



**State Accommodations Policies:  
Implications for the  
Assessment of Reading**



Partnership for Accessible  
Reading Assessment



**Partnership for Accessible Reading Assessment**

University of Minnesota  
350 Elliott Hall  
75 E. River Road  
Minneapolis, MN 55455

<http://www.readingassessment.info>  
[readingassess@umn.edu](mailto:readingassess@umn.edu)

This work is supported, in part, by the U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for



Special Education Research—Grant No. H324F040002. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Department of Education or offices within it.



**NATIONAL  
CENTER ON  
EDUCATIONAL  
OUTCOMES**

UNIVERSITY  
OF MINNESOTA  
**Curriculum and  
Instruction**



**UC DAVIS**



The University of Minnesota is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, or sexual orientation.

This document is available in alternative formats upon request.

# State Accommodations Policies: Implications for the Assessment of Reading

Sheryl S. Lazarus, Martha L. Thurlow, Kristin D. Eisenbraun,  
Kathryn E. Lail, Danielle L. Matchett, & Mari Quenemoen

June 2006

All rights reserved. Any or all portions of this document may be reproduced and distributed without prior permission, provided the source is cited as:

Lazarus, S. S., Thurlow, M. L., Eisenbraun, K. D., Lail, K. E., Matchett, D. L., & Quenemoen, M. (2006). *State accommodations policies: Implications for the assessment of reading*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, Partnership for Accessible Reading Assessment.

## Introduction

Until relatively recently, students with disabilities had been largely excluded from statewide testing. The standards-based reform movement and changes in federal laws have led to improved educational opportunities for students with disabilities. However, policymakers have argued about how to measure the academic achievement of these students. Specifically in the area of reading assessments, much controversy has surrounded the use of accommodations on high stakes statewide assessments. The purpose of this report is to analyze the accommodations that are included in state accommodations policies and guidelines to learn more about 10 accommodations that may have specific implications for the assessment of reading. These accommodations include audio-video equipment, braille, large print, proctor/scribe, read aloud directions, read aloud questions, repeat/re-read/clarify directions, sign interpret directions, sign interpret questions, and sign responses to a sign language interpreter.

Large-scale assessment options for students with disabilities include taking the general assessment without accommodations, taking the general assessment with accommodations, or participating in an alternate assessment. All states have accommodations policies that describe which accommodations may be used on statewide tests (Thurlow, Lazarus, Thompson, & Morse, 2005). A testing *accommodation* is a change in testing materials or procedures that enables students to participate in assessments in a way that allows their abilities to be assessed rather than their disabilities (Bolt & Thurlow, 2004). Accommodations should improve the accuracy with which the student's knowledge and skills are measured, but should not change the construct being tested.

A standard accommodation is an accommodation that is not considered to change the test to the extent that it changes the construct being assessed. A nonstandard accommodation is an accommodation that is considered to alter the test to such an extent that a student's score is not considered valid. Nonstandard accommodations are sometimes called modifications, adaptations, or not allowed accommodations (Thurlow et al., 2005; Bolt & Thurlow, 2004). However, the research on how some of the more controversial accommodations (such as read aloud questions or dictated response) affect the validity of scores has been inconclusive and lacks a strong empirical base (Johnstone, Altman, Thurlow, & Thompson, 2006; Thompson, Blount, & Thurlow, 2002). More research is necessary to fully understand the varied effects that individual accommodations have on actual academic achievement.

## Method

In 2003, the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) gathered, organized, and reported various aspects of state accommodation policies (Clapper, Morse, Lazarus, Thompson, & Thurlow, 2005). The study discussed in this report analyzed the appendix tables in the Clapper et al. (2005) report to gather information about 10 accommodations

that may relate specifically to the assessment of reading: (1) audio-video equipment, (2) braille, (3) large print, (4) proctor/scribe, (5) read aloud directions, (6) read aloud questions, (7) repeat/re-read/clarify directions, (8) sign interpret directions, (9) sign interpret questions, and (10) sign responses to a sign language interpreter. Definitions of these accommodations are provided in Table 1.

