requires and uses during instruction and for assessments. When making decisions, student input, particularly for older students, is recommended. Tool 2 (See Tool 2: Linguistic Supports for English Learnerspg. 27) has more information about making decisions about linguistic supports for English learners based on student characteristics.

Accommodations

Accommodations are changes in procedures or materials that ensure equitable access to instructional and assessment content and generate valid assessment results for students who need them. Embedded accommodations (e.g., text-to-speech) are provided digitally through instructional or assessment technology, while non-embedded accommodations (e.g., computation supports) are provided locally. Accommodations are available for students for whom there is a documented need on an IEP or 504 accommodation plan. Tool 3 (See pg. 35) includes embedded and non-embedded accommodations currently used on NSCAS Summative Tests.

Making Decisions about Accommodations

EL teams, IEP teams, and educators for 504 plans make decisions about accommodations. For ELs with disabilities, these teams should include an expert in the area of English language acquisition. Decision makers should provide evidence of the need for accommodations and ensure that they are noted on the IEP or 504 plan, applicable. Decision makers are responsible for entering information on linguistic supports and/or accommodations from the IEP or 504 plan. For EL students with disabilities, NDE encourages districts to use locally developed planning tools or processes to track linguistic supports and/or accommodations so that all needed features and accommodations can be provided for identified students. Tool 5 (See pg. 43) provides a summary of Dos and Don'ts, which may be helpful to use when working with staff.

Section III: Five-step Decision-making Process

This section describes a five-step process that can be used to make optimal accessibility decisions for those students who need accessibility supports in the classroom. The five steps follow:

Step 1: Expect Students to Achieve Grade-level Standards
Step 2: Learn About Accessibility Supports for Instruction and Assessment
Step 3: Identify Accessibility Supports for Instruction and Assessment
Step 4: Administer Accessibility Supports during Instruction and Assessment
Step 5: Evaluate Use of Accessibility Supports in Instruction and Assessment

Step 1: Expect Students to Achieve Grade-level Standards

All students can work toward grade-level academic content and should be expected to be successful on grade-level content standards. Academic standards are educational targets outlining what students are expected to learn at each grade-level. Teachers ensure that students work toward grade-level standards by using a range of instructional strategies based on the varied strengths and needs of students. For some students, accessibility supports are provided during instruction and assessments to help promote equal access to grade-level content.

Individual educators or teams of educators who are familiar with all characteristics and needs of students should make instructional and assessment decisions for them. Educators are responsible for developing, implementing, and improving accessibility practices for students. The following are the types of educators who may be involved in making accessibility decisions:

- special education teachers
- 504 Plan committee representatives
- ELL teachers and facilitators
- assessment specialists, test coordinators, guidance counselors
- general education teachers (classroom/content teachers)
- school administrators
- parents and/or guardians
- students (if appropriate)

Including All Students in State Assessments

Inclusion of all students in large-scale assessments and grade-level standards is mandated by both federal and state laws. Accessibility supports are provided for students during instruction and assessments to guarantee equal access to grade-level content. To meet this goal of equal access, educators must be familiar with Nebraska content standards and statewide assessment testing requirements.

https://www.education.ne.gov/AcademicStandards/index.html

Inclusion of Student with IEPs and 504s

All students with disabilities can work toward grade-level academic content standards (or grade-level content standards with extended indicators) and most students will be able to achieve these standards when the following three conditions are met:

1. Instruction is provided by teachers who are qualified to teach in the content areas addressed by state standards and who know how to differentiate instruction for diverse learners.
2. IEPs for students with disabilities are developed to ensure the provision of specialized instruction (e.g., specific reading skills, strategies for "learning how to learn").
3. Appropriate accommodations are provided to help students' access grade-level content.

Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities

Federal guidelines dictate that 1% of all students assessed on the NSCAS Summative Assessment are eligible to participate in the NSCAS Summative Alternate Assessment. Typically, these are those students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Guidance for determining if students meet the criteria for participation:

- Alternate Assessment Criteria/Checklist
- IEP Team Decision Making Flow Chart

Inclusion of English Learners

All students, including ELs and ELs with disabilities, can work toward grade-level academic content standards while they are improving their English proficiency. They will be able to achieve these standards when instruction is provided by teachers who are

qualified to teach in the content areas addressed by state standards and who know how to differentiate instruction for diverse learners. Meaningful access of grade-level content by diverse students is also made possible by appropriately selected linguistic supports (accommodations for English learners). Additionally, to secure successful student access to grade-level content, EL educators, special educators, and their general education counterparts must collaborate when making accessibility decisions.

Recently-arrived English Learners

NEW: Under NCLB, students who had attended a U.S. school for less than 12 months could be granted a waiver from the NeSA-ELA assessment. Under Nebraska's state ESSA plan, this exemption is no longer allowed. All ELs must participate in all state-administered content assessments. Scores in the first year of assessing the student, however, will not be included in state accountability. In the second year, students must test, but only growth will be calculated. In the third year, students will participate and scores will be included in state accountability systems.

Recently Arrived English Learners (RAELs) are students who have been enrolled in a school in one of the 50 states in the United States or the District of Columbia for less than 12 months. The state must assess and report the performance of a recently arrived English learner on the English language arts and mathematics assessments in each year of the student's enrollment. And for the purpose of state accountability:

In Year 1: students are included in participation calculations but results are excluded on the English language arts and math assessments in the state accountability system.
In Year 2: students are included in participation calculations and results are used in growth measures but not achievement indicators in the state accountability system.
In Year 3: students are included in all accountability calculations.
§1111(b)(3)(A)(ii)

Former English Learners

Former English learners or "redesignated English fluent" students are allowed some linguistic support on content tests, if appropriate. These supports may include additional time to process the language demands and the use of word-to-word bilingual dictionaries or word lists. **Translated directions/ assessments and paper/pencil**

forms are not allowed. Former ELs, for the purposes of accountability, remain in the EL subgroup for the duration for the 4 year federal monitoring period.

Note: All English learners, K-12, must take the state-required English proficiency assessment. The English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century (ELPA21) must be administered annually regardless of time in a U.S. school. **This document does not address accommodations for ELPA21**. Please refer to the *ELPA21 Accessibility and Accommodation Manual* for accommodations specific to ELPA21.

Step 2: Learn About Accessibility Supports for Instruction and Assessment

Current technology enables educators to introduce computer-based instruction and assessment accessibility supports that facilitate individualized educational processes. The purpose of these supports is to reduce or eliminate the effects of barriers--language or disability, which prevent students from demonstrating what they know and can do. **Accessibility supports provided in the classroom should not reduce expectations for learning.** Three tiers of accessibility supports – universal features, linguistic supports for English learners, and accommodations – empower students with choices of support, thus enabling them to access instructional and assessment content effectively.

Accessibility supports provided to a student during state assessments, such as universal features, linguistic supports, or accommodations, in most cases, should also be provided during classroom instruction, classroom assessments, and district assessments; however, some instructional accessibility supports may not be appropriate for use on certain statewide assessments. In other cases, accessibility supports provided on assessments may be slightly different from those provided in the classroom (e.g., digital notetaking on an assessment). It is important that educators help students become familiar with the supports provided through the technology platform so that students are not using these tools for the first time on test day.

