

## **SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS AND TESTING**

For purposes of this policy, a “student with a disability” refers either to a student receiving special education services under O.R.C. Chapter 3323 in accordance with an individualized education program (IEP), or to a student who has been identified as having a disability based on an evaluation conducted in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

All students, including students with disabilities, must participate in required statewide assessments at designated grades or participate in an alternative assessment. For any student who takes an assessment, the student’s IEP shall include, or the Section 504 plan shall document in writing, what specific accommodation(s), if any, shall be provided when the student takes the assessment. The IEP shall specify the manner in which the student will participate in the statewide assessments, or it may excuse the student from taking the statewide assessment if it instead specifies an alternate assessment.

### **Procedure**

The determination of how an individual student with a disability will participate in state and district assessment programs will be made, at least annually, by the student’s IEP or Section 504 team using the following procedures:

- A. The student’s present level of educational performance will be reviewed.
- B. During the meeting, a statement regarding participation will be identified on the IEP or Section 504 plan as part of the statement regarding the extent to which the child will be able to participate in the regular education program.
- C. If a student with a disability does not take the required statewide assessments, the student’s need for an alternate assessment(s) will be documented, prior to administration, on the IEP, and any alternate assessment(s) will be conducted and the results shall be reported to the Ohio Department of Education.
- D. If it is determined that the student will participate in the assessment program, any appropriate modifications in the format and/or administration procedures shall be made to accommodate the needs of individual students with disabilities and documented on the IEP or Section 504 plan.

Required statewide assessment pass rates used to determine school district performance will include the results of students who take assessments with or without accommodations.

A student with a Section 504 plan shall be permitted reasonable accommodations as specified within his/her individual plan.

### Accommodations

Any student with a disability who is required to take a prescribed statewide assessment may be provided any specific accommodation(s), as documented in his/her IEP or Section 504 plan, that meets all of the following criteria:

- A. The accommodation is specified in the student's IEP and is provided for classroom and districtwide assessments;
- B. The accommodation does not change the content or structure of the assessment;
- C. The accommodation does not change what type of knowledge or skill an assessment is intended to measure; and
- D. The accommodation does not change or enhance the student's response as to what type of knowledge or skill is intended to be assessed, but it facilitates how the response is provided or accessed.

### Alternate Assessment

The opportunity to participate in alternate assessment should be available only to a small percentage of students with disabilities. The determination of whether a student should participate in alternate assessment will be made by the student's IEP or Section 504 team according to the criteria established by the State Board of Education.

Alternate assessment is appropriate only for students who have the most severe disabilities and require the highest level of individualized instruction, such as students with severe limitations to cognitive functioning as documented by the student's evaluation team report. Generally, participation in alternate assessment will not be appropriate for students engaged and making progress in the general curriculum. Participation in alternate assessment should never be based on the student's disability, condition, achievement level, school attendance, or social/cultural factors.

The IEP or Section 504 team should document the student's test taking status in the appropriate sections of the IEP or the Section 504 plan, and pertinent status codes should be recorded through the Education Management Information System.

### English Learner (EL) Students

For purposes of this policy, a student shall be identified as an English learner ("EL") if the student meets the following criteria:

- A. The student is aged 3 through 21 and is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary or secondary school;
- B. The student's primary language is not English, whether born in the U.S. or another country;
- C. Within the school year, the student has been identified as being an individual whose difficulties speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual one of the following:
  - (1) The ability to meet the proficient level of achievement on statewide achievement tests;
  - (2) The ability to achieve successfully in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or
  - (3) The opportunity to participate fully in society.

Students must be classified as EL until they are exited from the EL program according to state criteria. Each EL student shall be assessed annually with Ohio's approved English language proficiency assessment.

EL students must participate in statewide assessments. EL students who have been enrolled in U.S. schools for no more than 180 school days and have not been previously exempted shall be exempt for one year from taking any required statewide reading, writing, or English language arts assessment, other than Ohio's approved English language proficiency assessment.

EL students who meet the criterion for exemption from the reading and writing assessments on state achievement tests are required to participate in all other state assessments and must meet the other performance standards required of all students. All reporting related to statewide testing of EL students shall be in accordance with state law and State Board rules.

For purposes of statewide testing, EL students may receive accommodations as approved by the State Department of Education.

LEGAL REFS.: O.R.C. §3301.0711  
O.A.C. 3301-35-04; 3301-13-03

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