**Table 1. Accommodation Definitions**

<p><b>Audio-video equipment</b>—use of audio or video equipment.</p> <p><b>Braille</b>—all parts of the assessment are presented in braille.</p> <p><b>Large print</b>—all parts of the assessment are in large print.</p> <p><b>Proctor/scribe</b>—the student responds verbally and a proctor or scribe then translates this to an answer sheet; for writing extended responses, specific instructions about spelling or punctuation may be included.</p> <p><b>Read aloud directions</b>—the directions portion of the assessment is read to the student.</p> <p><b>Read aloud questions</b>—the assessment items are read to the student aloud.</p> <p><b>Repeat/re-read/clarify directions</b>—directions may be clarified through restatement for the student either in response to the administrator’s decision that clarification is needed for all directions, or in response to student questions.</p> <p><b>Sign interpret directions</b>—the directions portion of the assessment is presented to the student via sign language (or other version such as cued speech, signed English).</p> <p><b>Sign interpret questions</b>—the assessment items are presented to the student via sign language.</p> <p><b>Sign responses to a sign language interpreter</b>—the student responds in sign language to the interpreter.</p>
---

Source: Clapper et al. (2005).

If the Clapper et al. (2005) report did not provide detailed information about a particular accommodation for a given state, the state’s accommodations policy or guidelines were also reviewed. The policies were obtained from the state Web sites or from paper copies as of December 31, 2003. Each accommodation policy for each state was categorized in one of four ways: allowed, allowed with implications for scoring, allowed in certain circumstances, or prohibited. Table 2 provides details about the various categories.

## Table 2. Accommodation Classifications

<p><b>Allowed</b>—If the accommodation is used, the student must be given the score she or he earned, the student’s score must be aggregated, and the score must be used for accountability purposes.</p> <p><b>Allowed with implications for scoring and/or aggregation</b>—If the accommodation is used, the student automatically receives a certain score (e.g., zero or below basic) or the score is not aggregated. For this report, if a state indicated an accommodation was nonstandard, it was assumed that there were implications for scoring <i>unless</i> there was an indication to contradict this.</p> <p><b>Allowed in certain circumstances</b>—The accommodation is allowed on some assessments and not others.</p> <p><b>Prohibited</b>—The accommodation may not be used.</p>
---

Source: Clapper et al. (2005).

## Results

### Audio-Video Equipment

As indicated in Table 3, the accommodations policies of 17 states permitted the use of audio or video equipment without restriction. Ten states allowed the use of the accommodation in certain circumstances; specifically, several of these states did not allow the use of audio-video on a reading test. For example, the New Mexico policy stated that the use of a tape recorder was not allowed on the reading comprehension test and the South Dakota policy indicated that audio-video equipment was allowed except on items assessing decoding and reading comprehension. In three states, there were implications for scoring when the audio-video accommodation was used. In Virginia, for example, the use of the audiotaped version on the English/Reading test was considered a nonstandard accommodation. Although verbatim audiotaped directions were allowed without restriction in Maryland, verbatim audiotape of the entire test content was allowed with implications for scoring on the California Test of Basic Skills, 5th edition (CTBS/5), and on the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP). This accommodation is not allowed on the Maryland Functional Reading Test or the High School Assessment English Test.

### Braille

Table 4 shows that 39 states permitted the use of the braille accommodation with no restrictions and seven states allowed the use of braille in certain circumstances. Several states only permitted the use of braille on some, but not all, of the large-scale assessments that were administered in the state. For example, the braille accommodation was considered a nonstandard accommodation on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) in

the state of Georgia. In Mississippi, the braille accommodation was considered a non-allowable accommodation on the California Test of Basic Skills, 5th edition. Other states required medical and educational documentation of a visual impairment before the braille accommodation was allowed. For example, Oklahoma only allowed the use of braille if the student's IEP and a doctor's letter on file indicated a visual impairment. In seven states there were implications for scoring if braille was used. For example, the Utah policy indicated that the braille version of the reading test had been separately normed, so the scores may not be comparable to the regular version of the test. One state, Montana, prohibited the use of braille on the general assessment and required the use of an alternate assessment for students who needed the braille accommodation.

### **Large Print**

As shown in Table 5, most states (n = 47) allowed the large print accommodation. In Oklahoma, this accommodation was allowed only if a student's IEP documented that the student had a visual impairment and there was a doctor's letter on file. There were implications for scoring when the large print accommodation was used in Hawaii (i.e., the student did not receive stanine or percentile rank scores on the Stanford-9).

### **Proctor/Scribe**

The use of a proctor or scribe to record a student's responses was allowed with no restrictions in 33 states (Table 6). Another 15 states allowed the use of a scribe or proctor in certain circumstances. For example, Connecticut permitted the use of a scribe to record multiple choice responses but did not permit scribes to record open-ended or extended responses. In eight states there were implications for scoring when a proctor or scribe was used. In Indiana, for example, the scores of students who used a proctor or scribe to record responses for the Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress-Plus (ISTEP+) were not included in aggregate reports. In Hawaii, again, stanine and percentile rank scores were not calculated on the Stanford 9.