As students become more proficient in instructional content, their need for some accessibility supports may decrease. For instance, ELs need fewer native language supports as their English language proficiency increases. Accessibility supports for instruction and assessment are integrally intertwined.

Universal Design Implications

Universal design principles address policies and practices that are intended to improve access to learning and assessments for all students. When educators employ universal design techniques, they can gain a more accurate understanding of what students know and can do. Universal design techniques should be applied consistently in instruction and assessments, when available.

Universally designed instructional and assessment content may reduce the need for accommodations and for alternate assessments. Nevertheless, universal design cannot completely eliminate the need for accommodations or for alternate assessments. Universal design can provide educators with more valid inferences about the achievement levels of all students.

Modifications in Instruction and Assessment

Accessibility supports do not reduce learning expectations. They meet specific needs of students in instruction and assessment and enable educators to know that measures of a student's work produce valid results.

Modifications, however, refer to practices or materials that change, lower, or reduce state-required learning expectations. Test modifications are not the same as the tiers supports or accommodations. Test modifications are adjustments or changes in the test or the testing process that change the test expectation, the grade level, or the construct or content being measured. **Modifications are not allowed on state assessments.**

Instructional Accessibility Supports

To optimize students' educational experiences, educators should consider:

- Student characteristics and needs;
- Instructional tasks expected of students to demonstrate proficiency in grade-level state standards; and
- Consistency between accessibility supports used for classroom instruction and those used on assessments.

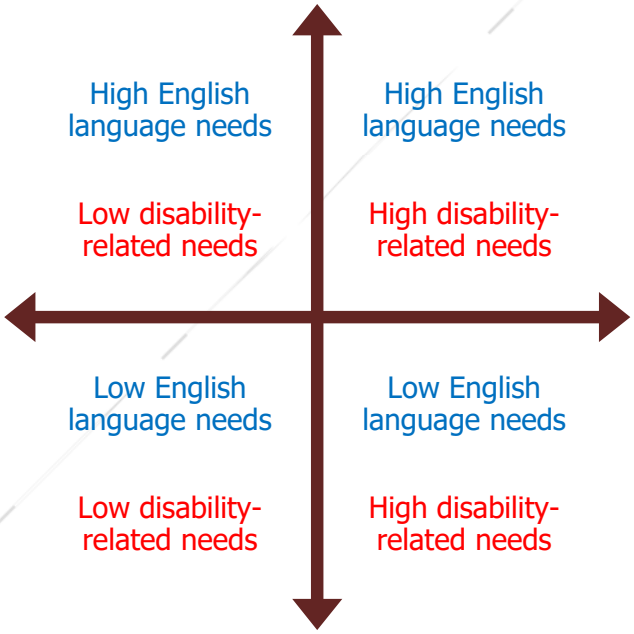
Educators should ask: What are the student's specific instruction and assessment needs? How might student access to curriculum, instruction, and assessment be supported? Have students had opportunities to practice universal features? Does the student need any linguistic supports or accommodations? A student may not be receiving an accessibility support he or she really needs or may be receiving too many. Research indicates that more is not necessarily better, and that providing students with accessibility supports that are not truly needed may have a negative impact on performance.

ELs with Disabilities

For ELs with disabilities, IEP team members should consider the degree of each student's language- and disability-related needs. As shown in Figure 2, accessibility decisions should be individualized based on the particular language- and disability-related challenges faced by ELs with disabilities. Students with high English language needs and low disability-related needs will require more language-based supports while their counterparts with high disability-related needs and low English language needs will require more supports that remove disability-related barriers. At the same time, students with high English language needs and high disability-related needs will benefit from more intensive language- and disability-related supports while students with low English language needs and low disability-related needs will require fewer supports that alleviate linguistic and disability-related assessment challenges.

Figure 2. English Language- and Disability-related Needs Affecting Accessibility Decisions

Source: Shyyan, Christensen, Touchette, Lightborne, Gholson, and Burton, 2013. Reprinted with permission.



This approach of accounting for varying English language- and disability-related needs for ELs with disabilities was developed to reinforce the idea that students in each of the four sections will require different instructional support. Moreover, variability within each section should be taken into account, and students' individualized needs should be addressed on an individual basis. This approach also aims to reiterate that educators

should fully account for the complexity of both language and disability implications during the instruction and assessment of ELs with disabilities.

Step 3: Identify Accessibility Supports for Instruction and Assessment

Effective decision making about the provision of appropriate accessibility supports begins with making appropriate instructional decisions. Optimal instructional decision-making is facilitated by gathering and reviewing reliable information about the student's access needs, disability, English language proficiency, and present level of performance in relation to academic content standards.

Decisions should be based on individual characteristics and needs. **Making blanket decisions for groups of students at particular language acquisition levels or with particular disabilities is not appropriate.** When individualized accessibility decisions are made thoughtfully, they can advance equal opportunities for students to participate in the general education curriculum.

A student's needs and preferences are probably the most important criteria that should be considered when making optimal accessibility decisions. However, other academic-related criteria, such as English language proficiency test results, disability needs, oral proficiency in English and other languages, literacy levels in English and native language, implications of special education programs, the kind of education the student received before coming to the U.S. (e.g., evidence of limited or interrupted formal education), the time spent in English speaking schools, performance on other assessments, the resources available to students in their native languages, or the student's cultural background may also help educators determine which accessibility supports should be used. See Tool 2 (pg. 27) for selecting appropriate supports for English learners.

Documenting Accessibility Supports for All Students

To ensure continuous monitoring and improvement of accessibility approaches, educators should document which supports are used and how students use the accessibility supports. Documenting what linguistic supports and/or accommodations are effective will enable educators to make more informed decisions. See Test Administration Manual for supports that must be documented for NSCAS content testing.

Documenting Accessibility Supports Under IDEA

For students with disabilities served under IDEA, determining appropriate instructional and assessment accessibility supports should not pose any particular problems for educators who follow appropriate educational practices. With information obtained from the required summary of the student's Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP), the process of identifying and documenting accessibility supports should be a fairly straightforward event. The PLAAFP is a federal requirement in which collaborative 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 non-disabled children" [Rule 51 007.07A1a]

There are potentially three areas during the IEP development process when accommodations should be discussed:

1. "Consideration of Special Factors" (Rule 51 007.07B6 and 007.07B7)
The IEP team considers communication and assistive technology devices and supports.

2. "Supplementary Aids and Services" (Rule 51 007.07A5)
The IEP team considers possible "aids, services, and other supports" that are provided in general education classes or other education-related settings to enable children with disabilities to be educated with non-disabled children to the maximum extent appropriate. Accommodations used during instruction throughout the year are recorded in this section.

3. "Participation in Assessments" (Rule 51 007.07A7, 007.07A7a, 007.07A7b)
The IEP team considers the student's participation in the Nebraska Statewide Summative Assessment and the accommodations used during the testing process. Generally, accommodations used during instruction and written into the student's IEP are allowable for statewide testing. However, this is not always the case. The IEP team should refer to the "Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System Accessibility Manual: How to Select, Administer, and Evaluate Use of Accessibility Supports for Instruction and Assessment of All Students".

