

Fall 2009

Testing Accommodations for Students with Disabilities and Limited English Proficient (English Language Learner) Students

Accommodations are practices and procedures in the presentation, response, setting, and timing/scheduling that provide equitable access during instruction and assessments for students with disabilities and limited English proficient students. Accommodations are intended to reduce or even eliminate the effects of a student's disability or language proficiency while maintaining learning expectations. Accommodations provided to a student must be the same for classroom instruction, classroom assessments, and state assessments.

For more information on the use of testing accommodations, please see [the District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent of Education Testing Accommodations Manual](#). OSSE provides annual training and technical assistance on this manual to LEAs.

OSSE is committed to ongoing evaluation of accommodations available to students with disabilities and Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. As a part of this effort, OSSE commissioned a study in 2009 on the use of accommodations by students with disabilities on the annual statewide assessment. The detailed report is available upon request. However, findings from the report include:

- The average student receiving *any* accommodations received 3 or 4 accommodations.
- The most common accommodations are Equipment accommodations.
- Female students are less likely than male students to receive accommodations.
- Most accommodations provided for the DC CAS are allowed in other states on large-scale assessments.
- Implementation of accommodations greatly affects the impact of accommodations on scores.
- A recommendation for further collection of data to better evaluate the impact of various accommodations on assessment scores.

The District of Columbia's accommodations for LEP students address the linguistic and socio-cultural needs of ELL students. OSSE uses an ELL responsive taxonomy to organize the accommodations, categorizing them according to direct and indirect linguistic support, and the accommodations are distinct and separate from accommodations appropriate for students with disabilities. OSSE also evaluates the use of accommodations for LEP (ELL) students. Through the LEP Partnership initiative, beginning in the fall of 2008 the District of Columbia has been receiving technical assistance from the George Washington University Center for Equity and Excellence in Education (CEEE) on evaluating and refining State accommodations policies for LEP students, in the areas of design, selection of ELL responsive accommodations and procedures to improve the quality of accommodations. OSSE updates the Testing Accommodations Manual as needed based upon these ongoing evaluations.

For questions on testing accommodations, please contact:

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