In several states the use of a proctor or scribe was only permitted on certain examinations and there were also scoring implications. In California, for example, the proctor/scribe accommodation was allowed on the writing test if the student provided all spelling and language conventions. There were implications for scoring if the proctor/scribe provided spelling, punctuation, grammar, capitalization, and other language conventions.

### **Read Aloud Directions**

As shown in Table 7, more than four-fifths of the states (n = 41) permitted directions to be read aloud with no restrictions. Three states, Arizona, Michigan, and Wisconsin,

allowed directions to be read aloud in certain circumstances. The circumstances in which the directions could *not* be read aloud were on tests that measured reading. Three states, Arizona, Michigan, and North Dakota, allowed the use of this accommodation but there were implications for scoring. In Arizona, reading the directions aloud on the Stanford 9 test affected the standardization and the comparability of scores. Michigan stated that reading parts of the English Language Arts tests was considered nonstandard and, if read aloud, the resulting scores could not be considered eligible scores for Michigan Merit Award purposes and could not be included in any summary scores. The North Dakota policy stated that the accommodation may have an effect on the performance of the student and this should be considered when interpreting scores.

### Read Aloud Questions

Table 8 shows that only three states, Massachusetts, Missouri, and Vermont, permitted the use of read aloud questions with no restrictions, with most states ( $n = 42$ ) allowing the use of read aloud questions in certain circumstances. Within the “allowed in certain circumstances” category, this accommodation was most frequently restricted on reading tests.

In 14 states the read aloud questions accommodation was considered a nonstandard accommodation (i.e., allowed with implications for scoring). As indicated in Table 8, some states had very detailed specifications regarding the use of this accommodation. For example, Maryland allowed questions to be read aloud with the use of the Kurzweil™ reading software on the Maryland School Assessment (MSA), Maryland High School Assessments (HSA), and the IDEA Proficiency Test (IPT). Additionally, Maryland considered this a nonstandard accommodation in grades three and four on the MSA, but permitted its use at higher grade levels when the state standards may have focused more on comprehension rather than decoding. The Maryland policy also stated that this accommodation was permitted only on certain subtests, Reading for Understanding and Reading for Life Skills.

### Repeat/Re-read/Clarify Directions

Table 9 shows that directions may be repeated, re-read, or clarified in 33 states. Four states (Arizona, Georgia, Mississippi, and Montana) permitted the use of this accommodation only in certain circumstances. In these states, the limitations often referred to the reading test. For example, the Arizona policy indicated that directions may be re-read, but that on the reading test they could not be clarified. Only three states (Georgia, Mississippi, and North Dakota) had implications for scoring when the repeat, re-read, clarify directions accommodation was used (only under certain conditions for Georgia).



## Sign Interpret Directions

As indicated in Table 10, most states ( $n = 45$ ) allowed directions to be signed without restriction. Only one state, Mississippi, permitted the use of this accommodation in certain circumstances. Mississippi did not allow the use of sign interpretation of directions on the reading test or on the CTBS/5. In two states, Arizona and North Dakota, sign interpretation of directions was considered a nonstandard accommodation (i.e., allowed with implications for scoring).

## Sign Interpret Questions

Table 11 shows that 13 states permitted sign interpretation of questions with no restrictions. More than half of the states ( $n = 27$ ) allowed sign interpretation in certain circumstances. Typically, states that restricted the use of sign interpretation of questions did not allow its use on the reading test. In seven states, there were implications for scoring when this accommodation was used. In some states, sign interpretation of questions was considered nonstandard (i.e., allowed with implications for scoring) only on the reading test. For example, the Virginia policy indicated that this accommodation was nonstandard if used on the English/reading test.

## Sign Responses to a Sign Language Interpreter

In 20 states, responses may be signed to a sign language interpreter without restriction (Table 12). Eight states allowed this accommodation in certain circumstances. For example, Delaware did not permit responses to be signed on the reading or writing tests. In two states, Indiana and North Dakota, there were implications for scoring when this accommodation was used. For example, in Indiana, the scores were not included in any aggregated reports for norm referenced tests if this accommodation was used.