Documenting Accessibility Supports on a Student's 504 Plan

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires public schools to provide certain accessibility supports to students with disabilities even if they do not qualify for special

education services under IDEA. The definition of a disability under Section 504 is much broader than the definition under IDEA. All IDEA students are also covered by Section 504, but not all Section 504 students are eligible for services under IDEA. Section 504 states:

> No otherwise, qualified individual with a disability in the United States shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. [29 U.S.C. Sec. 794]

Decision-making Process

The decision-making process for providing accessibility supports should include consideration of at least these three factors:

1. Student characteristics – disabilities, language proficiency, accessibility supports used in classroom instruction/assessments to access and perform in academic standards and state tests.

2. Classroom instruction and assessment tasks – knowledge about what tasks are required in instruction and on state assessments and ways to remove physical and other barriers to a student's ability to perform those tasks.

3. Accessibility policy – knowledge of state accessibility and accommodation policy for state assessments and consequences of decisions.

If multiple accessibility supports are employed for a student, educators should also be cognizant of the possible interactions of these accessibility supports. For instance, the highlighter might change colors if the color contrast is turned on.

Involving Students in Selecting, Using, and Evaluating Accessibility Supports

The more involved students are in the selection process, the more likely they are to use the selected accessibility supports, particularly with older students. Students need opportunities to learn which accessibility supports are most helpful for them, and then they need to learn how to make certain those supports are provided in all of their classes and wherever they need them outside of school. For instance, students with

significant cognitive disabilities, many of whom do not have sophisticated expressive communication systems, can show teachers whether they prefer certain supports. It is important to not limit the option of student feedback and student self-advocacy for those who cannot communicate those preferences easily.

Prior Use of Accessibility Supports

Students are most successful with testing accessibility supports when they have used them prior to the test. Educators are encouraged to implement accessibility supports in instruction to make sure these concerns are addressed before the state assessment is administered. Students with IEP's and 504 plans who are provided accommodations on the state assessment must also have had these same accommodations during classroom instruction, classroom assessments and district assessments. Accessibility supports should not be used for the first time on a state test. Instead, it is important to address these concerns ahead of time:

- Plan time for students to learn new accessibility supports.
- Be sure that students know how to use embedded and non-embedded accessibility supports. For embedded supports, there may be practice or sample items or tutorials for students to experience prior to test administration.
- Plan for evaluation and improvement of the use of accessibility supports.

The common rule that all linguistic supports should be routinely used in the classroom prior to the test does not always hold true for English learners. While it is important to provide opportunities to use linguistic supports, such as reference materials (bilingual word lists, bilingual dictionaries) well before the test, it is not always necessary for the other supports such as oral English and oral and written translations. (Acosta et al., 2008). While many supports do not **require** prior experience, they may well be appropriate and helpful for instruction.

Step 4: Administer Accessibility Supports during Instruction and Assessment

Accessibility during Instruction

Students should be provided accessibility supports during instruction. An accessibility support should **not** be used solely during assessments, except as noted above regarding linguistic supports.

Educators must make sure that students have opportunities to become familiar with the technological aspects of the assessment process. In addition to taking practice tests using the same testing platform, it is also important for educators to provide opportunities for all students to use technology for learning.

Accessibility during Assessment

Providing accessibility supports through the testing platform ensures that the provision of accessibility is standardized from student to student and district to district. However, it is important to monitor the provision of accessibility supports on test day to ensure that supports are delivered and the technology is working as it should. Teachers should be in communication with assessment coordinators in a timely manner to ensure that the assessment is properly programmed and verified with the appropriate accessibility supports for students.

Prior to the day of a test, teachers should ensure that test administrators and proctors know what accessibility supports each student will be using and how to administer them properly. For example, test administrators and proctors should know whether a student needs to test in a separate location, so that plans can be made accordingly. Staff administering accessibility supports, such as reading aloud to a student or scribing student responses, must adhere to specific guidelines so that student scores are valid. Tools 6 – 9 (See pg. 44-52) provide read aloud, scribe, translation, and educational sign language interpreter guidelines for non-embedded accessibility supports.

Ethical Testing Practices

Ethical testing practices must be maintained during the administration of a test. Unethical testing practices include inappropriate interactions between test administrators and students taking the test. They also include, but are not limited to, allowing a student to answer fewer questions, offering additional information, coaching students during testing, editing student responses, telling a student they may want to review and answer, or giving clues in any other way. Professionalism, common sense, and practical procedures provide the right framework for testing ethics. It is important to note that school districts are bound to hold all certificated staff members in school districts accountable for following the Regulations and Standards for Professional Practice Criteria as outlined in Nebraska Rule 27.

Test Security

Test security involves maintaining the confidentiality of test questions and answers, and is critical in ensuring the integrity of a test and validity of test results. If non-embedded accessibility supports are used, assessment security can become an issue when other test formats are used (e.g., braille, large print) or when someone other than the student is allowed to see the test (e.g., interpreter, reader, scribe). To ensure test security and confidentiality, test administrators need to (1) keep testing materials in a secure place to prevent unauthorized access, (2) keep all test content confidential and refrain from sharing information or revealing test content, and (3) return all materials as instructed.

Some of the same considerations for test security apply to embedded accessibility supports. For example, ensuring that only authorized personnel have access to the test and that test materials are kept confidential is critical in technology-based assessments. In addition, it is important to guarantee that (1) students are seated in such a manner that they cannot see each other's terminals, (2) students are not able to access any unauthorized programs or the Internet while they are taking the assessment, and (3) students are not able to access any saved data or computer shortcuts while taking the test. In most cases, any special required hardware devices and appropriate applications, such as switches, should be compatible with computer-delivered assessments. Prior to testing, educators should check on device compatibility and make appropriate adjustments if necessary.

Additional information about test security is detailed in the Nebraska State Accountability Security Manual and Test Administration Manuals.

Step 5: Evaluate Use of Accessibility Supports in Instruction and Assessment

Accessibility supports must be selected on the basis of the individual student's needs and must be used consistently for instruction and assessment. Supports on assessments must be reevaluated annually on an individual basis to determine which supports continue to be necessary.

Questions to Guide Evaluation at the Student Level

The following questions can be used to formatively evaluate accessibility supports used at the student level and inform the individualized decision-making process.

1. What accessibility supports are used by the student during instruction and assessments?
2. What are the results of classroom assignments and assessments when accessibility supports are used versus when they are not used? If a student does not meet the expected level of performance, is it due to not having access to the necessary instruction, not receiving the accessibility supports, or using accessibility supports that are ineffective?
3. What is the student's perception of how well the accessibility support worked?
4. What combinations of accessibility supports seem to be effective?
5. What are the difficulties encountered in the use of accessibility supports?
6. What are the perceptions of teachers and others about how the accessibility support appears to be working?
7. How have the characteristics of the students changed over time to warrant a plan or accessibility support change?

Tool 1: Universal Features

Universal features are accessibility supports that are embedded and provided digitally through instructional or assessment technology (e.g. answer choice eliminator), or non-embedded and provided non-digitally at the local level (e.g. scratch paper). Universal features are available to all students as they access instructional or assessment content.