**Table 3. Audio-Video Equipment, 2003 Policies/Guidelines**

State	Allowed without Restriction	Allowed in Certain Circumstances	Allowed with Implications for Scoring	Notes/Comments
Alabama				
Alaska	X			
Arizona		X		Audiotape administration is not allowed on the reading portion of Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS).
Arkansas				
California				
Colorado				
Connecticut				
Delaware				
Florida				
Georgia				
Hawaii		X		Audiotape administration is allowed on the Mathematics Problem Solving subtest of the Stanford 9 only and not allowed on the Reading Comprehension subtest.
Idaho	X			
Illinois	X			
Indiana				
Iowa	X			
Kansas				
Kentucky	X			
Louisiana	X			
Maine				

State	Allowed without Restriction	Allowed in Certain Circumstances	Allowed with Implications for Scoring	Notes/Comments
Maryland		X	X	Verbatim audiotape of directions is allowed without restriction; Verbatim audiotape of the entire test content is allowed with implications for scoring if used on the California Test of Basic Skills, 5th edition (CTBS/5) (use of this accommodation on the CTBS/5 invalidates comparison to national norms) or on the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP) (use of this accommodation on the MSPAP results in the student's reading score being invalidated in the scoring/data processing process); Verbatim audiotape of the entire test content is not permitted for the Maryland Functional Reading Test or the High School Assessment (HSA) English test.
Massachusetts	X			
Michigan	X			
Minnesota		X		Audiotape administration of the math test only is allowed.
Mississippi				
Missouri				
Montana				
Nebraska	X			
Nevada				
New Hampshire	X			
New Jersey	X			
New Mexico		X		Use of a tape recorder for presentation of directions, stimulus material, questions, and/or answer choices is allowed except on the reading comprehension test.
New York	X			
North Carolina				
North Dakota				
Ohio	X			
Oklahoma				

State	Allowed without Restriction	Allowed in Certain Circumstances	Allowed with Implications for Scoring	Notes/Comments
Oregon	X			
Pennsylvania		X		Audiotape directions and verbatim audiotape of Mathematics and Writing tests only is allowed.
Rhode Island		X	X	If audiotape presentation is used on the English Language Arts Assessment in grades 4, 8, or 11, the resulting score will be considered invalid.
South Carolina	X			
South Dakota		X		Audio recordings for presentation are allowed except on items assessing decoding and reading comprehension.
Tennessee		X		A tape recorder can be used on the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) Competency Test only and requires special permission.
Texas				
Utah	X			
Vermont				
Virginia		X	X	Audiotape version of test items is a nonstandard accommodation on the English/Reading test (nonstandard accommodations significantly change what a test is measuring and do not maintain standard conditions of the test).
Washington	X			
West Virginia				
Wisconsin				Prohibited—It is inappropriate to use audiotaped, videotaped, or any other type of electronic versions of the Wisconsin Reading Comprehension Test (WRCT) or Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examinations (WKCE) Reading Test.
Wyoming				
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	

Sources: Compiled using data obtained from Clapper et al. (2005) and a review of state accommodation policies.

**Table 4. Braille, 2003 Policies/Guidelines**

State	Allowed without Restriction	Allowed in Certain Circumstances	Allowed with Implications for Scoring	Notes/Comments
Alabama		X	X	Allowed with implications for scoring (i.e., considered non-standard administration; only raw scores reported) on the Stanford 10 only.
Alaska	X			
Arizona	X			
Arkansas	X			
California	X			
Colorado	X			
Connecticut	X			
Delaware		X		Presenting the test in Grade 1 and/or Grade 2 braille is allowed.
Florida	X			
Georgia		X	X	Considered a nonstandard accommodation on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS).
Hawaii	X			
Idaho	X			
Illinois	X			
Indiana	X			
Iowa	X			
Kansas	X			
Kentucky				
Louisiana	X			
Maine	X			
Maryland	X			
Massachusetts	X			
Michigan	X			
Minnesota	X			

State	Allowed without Restriction	Allowed in Certain Circumstances	Allowed with Implications for Scoring	Notes/Comments
Mississippi		X	X	Considered a non-allowable accommodation on the California Test of Basic Skills, 5th edition (CTBS/5) (i.e., the test results of students who use non-allowable accommodations become invalid and must be excluded from summary statistics).
Missouri	X			
Montana				Prohibited—Considered a nonstandard accommodation (i.e., scores can not be compared with those of other students taking the test with no accommodations or with standard accommodations); therefore, an alternate assessment must be completed.
Nebraska	X			
Nevada	X			
New Hampshire	X			
New Jersey	X			
New Mexico	X			
New York	X			
North Carolina	X			
North Dakota			X	Using a braille version of the test is considered a "Category 3 Accommodation." These accommodations may have an effect that alters the interpretation of individual scores and may also change what is being measured.
Ohio	X			
Oklahoma		X	X	The student's IEP must indicate visual impairment and there must be on file a doctor's letter stating that the student is visually impaired. If a braille version of a test is used, only student level scores will be provided and no summary reports will be produced.
Oregon	X			
Pennsylvania	X			
Rhode Island	X			
South Carolina	X			

<b>State</b>	<b>Allowed without Restriction</b>	<b>Allowed in Certain Circumstances</b>	<b>Allowed with Implications for Scoring</b>	<b>Notes/Comments</b>
South Dakota			X	Use of a braille version of the test is considered a non-standard administration.
Tennessee	X			
Texas	X			
Utah		X	X	The braille versions of the reading diagnostic tests and Stanford Achievement Test are normed and scored separately so the results cannot be compared to the regular version of the test.
Vermont		X		Not allowed on the New Standards Mathematics Examination.
Virginia	X			
Washington	X			
West Virginia	X			
Wisconsin	X			
Wyoming	X			
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	

Sources: Compiled using data obtained from Clapper et al. (2005) and a review of state accommodation policies.

**Table 5. Large Print, 2003 Policies/Guidelines**

<b>State</b>	<b>Allowed without Restriction</b>	<b>Allowed in Certain Circumstances</b>	<b>Allowed with Implications for Scoring</b>	<b>Notes/Comments</b>
Alabama	X			
Alaska	X			
Arizona	X			
Arkansas	X			
California	X			
Colorado	X			
Connecticut	X			
Delaware	X			
Florida	X			
Georgia	X			
Hawaii			X	Students do not receive stanine or percentile rank scores if used on the Stanford 9.
Idaho	X			
Illinois	X			
Indiana	X			
Iowa	X			
Kansas	X			
Kentucky				
Louisiana	X			
Maine	X			
Maryland	X			
Massachusetts	X			
Michigan	X			
Minnesota	X			
Mississippi	X			
Missouri	X			
Montana	X			



State	Allowed without Restriction	Allowed in Certain Circumstances	Allowed with Implications for Scoring	Notes/Comments
Nebraska	X			
Nevada	X			
New Hampshire	X			
New Jersey	X			
New Mexico	X			
New York	X			
North Carolina	X			
North Dakota	X			
Ohio	X			
Oklahoma		X		The student's IEP must indicate visual impairment and there must be on file a doctor's letter stating that the student is visually impaired.
Oregon	X			
Pennsylvania	X			
Rhode Island	X			
South Carolina	X			
South Dakota	X			
Tennessee	X			
Texas	X			
Utah	X			
Vermont	X			
Virginia	X			
Washington	X			
West Virginia	X			
Wisconsin	X			
Wyoming	X			
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	

Sources: Compiled using data obtained from Clapper et al. (2005) and a review of state accommodation policies.

**Table 6. Proctor/Scribe, 2003 Policies/Guidelines**

<b>State</b>	<b>Allowed without Restriction</b>	<b>Allowed in Certain Circumstances</b>	<b>Allowed with Implications for Scoring</b>	<b>Notes/Comments</b>
Alabama		X	X	Considered a non-standard administration (i.e., student report will indicate non-standard administration) if used on the Stanford 10. Not allowed on writing assessments.
Alaska	X			
Arizona		X	X	Allowed on math and reading tests but considered a nonstandard accommodation (i.e., affects comparability of scores) if used on the writing test.
Arkansas	X			
California		X	X	Allowed on the writing test if the student indicates all spelling and language conventions. Allowed with implications for scoring (i.e., considered a modification that affects the comparability of scores) on the writing test if the scribe provides spelling, grammar, and language conventions.
Colorado	X			
Connecticut		X		School personnel may bubble student verbal responses to multiple-choice or grid table items only but may not be used for recording student answers to any questions requiring an open-ended or extended-response.
Delaware	X			
Florida	X			
Georgia		X	X	Considered a nonstandard accommodation on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS).
Hawaii			X	Students do not receive stanine or percentile rank scores if used on the Stanford 9.
Idaho	X			
Illinois	X			
Indiana		X	X	Must be documented on the Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress-Plus (ISTEP+) Student Information Questionnaire; accommodated norm referenced scores are not included in any aggregate reports.