Embedded Universal Features Available to All Students

	Universal Feature	Description
1	Answer eliminator*	The student uses this feature to cross out answer choices that do not appear to be correct.
2	Flexible Scheduling	Districts and schools have flexibility to schedule each content test. Each test is only a single session and can be scheduled for one or multiple days. Typical students take less than 90 minutes for each test. Additional information about scheduling can be found in the test administration manual (TAM).
3	Highlighter*	The student uses this feature for marking desired text, items, or response options with a color.
4	Keyboard navigation	The student is able to navigate throughout test content by using a keyboard, e.g., arrow keys. This feature may differ depending on the testing platform or device.
5	Line reader/line guide	The student is able to use this feature as a guide when reading text.
6	Math tools*	These digital tools (e.g., ruler, protractor, calculator, etc.) are used for tasks related to math items. They are available only with the specific items for which one or more of these tools would be appropriate.
7	Notepad*	The student uses this feature as virtual scratch paper to make notes or record responses.
8	Zoom (item-level)	The student can enlarge the size of text and graphics on a given screen. This feature allows students to view material in magnified form on an as-needed basis. The student may enlarge test content at least fourfold. The system allows magnifying features to work in conjunction with other accessibility features and accommodations provided.

***not available for NSCAS Alternative Assessments**

Non-embedded Universal Features Available to All Students

	Universal Feature	Description
9	Alternate location	Student takes test at home or in a care facility (e.g. hospital) with direct supervision. For facilities without internet, a paper/pencil test will be allowed.
10	Directions	Test administrator rereads, simplifies or clarifies directions aloud for student as needed.
11	Color Contrast*	Background color can be adjusted based on student's need. This is accessed based on the native functionality of the testing device and must be turned on by the test administrator prior to launching the testing software. Students with attention difficulties may need this feature for viewing test content. It also may be needed by some students with visual impairments or other print disabilities.
12	Cultural Considerations	The student receives a paper/pencil form due to specific belief or practice that objects to the use of technology. This student does not use technology for any instructional related activities. Districts must contact NDE to request this accessibility feature.
13	Noise buffer/Headphones	The student uses noise buffers to minimize distraction or filter external noise during testing. Any noise buffer must be compatible with the requirements of the test. Any headphones may be used but may not be plugged into a digital source.
14	Redirection	Test administrator directs/redirects student focus on test as needed.
15	Scratch paper (plain or graph)	The student uses blank scratch paper, blank graph paper, or an individual erasable whiteboard to make notes or record responses. All scratch paper must be collected and securely destroyed at the end of each test domain to maintain test security. The student receives one sheet (or more as needed) of scratch paper. A marker, pen, or pencil should be provided as well. The student can use an assistive technology device to take notes instead of using scratch paper as long as the device is approved by the state. Test administrators have to ensure that all the notes taken on an assistive technology device are deleted after the test.
16	Setting	The student is provided a distraction-free space or alternate, supervised location (e.g. study carrel, front of classroom, alternate room).

	Universal Feature	Description
17	Student reads test aloud	The student quietly reads the test content aloud to self. This feature must be administered in a setting that is not distracting to other students.
18	Medical Device	Students may have access to an electronic device for medical purposes (e.g., Glucose Monitor). The device may include a cell phone but should only support the student during testing for medical reasons. Educators should follow local policies regarding medical devices and ensure students' health is the highest priority. Device settings must restrict access to other applications or the test administrator must closely monitor the use of the device to maintain test security. Use of electronic devices may require a separate setting to avoid distractions to other test takers and to ensure test security.

Tool 2: Linguistic Supports for English Learners

Linguistic supports for English Learners are those features that are available for those students who are designated as English learners. Decisions about linguistic supports should be made by the school team, not an individual, responsible for planning the student's academic program and should be shared with the student's parents or guardians. Selecting the appropriate supports for an English learner requires the examination of several background characteristics such as level of English proficiency, native language literacy level, current and past schooling and years in a U.S. school. Tool 2 includes *recommended* linguistic supports for students at different levels of English proficiency. Descriptions of student characteristics at these levels can be found below. Decisions should be made on an individual basis.

Student Characteristics

Emerging students are at the lowest levels of English language proficiency. These students tend to experience the greatest need for linguistic supports on tests, but these students are least able to use them. Oral native language supports are considered to be the most useful for emerging students, particularly those with fewer literacy skills. Written translations may be helpful for students literate in their native language. Text-to-speech or reading the test aloud in English is helpful to emerging students when supports in the native language are not available. Although state content tests aren't timed, providing extended time is recommended for English learners of all proficiency levels.

Progressing students are at the intermediate level of English proficiency. These students have developed some literacy in English and may benefit from more supports. Text-to-speech or having the test read aloud, providing appropriate reference materials, and extended time are usually helpful for progressing students. Some students may benefit from native language testing. It is important to consider native language literacy level, as well as their academic vocabulary knowledge in both languages when deciding if this support is appropriate. Students who have received recent instruction in English, particularly, those at the progressing and nearly proficient levels may be more likely to benefit from supports in English.

Nearly proficient and recently proficient students are at the more advanced level of English proficiency. These students are nearing English proficiency or have been redesignated at English proficiency on the ELPA21. Supports for these students tend to decrease at this level. Providing bilingual reference materials is recommended for students literate in the native language and who have academic vocabulary in native language and/or English. These students would typically not need oral translation. They may benefit from extended time.

Note: Under ESSA, English learners may be provided linguistic supports on state assessments to ensure students are assessed in a valid and reliable manner, including to the extent practicable assessments in the language and form mostly likely to yield accurate data on what the students know and can do in academic content areas. Students may receive translated content tests, with the exception of the ELA test, for up to three years. An additional two years may be allowed if the LEA determines, in consultation with NDE, on a case-by-case basis. a native language test is appropriate for a student. *§1111(b)(2)(F)*

Note: The official NDE Spanish translation must be used on NSCAS tests. There is no NDE Spanish version of the NSCAS Alternate.

Note: Translated directions/assessment or paper/pencil forms are not allowed for former English learners.

Embedded Linguistic Supports

Linguistic Support	Description	Proficiency Levels			Recommendations for Use
		ELPA21 Emerging	ELPA21 Progressing	ELPA21 Nearly Proficient or Proficient	
1. Text-to-speech in English (audio support)* **M/S/ELA** **ELA – passages not read**	The student uses this feature to hear generated audio of directions, content, and test items.	•	•		Students who use text-to-speech will need headphones unless tested individually in a separate setting.
2. Spanish online form* **M/S only**	The student takes the assessment in Spanish only. Text-to-speech not available in Spanish. May be read aloud verbatim by human reader.	•	◌		Consider the academic background of the student. A student should be literate in Spanish with strong academic vocabulary in Spanish.

***not available for NSCAS Alternative Assessments**

● Recommended for English learners at this English language proficiency level. The other linguistic supports listed may be helpful, based on individual student needs.

◌ Optional – may be appropriate based on English language proficiency level and level of native language literacy.