State	Allowed without Restriction	Allowed in Certain Circumstances	Allowed with Implications for Scoring	Notes/Comments
Iowa	X			
Kansas	X			
Kentucky	X			
Louisiana	X			
Maine		X		Oral dictation of a writing sample to a scribe is not allowed.
Maryland	X			
Massachusetts	X			
Michigan	X			
Minnesota	X			
Mississippi	X			
Missouri	X			
Montana	X			
Nebraska	X			
Nevada		X		Dictating responses for constructed response questions to a scribe is not allowed on writing assessments.
New Hampshire		X		Students may not dictate their responses to the writing prompt to a proctor/ scribe.
New Jersey	X			
New Mexico		X		Students may not indicate responses on a constructed-response writing test to a scribe.
New York	X			
North Carolina	X			
North Dakota		X	X	Indicating responses to a scribe on a constructed-response writing test is considered a "Category 3 Accommodation." These accommodations may have an effect that alters the interpretation of individual scores and may also change what is being measured.
Ohio	X			

State	Allowed without Restriction	Allowed in Certain Circumstances	Allowed with Implications for Scoring	Notes/Comments
Oklahoma	X			
Oregon	X			
Pennsylvania		X		Answering questions orally with a scribe transferring answers is allowed on math and reading tests only.
Rhode Island	X			
South Carolina	X			
South Dakota				
Tennessee		X		Allowed, but if used on the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) Writing test, this accommodation must be indicated on the student's IEP.
Texas	X			
Utah	X			
Vermont		X		Allowed except on the independent writing and long response to long reading passage sections of the New Standards English Language Arts Examination.
Virginia		X	X	Considered a nonstandard accommodation on the writing sample component of the English writing test (nonstandard accommodations significantly change what a test is measuring and do not maintain standard conditions of the test).
Washington	X			
West Virginia	X			
Wisconsin	X			
Wyoming	X			
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>8</b>	

Sources: Compiled using data obtained from Clapper et al. (2005) and a review of state accommodation policies.

**Table 7. Read Aloud Directions, 2003 Policies/Guidelines**

State	Allowed without Restriction	Allowed in Certain Circumstances	Allowed with Implications for Scoring	Notes/Comments
Alabama	X			
Alaska	X			
Arizona		X	X	Considered a modification if used on the Stanford 9 (i.e., affects standardization and the comparability of scores); not allowed on the reading portion of Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS).
Arkansas	X			
California	X			
Colorado	X			
Connecticut	X			
Delaware	X			
Florida	X			
Georgia	X			
Hawaii				
Idaho	X			
Illinois	X			
Indiana	X			
Iowa	X			
Kansas				
Kentucky				
Louisiana	X			
Maine	X			
Maryland	X			
Massachusetts	X			
Michigan		X	X	Reading the Part 2A/2B portions of the English Language Arts test considered a nonstandard accommodation (MEAP test scores accomplished by use of nonstandard accommodations are not considered eligible scores for Michigan Merit Award purposes or included in any summary scores).

<b>State</b>	<b>Allowed without Restriction</b>	<b>Allowed in Certain Circumstances</b>	<b>Allowed with Implications for Scoring</b>	<b>Notes/Comments</b>
Minnesota				
Mississippi	X			
Missouri	X			
Montana	X			
Nebraska	X			
Nevada	X			
New Hampshire	X			
New Jersey	X			
New Mexico	X			
New York	X			
North Carolina	X			
North Dakota			X	Reading test directions to student is considered a "Category 2 Accommodation." These accommodations may have an effect on student performance that should be considered when interpreting individual student scores.
Ohio				
Oklahoma	X			
Oregon	X			
Pennsylvania	X			
Rhode Island	X			
South Carolina	X			
South Dakota	X			
Tennessee	X			
Texas	X			
Utah	X			
Vermont	X			

<b>State</b>	<b>Allowed without Restriction</b>	<b>Allowed in Certain Circumstances</b>	<b>Allowed with Implications for Scoring</b>	<b>Notes/Comments</b>
Virginia	X			
Washington	X			
West Virginia	X			
Wisconsin		X		Directions may be read for the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examinations (WKCE) tests for mathematics, science, and social studies only.
Wyoming	X			
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	

Sources: Compiled using data obtained from Clapper et al. (2005) and a review of state accommodation policies.

**Table 8. Read Aloud Questions, 2003 Policies/Guidelines**

<b>State</b>	<b>Allowed without Restriction</b>	<b>Allowed in Certain Circumstances</b>	<b>Allowed with Implications for Scoring</b>	<b>Notes/Comments</b>
Alabama		X		Not allowed on the Stanford 10 or on any reading assessments.
Alaska		X		Test questions on the reading test may not be read to student.
Arizona		X	X	Considered a nonstandard accommodation (i.e., affects the comparability of scores) if used on Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards' (AIMS') reading test or on the Stanford 9.
Arkansas		X		Not allowed on the reading comprehension portion of the reading test.
California		X	X	This accommodation is available only to students with documentation in their IEP or 504 plan. This accommodation is considered a modification (i.e., it fundamentally alters what the test measures) if used on any English Language Arts (ELA) or reading subtest.
Colorado		X		Questions may not be read on the reading or writing test.
Connecticut		X		Only science and math items may be read.
Delaware		X	X	Reading aloud of reading passages or texts on the reading test produces non-aggregated scores.
Florida		X		Oral presentation may be provided for all directions and items other than reading items.
Georgia		X	X	Allowed on writing tests; the Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHSGT), and on all subtests of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) except reading comprehension and vocabulary subtests; considered a nonstandard accommodation if used on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) and on the reading comprehension and vocabulary subtests of the ITBS.
Hawaii				
Idaho		X		Not allowed on sections measuring reading ability.
Illinois				
Indiana		X		Test questions that measure reading comprehension may not be read at any time.



<b>State</b>	<b>Allowed without Restriction</b>	<b>Allowed in Certain Circumstances</b>	<b>Allowed with Implications for Scoring</b>	<b>Notes/Comments</b>
Iowa		X		Not allowed on tests of reading comprehension.
Kansas				
Kentucky		X		Must be documented on the student's IEP or 504 plan.
Louisiana		X		Not allowed on the "Reading and Responding" section of the English/Language Arts test in the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program for the 21st Century (LEAP 21) and Graduate Exit Examination for the 21st Century (GEE 21) nor on the "Reading Comprehension" section of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS), or the "Ability to Interpret Literacy Materials" section of the Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITED).
Maine		X		Not allowed during the reading session.
Maryland		X	X	Use of the Kurzweil™ reading software is permitted to deliver this accommodation on the Maryland School Assessment (MSA), Maryland High School Assessments (HSA), and the IDEA Proficiency Test (IPT); not permitted on the reading portion of the Maryland Functional Testing Program (MFPT); any verbatim reading accommodation invalidates criterion-referenced reading scores for grades 3 and 4 MSA, verbatim reading is only permitted on Part 3 (Reading for Understanding) and Part 4 (Reading for Life Skills) portions of the test.
Massachusetts	X			
Michigan		X	X	Reading the Part 2A and 2B portions of the English Language Arts (ELA) test is considered a nonstandard accommodation (MEAP test scores accomplished by use of nonstandard accommodations are not considered eligible scores for Michigan Merit Award purposes or included in any summary scores).
Minnesota		X		Reading of the mathematics test only is allowed.
Mississippi		X	X	Not allowed on any reading sections or on any subtests of the California Test of Basic Skills, 5th edition (CTBS/5). If non-allowable accommodations are used, the resulting scores are not included in the district summary statistics.
Missouri	X			

State	Allowed without Restriction	Allowed in Certain Circumstances	Allowed with Implications for Scoring	Notes/Comments
Montana		X	X	Reading orally to the student the Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary subtests makes the administration of these subtests nonstandard (scores of students using nonstandard accommodations will not be compared with those of other students).
Nebraska				
Nevada		X	X	Allowed on language arts, mathematics, and science tests; reading the reading or vocabulary test to the student is a non-permissible accommodation and will result in an invalid administration of the test (i.e., affects the validity and reliability of a student's test scores).
New Hampshire		X		Allowed only for math, science, and/or social studies tests. The reading component of English language arts may not be read.
New Jersey		X		Reading passages in Language Arts Literacy may not be read aloud.
New Mexico		X		Not allowed on reading comprehension tests.
New York		X		Only the items and questions within the Grade 4 English Language Arts Session 2, Part 1 and Grade 8 ELA Session 1, Part 2: Listening part of the test may be read aloud to the student.
North Carolina		X		Allowed on math and writing tests but not on reading comprehension tests.
North Dakota		X	X	Considered a "Category 2" accommodation, that is., this accommodation may have an effect on student performance that should be considered when interpreting individual student scores. If used on the reading comprehension test, this accommodation is considered a "Category 3" accommodation and may have an effect that alters the interpretation of individual scores and may also change what is being measured.
Ohio				
Oklahoma		X		Allowed if the test is not a reading test.
Oregon		X		Allowed for math and writing but not for reading/literature items.
Pennsylvania		X		Allowed on mathematics or writing prompts only; reading the reading tests is not allowed.
Rhode Island		X	X	Allowed but the resulting score will be considered invalid if used on English Language Arts Test.