Non-embedded Linguistic Supports

Linguistic Support	Description	Proficiency Levels			Recommendations for Use
		ELPA21 Emerging	ELPA21 Progressing	ELPA21 Nearly Proficient or Proficient	
3. Word-to-word bilingual dictionary **M/S only**	A bilingual word-to-word dictionary does not contain any definitions, pictures or examples.	◌	•	•	Reference materials are appropriate for students who have had prior experience using them and are able to effectively access the information. May be appropriate for students who don't need a fully translated test, but may need to reference a few words.
4. Bilingual word list **M/S only**	A *district-developed* bilingual word list is a list that contains an English word and the target word or words in the native language. Word list should not violate the construct of the test.	◌	•	•	Reference materials are appropriate for a student who has had prior experience using them, and is able to effectively access the information.

Linguistic Support	Description	Proficiency Levels			Recommendations for Use
		ELPA21 Emerging	ELPA21 Progressing	ELPA21 Nearly Proficient or Proficient	
5. Native language oral translation of directions **M/S/ELA**	Translation of general test directions (not item prompts or questions) can be provided and reread as needed by a test administrator who is fluent in the language. Test administrator may also provide translated audio recording of directions or native language.	•	•		Translating directions aloud in native language is particularly helpful for an emerging student who has not acquired enough English to understand oral or written English.
6. Native language written translation of directions **M/S/ELA**	Test administrator provides written directions in native language. For Spanish, use only the state provided translations.	◌			Written translations of directions is helpful for a student who is literate in his/her native language.
7. Native language clarification of directions **M/S/ELA**	Test administrator simplifies, explains, or clarifies directions in native language.	•	•		Clarification of directions in native language is helpful for an emerging or a progressing student.

Linguistic Support	Description	Proficiency Levels			Recommendations for Use
		ELPA21 Emerging	ELPA21 Progressing	ELPA21 Nearly Proficient or Proficient	
8. Native language oral translation of content and test items **M/S only**	Test administrator provides a translator to orally translate content and test items in native language and reads/rereads as needed. Student is able to respond orally in his/her native language. A translator records student response into online system or regular answer sheet.	●	○		Translating content and test items orally is helpful for an emerging and a progressing student who is not literate in his/her native language, however, his/her native language oral skills are more developed. See tool 7 (pg. 46), scribe guidelines, if inputting student responses into online system or answer sheet. **Note:** For Spanish-speakers taking online English form but who only need support with a few words, a bilingual word-to-word dictionary is an option. If more support is necessary, a side-by-side paper form should be ordered.
9. Native language written translation of content and test items **M/S only**	Test administrator provides a translator to translate content and test items into written native language. **Paper/pencil only.**	○			Written translations of content and test items are appropriate for a student who is literate in his/her native language and understands the academic vocabulary in that language. These students have usually had comparable formal schooling in their home country.

Linguistic Support	Description	Proficiency Levels			Recommendations for Use
		ELPA21 Emerging	ELPA21 Progressing	ELPA21 Nearly Proficient or Proficient	
10. Paper-and-pencil test **M/S/ELA**	Reasons for paper/pencil include: • Written translations of languages other than Spanish **(M/S)** • Available for students who need side-by-side (English and another language) **(M/S only)** • Need for Spanish audio files provided by NDE. • Limited access to technology **(M/S/ELA)**	•			Districts are able to provide written translations in languages other than Spanish. See tool 8 for translation guidelines. If students need the side-by-side support for M/S in English and Spanish, paper/pencil is the only option for these students. For the Spanish translated test, districts must use the NDE version. Due to **significantly** limited access to technology, a newcomer with limited or interrupted formal schooling may need to take the paper-and-pencil version of the assessments. **This option should be based on a student's individual needs only and should not be applied on a group basis.**

Linguistic Support	Description	Proficiency Levels			Recommendations for Use
		ELPA21 Emerging	ELPA21 Progressing	ELPA21 Nearly Proficient or Proficient	
11. Read Aloud	The student will have those parts of the test that have audio support in the computer-based version read by a qualified human reader in English or native language. **Must be read verbatim.**	●	●		If using a human reader, refer to tool 6 for guidelines.

● Recommended for English learners at this English language proficiency level. The other linguistic supports listed may be helpful, based on individual student needs.

◌ Optional – may be appropriate based on English language proficiency level and level of native language literacy.

Tool 3: Accommodations

Embedded Accommodations Available with an IEP or 504 Plan

	Accommodation	Description	Recommendations for Use
1	Color chooser **NSCAS Alternate only**	Background color can be adjusted based on student's need.	Students with attention difficulties may need this feature for viewing test content. It also may be needed by some students with visual impairments or other print disabilities.
2	Text-to-speech* **ELA – passages not read**	The student uses this feature to hear generated audio of directions, content, and test items. ELA passages may not be read aloud. Items that test writing skills and look like longer passages may be read aloud. Typically, passages that may not be read aloud are on left side of split screen.	Students with reading-related disabilities may need assistance accessing instructional content. Students who use text-to-speech will need headphones unless tested individually in a separate setting.

***not available for NSCAS Alternative Assessments**

Non-embedded Accommodations Available with an IEP or 504 Plan

	Accommodation	Description	Recommendations for Use
3	Paper/Pencil	Reasons for paper/pencil include: • Need for Braille or large print version • Student has a medical condition that does not allow the use of computer screens • Student is tested in a facility that does not allow/have internet access	The paper/pencil option should be based on student's individual need but is limited to the reasons listed in the description section.

	Accommodation	Description	Recommendations for Use
4	Mathematical Supports	This accommodation is for students who need additional supports for math (e.g. abacus, calculation device, number line, addition/multiplication charts, base-ten blocks, various types of counters, fraction tiles and pies without numerical labels, coins, clock with or without numbers shown on clock face; clock should not have gears, etc.)	Student's disability affects math calculation but not reasoning.
5	Assistive technology	The student is able to use assistive technology, which includes such supports as typing on customized keyboards, assistance with using a mouse, mouth or head stick or other pointing devices, sticky keys, touch screen, and trackball, speech-to-text conversion, or voice recognition.	Students who have difficulty manipulating a mouse or standard keyboard may need an alternative communication device.
6	Audio amplification device	Hearing impaired student uses an amplification device (eg. FM system, audio trainer)	Some students may require audio amplification devices in addition to hearing aids to increase clarity.
7	Braille*	A raised-dot code that individuals read with the fingertips. Graphic material (e.g., maps, charts, graphs, diagrams, illustrations) is presented in a raised format (paper or thermoform). Contracted braille (Unified English Braille - UEB) is available. Nemeth code is available for math.	Students who are blind or have low vision may read text via braille. Tactile overlays and graphics also may be used to assist the student in accessing content through touch. The use of this accommodation may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment.

	Accommodation	Description	Recommendations for Use
8	Braille writer or note-taker	A blind student uses a braille writer or note-taker with the grammar checker, internet, and file-storing functions turned off.	Students should number their responses to be sure that their answers can be transcribed accurately into a scorable test booklet or answer document.
10	Flexible scheduling	The number of items per session can be flexibly defined based on the student's need. This accommodation can augment the scheduling flexibility defined by the Test Administration Manual.	Students lack the stamina for long testing period or are unable to sustain focus.
11	Large print test booklet*	A large print form of the test that is provided to the student with a visual impairment. A student may respond directly into test booklet. Test administrator transfers answers onto answer document.	Students with visual impairments who may not be able to use zoom or magnifying devices to access the test and may need a large print version of the form.
12	Project online test	An online test is projected onto a large screen or wall. Student must use alternate supervised location that does not allow others to view test content.	Students with visual impairments who may not be able to use zoom or magnifying devices to access the test but would still benefit from taking an online test.
13	Primary mode of communication	Student uses communication device, pointing or other mode of communication to communicate answers. Test administrator may need to record answers onto the answer document or online.	Student's disability precludes him or her from communicating answer choices in the standardized mode.
14	Print on request/Print on demand **NSCAS Alternate Only**	This accommodation is for the alternative assessment only.	Students who may not be able to interact with items online may need to have a paper copy of the test.

	Accommodation	Description	Recommendations for Use
15	Read Aloud	This accommodation is only allowed for students that have a documented need for paper/pencil. The student will have those parts of the test that have audio support in the computer-based version read by a qualified human reader in English.	Students require a paper/pencil form and students have a reading-related disabilities that may require assistance accessing instructional content.
16	Response assistance	Student responds directly into test booklet. Test administrator transfers answers onto answer sheet.	Student with a disability that does not allow them to be able to enter/transfer answers onto answer sheet.
17	Scribe (possibly primary mode of communication)	The student dictates her/his responses to an experienced educator who records verbatim what the student dictates.	Students who have documented significant motor or language processing difficulties, or who have had a recent injury (such as a broken hand or arm) that makes it difficult to produce responses may need to dictate their responses to a human, who then records the student's responses verbatim either in the test platform or on paper. The use of this accommodation may result in the student needing additional time to complete the assessment. For these students, dictating to a scribe is the only way to demonstrate their composition skills.
18	Sign interpretation	An educational sign language interpreter signs the test directions, content and test items to the student. ELA passages may not be signed. The student may also dictate responses by signing.	The student must be tested in an individual or small group setting.
19	Specialized presentation of test	Examples of this accommodation are: (e.g. colored paper, tactile graphics, color overlay, magnification device, color of background, etc.)	Students with visual impairments or other print disabilities may need assistance viewing content.

	Accommodation	Description	Recommendations for Use
20	Voice feedback	Student uses an acoustical voice feedback device (eg. WhisperPhone)	Students who need assistance processing information and focusing on test.

***not available for NSCAS Alternative Assessments**

Tool 4: Planning Tool

Universal Features	
These features are available by default to all students. They may not be turned off.	
Embedded Universal Features	**Non-embedded Universal Features**
• answer choice eliminator • flexible scheduling • highlighter • keyboard navigation • line reader/line guide • math tools • notepad • zoom (item-level)	• alternate location • directions • color contrast • noise buffer/headphones • redirection • scratch paper (plain or graph) • settings • student reads test aloud

Linguistic Supports for English Learners	
These features are identified in advance by an informed team of educators. The online embedded features are not available unless selected. Check all that apply.	
Embedded Linguistic Supports	**Non-embedded Linguistic Supports**
☐ text-to-speech **(ELA passages not read)** ☐ Spanish online form	☐ word-to-word bilingual dictionary **M/S only** ☐ bilingual word list **M/S only** ☐ paper-and-pencil test **Directions M/S/ELA** ☐ native language oral translation of directions ☐ native language written translation of directions ☐ native language clarification of directions **Test Content and Test Items M/S only** ☐ native language oral translation of content and test items ☐ native language written translation of content and test items

Accommodations	
These are identified in advance by an IEP or 504 team. Check all that apply.	
Embedded Accommodations	**Non-embedded Accommodations**
☐ text to speech ☐ color chooser (alternate only)	☐ acoustical voice feedback ☐ assistive technology ☐ audio amplification device ☐ audio presentation of direction, content, and test items ☐ braille ☐ braille writer or notetaker ☐ mathematical supports ☐ flexible testing schedule ☐ large print ☐ paper/pencil form ☐ primary mode of communication ☐ print on demand for alternate assessment only ☐ project online test ☐ response assistance ☐ scribe ☐ sign interpretation ☐ specialized presentation of test (color paper/color overlay, etc.)

Tool 5: Dos and Don'ts When Selecting Accessibility Supports

Do…make accessibility decisions based on individualized needs (e.g., the student's amount of time in the country, age, literacy level in native language, disability needs, etc.).	**Don't**…make accessibility decisions based on whatever is easiest to do (e.g., preferential seating).
Do…select accessibility supports that reduce the effect of the disability and language barrier to access content and demonstrate learning.	**Don't**…select accessibility supports unrelated to documented student learning needs or to give students an unfair advantage.
Do…be certain to document instructional and assessment accommodation(s) on the IEP or 504.	**Don't**…use an accommodation that has not been documented on the IEP or 504 plan.
Do…select linguistic supports based on input of educators who understand language acquisition.	**Don't**…make blanket decisions about linguistic supports.
Do…ensure that accommodations are selected based on multiple stakeholders' input.	**Don't**…make unilateral decisions about accommodations.
Do…make decisions about linguistic supports and accommodations prior to the assessment day.	**Don't**…assume that various combinations of accessibility supports will work effectively without testing these combinations.
Do…be specific about the "Where, When, Who, and How" of providing accessibility supports.	**Don't**…assume that all instructional accessibility supports are appropriate for use on assessments.
Do…become familiar with the types of approved linguistic supports and accommodations that can be used for assessment and select wisely.	**Don't**…make decisions about linguistic supports based on a special education framework.
Do…document and evaluate supports and accommodations used by the student.	**Don't**…check every accessibility support possible on a checklist simply to be "safe."
Do…get input about accessibility supports from teachers, parents, and students.	**Don't**…assume the same accessibility supports remain appropriate year after year.
Do…provide accessibility supports for assessments routinely used for classroom instruction or ensure that students practice each support sufficiently.	**Don't**…provide an assessment accessibility support for the first time on the day of a test.

Tool 6: Read Aloud Guidelines

Background

In cases where a student cannot use the computer-based version of assessments, the student should be provided the read aloud feature. When provided the read aloud support, the student will have those parts of the test that have audio support in the computer-based version read by a qualified human reader.

Qualifications of Test Readers

- The human reader should be an education professional who is familiar with the student, and who is typically responsible for providing this feature in the classroom.
- The human reader must be trained in accordance with test administration and security policies and procedures as articulated in the state's guidelines.
- The human reader must have prior experience in providing read aloud support and must be familiar and comfortable with the process before providing this support to a student during test administration.

Preparation Procedures

- Human readers are expected to familiarize themselves with the test environment and format of the test in advance of administering the read aloud support during operational testing.
- Human readers must clearly distinguish between the test content that should and should not be read aloud to students. Reading aloud test content that is not permitted will result in a test misadministration and will invalidate the test.
- Prior to administering the test, the human reader should inform the student of the parameters of the read aloud support.
- The human reader must be aware of whether the student requires additional accessibility supports that have been approved for use during the test.

Guidelines for Reading Aloud

- The test environment must be configured in such a way as to ensure that the read aloud does not interfere with the instruction or assessment of other students (e.g., ensuring adequate spacing so that the reader's voice does not carry to other students or testing in a separate setting).

- The human reader can only read aloud the same test content that is supported through audio in a computer-based version. No other test content may be read aloud.
- The human reader must read test content exactly as written and as clearly as possible.
- The human reader must communicate in a neutral tone and maintain a neutral facial expression and posture.
- The human reader should avoid gesturing, head movements, or any other verbal or non-verbal emphasis on words.
- The human reader must avoid conversing with the student about test items and respond to the student's questions by repeating the item, words, or instructions **verbatim** as needed.
- The human reader must not paraphrase or define any prompts, test items, or words.
- The human reader may clarify or paraphrase directions in English or a native language if necessary.
- The human reader should adjust his/her reading speed and volume if requested by the student.

Post-Administration

- The human reader must not discuss any portion of the test or the student's performance with others.

Tool 7: Scribe Guidelines

Background

A scribe is an adult who writes down or inputs to the computer what a student dictates via speech or an assistive communication device. A guiding principle in providing a scribe during test administration is to ensure that the student has access to and is able to respond to test content.

Qualifications of Scribes

- The scribe should be an education professional who is familiar with the student, and who is typically responsible for providing this accommodation in the classroom.
- The scribe must be trained in accordance with test administration and security policies and procedures as articulated in test administration manuals, accessibility and accommodations manuals, and related documentation.
- The scribe must have prior experience in providing scribing or transcribing services and must be familiar and comfortable with the process before providing this accommodation to a student during operational test administration.

Preparation Procedures

- Scribes are expected to familiarize themselves with test format using a practice test as well as test environment in advance of the testing session if administering the scribe accommodation during operational testing.
- Scribes must be familiar with the Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan if the student for whom they are scribing has a disability, so that there are plans in place for providing all needed designated supports and accommodations.
- Scribes must be aware if the student requires additional accessibility features or accommodations that have been approved for use during the test.
- Scribes should meet with the student in advance and practice scribing with the student prior to the assessment.

Guidelines for Scribing

- Scribing must be provided in a separate setting so as not to interfere with the instruction or assessment of other students.

- For computer-based administrations, scribes must enter student responses directly into the test interface, making use of the embedded and non-embedded accessibility supports available for a given item and student.
- Scribes should comply with student requests regarding use of all available features within the test environment.
- Scribes must avoid conversing with the student about test items and record the student's responses **verbatim** even if they contain errors.
- Scribes may respond to procedural questions asked by the student (e.g., test directions, navigation within the test environment).
- Scribes may not respond to student questions about test items if their responses compromise validity of the test. The student must not be prompted, reminded, or otherwise assisted in formulating his or her response during or after the dictation to the scribe.
- Scribes may ask the student to restate words or parts of a sentence as needed. Such requests must not be communicated in a manner suggesting that the student should make a change or correction.
- Scribes may not question or correct student choices, alert students to errors, prompt, or influence students in any way that might compromise the integrity of student responses.
- Scribes may not edit or alter student work in any way, and must record exactly what the student has dictated.
- The student must be allowed to review and edit what the scribe has written.

Post-Administration

- The scribe must not discuss any portion of the test or the student's performance with others.

Guidelines for Transcription

- Responses must be transcribed verbatim onscreen or in the paper test booklet by the test administrator as soon as possible after the test is administered.
- Any stored test content on the word processing device must be deleted after the transcription is completed. While awaiting transcription, the device with recorded answers must be stored in a secured, locked location.

Tool 8: Translation Guidelines/Native Language Supports

Sight translation is the provision of spontaneous oral translation of test items and/or directions from English to an EL's native language. That is, sight translation involves on-the-spot rendering of printed and online test materials orally in the learner's native language. Sight translation is the term used by professional translators and interpreters. However, in public education, the term oral translation is more frequently used. Note: Translators should not be family members.

- Before testing, be sure to identify unknown words on the test, look up meaning of these words and write the meaning or target language equivalent of the word(s) on your copy of the test booklet. Destroy notes after use.
- This option may be utilized when a student is provided a test in a language other than Spanish.
- This support is only available on the English language arts assessment for directions. Test items and passages may not be translated on the NSCAS ELA assessment.

Guidelines for Sight Translation

- The test environment must be configured in such a way as to ensure that the sight translation does not interfere with the instruction or assessment of other students (e.g., ensuring adequate spacing so that the reader's voice does not carry to other students or testing in a separate setting).
- The translator must communicate in a neutral tone and maintain a neutral facial expression and posture.
- The translator should avoid gesturing, head movements, or any other verbal or non-verbal emphasis on words.
- The translator cannot clarify or answer questions about content in English or the native language.
- The translator must not simplify any prompts, test items, or words.
- The translator may clarify or paraphrase directions only in the native language if necessary.
- The translator should adjust his/her speed and volume if requested by the student.

Scripted oral translation involves having the sight translator read aloud a previously translated script of a test in the student's native language. To the student, it may seem like a sight translation, in that the script is read aloud. However, the translation of the

script has been previously prepared by a translator. Thus, the person who reads it neither interprets nor translates.

- The state provides content test translations in Spanish. Only the official state Spanish translation should be used for scripted oral translation.

Note: The following practices are recommended for tests translated locally in languages other than Spanish.

Protocol for Local Translation of Directions and/or items (Note: Only directions can be translated on NSCAS ELA assessment).

1) The bilingual teacher, the translator, and other team members who can read in the target language:
   - Independently read and translate the directions and /or test items;
   - As a team, compare the original and translated versions of the directions and/or test items and look for translation errors; and
   - Come to a consensus and make any necessary edits to the translated directions and/or test items.
2) District keeps the official copy of the translated directions and test items secure and destroys all copies upon test completion.

Other Native Language Supports:

Protocol for the Word-to-Word Bilingual Word List (M/S only)

A bilingual word list is a district-developed (not student developed or individualized) list of key words (no definitions or examples) in both English and the native language. Words included on the list should give the student access to the general test content but does not include key words that would compromise the construct being tested. Follow protocol for local translations above.

Protocol for the Word-to-Word Bilingual Dictionary (M/S only)

A word-to-word bilingual dictionary does not have pictures, examples or definitions of words. The use of bilingual dictionaries should be a part of the student's regular classroom experience if being used as a support for assessment.

This support is available for state math and science assessments only.

What types of training might be made available for translators?

As outlined in the following *Dos and Don'ts* chart, translators should participate in all aspects of staff training related to test administration and protocols, test security, code of ethics, and planning for testing day.

Schools/districts may wish to print the Dos and Don'ts chart for translators and require translators to check each of the 'Do' tasks. State test security protocols must be followed at all times. See your school or district test coordinator for directions and questions about security procedures.

Dos and Don'ts for Translators

	Dos	Don'ts
Before the Test	❑ Do provide supervised access to the test administration manual (TAM) prior to test administration. ❑ Follow state and district security protocols when handling secure materials. ❑ Do participate in training with the school test coordinator or designee. ❑ Do make sure you are aware of any school policies regarding bathroom emergencies, student sickness during the test, fire alarm procedures, etc. ❑ Do review the linguistic supports and/or accommodations permitted for the EL student receiving translation support. ❑ Do plan for test day: o Review the allowable accessibility supports. o Read and practice test directions in advance. o Practice and create script to read to students.	☐ Don't remove any test materials from the school or designated area.
During the test	❑ Do tell the student the ground rules of the test administration in the student's native language (including which parts of the test can and cannot be translated). ❑ Do interpret/translate all directions including example questions. ❑ Do emphasize words printed in boldface, italics, or capitals. ❑ Do avoid voice inflection which may be seen as cueing.	☐ Don't alert the student to his/her mistakes during testing. ☐ Don't prompt the student in any way that would result in a better response. ☐ Don't influence the student's response in any way. ☐ Don't define terms for the student. This constitutes assistance that gives the student extra help that is not received by other students. It is unethical for an interpreter to provide such assistance and it is also strictly forbidden.
After the test	❑ Leave the test booklet at the school with the test coordinator. ❑ Do participate in the evaluation process (and/or discussion of how well the accessibility supports worked).	☐ Don't discuss test or responses with others.

Name (printed) _____

Name (signature) _____

Date _____

Tool 9: Educational Sign Language Interpreter Guidelines

In cases where a student requires a sign language support, and for whom the American Sign Language (ASL) video accommodation is not available or appropriate, an educational sign language interpreter is provided. Educational sign language interpreters must follow these procedures during testing to ensure the standardization of the signed presentation to the students.

1. Interpreters must be trained on test administration policies by local test coordinators.

2. Interpreters should use signs that are conceptually accurate, with or without simultaneous voicing, translating only the content that is printed in the test book or on the computer screen without changing, emphasizing, or adding information. Interpreters may not clarify (except for test directions), provide additional information, assist, or influence the student's selection of a response in any way. Interpreters must do their best to use the same signs if the student requests a portion repeated.

3. Interpreters must sign (or sign and speak when using Sim-Com [Simultaneous Communication]) in a clear and consistent manner throughout test administration, using correct production, and without inflections that may provide clues to, or mislead, a student. Interpreters should be provided a copy of the test and the administrative directions prior to the start of testing (check individual state policy for amount of time allowed), in order to become familiar with the words, terms, symbols, signs, and/or graphics that will be read aloud to the student.

4. Interpreters should emphasize only the words printed in boldface, italics, or capital letters and inform the student that the words are printed that way. No other emphasis or inflection is permitted.

5. Interpreters may repeat passages, test items, and response options, as requested, according to the needs of the student. Interpreters should not rush through the test and should ask the student if they are ready to move to the next item.

6. Interpreters may not attempt to solve mathematics problems, or determine the correct answer to a test item while signing, as this may result in pauses or changes in inflection which may mislead the student.

7. Interpreters must use facial expressions consistent with sign language delivery and must not use expressions which may be interpreted by the student as approval or disapproval of the student's answers.

8. Test administrators must be familiar with the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plan, and should know in advance which accommodations are required for the student, and for which test the student is designated to receive an educational sign language interpreter. Test administrators must be aware of whether a student requires additional tools, devices, or adaptive equipment that has been approved for use during the test, such as a magnifier, closed circuit television (CCTV), abacus, brailler, slate, or stylus, and if use of these tools impacts the translation of the test, the interpreter should be made aware of this.

9. Upon review of the test, if an educational sign language interpreter is unsure how to sign and/or pronounce an unfamiliar word, the interpreter should collaborate with an ASL-fluent content expert (if available) which sign is most appropriate to use. If the interpreter is unable to obtain this information before the test, the interpreter should advise the student of the uncertainty and spell the word.

10. When using an ASL sign that can represent more than one concept or English word, the interpreter must adequately contextualize the word, in order to reduce ambiguity. The interpreter may also spell the word after signing it, if there is any doubt about which word is intended.

11. Interpreters must spell any words requested by the student during the test administration.

12. When test items refer to a particular line, or lines, of a passage, re-sign the lines before signing the question and answer choices. For example, the interpreter should sign, "Question X refers to the following lines…," then sign the lines to the student, followed by question X and the response options.

13. When signing selected response items, interpreters must be careful to give equal emphasis to each response option and to sign options before waiting for the student's response.

14. When response choices will be scribed, the interpreter should inform the student at the beginning of the test that if the student designates a response choice by letter only ("D", for example), the interpreter will ask the student if he/she would like the response to be signed again before the answer is recorded in the answer booklet or the computer-based test.

15. If the student chooses an answer before the interpreter has signed all the answer choices, the interpreter must ask if the student wants the other response options to be signed.

16. After the interpreter finishes signing a test item and all response options, the interpreter must allow the student to pause before responding. If the pause has been lengthy ask, "Do you want me to sign the question or any part of it again?" When signing questions again, interpreters must avoid emphasis on words not bolded, italicized, or capitalized.

17. Interpreters should refer to the state glossary (if provided) for technical vocabulary (signs used on the ASL video accommodation) for consistency in providing the accommodation.

Tool 10: Optional Confidentiality Agreement for Educators Exposed to Test Content during Administration of NSCAS Tests

The following optional confidentiality agreement may be used for educators or language experts that are exposed to NSCAS test content during the administration/preparation of NSCAS accessibility supports or during the administration of NSCAS Alternate tests. While this is allowed, the content of all passages and items are secure and should not be read by anyone but the student taking the assessment. Educators that are not administering specific accessibility supports or administering the NSCAS Alternate tests should not read or view any secure test content.

Types of people that it might be advisable to sign this agreement:

- Educators exposed to test content while administering accessibility supports
- Educators who administer the NSCAS Alternate tests
- Individuals who translate test content into other languages
- Individuals who read test content aloud to students
- Administrators that are exposed to test content during a security breach investigation

This list above is not all inclusive, other educators exposed to test content may also need to sign the agreement. Typical test proctors should not need to sign such an agreement because they should not be exposed to test content.

If districts choose to use this agreement, the forms should not be returned to NDE, but should be kept on file in the district. NDE encourages all districts to maintain a set of district policies that include reference to the NSCAS Summative Accessibility Manual. The NSCAS Security Manual includes additional information about security of the NSCAS tests.

Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS) Confidentiality Agreement for Educators Exposed to NSCAS Content Spring 2018

Test security is of the utmost importance to the Nebraska Department of Education. The content of all passages and items are secure and should not be read by anyone but the student taking the assessment. Occasionally, educators or language experts are exposed to test content in the administration/preparation of NSCAS accessibility supports. Additionally, educators will be exposed to test content when administering the NSCAS Alternate tests. **Educators exposed to test content during the administering of accessibility supports or NSCAS Alternate tests should not reproduce any content, directly or indirectly, disclose any content, or discuss any NSCAS content.**

NDE is certain that you share our concern for test security and ask that you acknowledge your adherence to this agreement by signing below.

Legal First Name _____ MI _____ Legal Last Name _____

School/Organization _____ Role/Position _____

Signature _____ Date _____