State	Allowed without Restriction	Allowed in Certain Circumstances	Allowed with Implications for Scoring	Notes/Comments
South Carolina		X	X	Allowed for math, science, and social studies, but considered a modification (i.e., compromises the validity and alters the meaning and comparability of test scores) if used on the English Language Arts test.
South Dakota		X		Allowed except on tests of decoding and reading comprehension.
Tennessee		X	X	May be used by students scoring at or below the 16th percentile on an individualized standardized reading test and/or by students who meet eligibility criteria for a Visual and/or Hearing Impairment; eligible students may not use this accommodation for the following subtests: Reading and Language Arts, Vocabulary, Language Mechanics, Spelling and Word Analysis; if audiotape version of test is used, it is considered a Special Conditions Accommodation (test scores will not be aggregated and reported with the total student population) and must be coded on the test form.
Texas		X		Not allowed on reading or writing tests; this accommodation is allowed for examinees who are identified as having dyslexia or a related disorder in mathematics, social studies, and science.
Utah		X		Reading the content aloud to students is not allowed on the reading test.
Vermont	X			
Virginia		X	X	Considered a nonstandard accommodation if used on the English/Reading test. If a student uses a nonstandard accommodation, the record of that score will be accompanied by a notation explaining that the score resulted from a nonstandard administration.
Washington		X		Allowed for mathematics or science items on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL); not allowed on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills/ Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITBS/ITED).
West Virginia		X		Directions, stimulus material, questions, and/or answer choices may be read aloud, except for on the WESTAT Reading and Language Arts Test.
Wisconsin		X		Questions may be read for the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examinations (WKCE) for mathematics, science, and social studies only.
Wyoming		X		Allowed on math tests only.
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>14</b>	

Sources: Compiled using data obtained from Clapper et al. (2005) and a review of state accommodation policies.

**Table 9. Repeat, Re-Read, Clarify Directions, 2003 Policies/Guidelines**

State	Allowed without Restriction	Allowed in Certain Circumstances	Allowed with Implications for Scoring	Notes/Comments
Alabama	X			
Alaska	X			
Arizona		X		Clarification of general administration instructions is allowed except on the reading portion of the test; repetition of directions is allowed without restriction.
Arkansas				
California	X			
Colorado				
Connecticut				
Delaware	X			
Florida	X			
Georgia		X	X	Repetition of directions is allowed; clarification of directions is considered a nonstandard accommodation on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) and a standard accommodation on all other assessments.
Hawaii	X			
Idaho	X			
Illinois				
Indiana				
Iowa	X			
Kansas				
Kentucky	X			
Louisiana	X			
Maine	X			
Maryland				
Massachusetts	X			

<b>State</b>	<b>Allowed without Restriction</b>	<b>Allowed in Certain Circumstances</b>	<b>Allowed with Implications for Scoring</b>	<b>Notes/Comments</b>
Michigan	X			
Minnesota	X			
Mississippi		X	X	Not allowed on the reading section of the test or on the California Test of Basic Skills, 5th edition (CTBS/5). If non-allowable accommodations are used, the resulting scores are not included in the district summary statistics.
Missouri				
Montana		X		No portion of the reading comprehension or vocabulary tests, including test directions, should be cued (i.e., clarified) in any way.
Nebraska	X			
Nevada	X			
New Hampshire	X			
New Jersey	X			
New Mexico	X			
New York	X			
North Carolina	X			
North Dakota			X	Paraphrasing directions is considered a "Category 3 Accommodation." These accommodations may have an effect that alters the interpretation of individual scores and may also change what is being measured.
Ohio				
Oklahoma	X			
Oregon	X			
Pennsylvania	X			
Rhode Island	X			
South Carolina	X			
South Dakota	X			
Tennessee	X			

<b>State</b>	<b>Allowed without Restriction</b>	<b>Allowed in Certain Circumstances</b>	<b>Allowed with Implications for Scoring</b>	<b>Notes/Comments</b>
Texas				
Utah	X			
Vermont				
Virginia	X			
Washington	X			
West Virginia	X			
Wisconsin				
Wyoming	X			
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	

Sources: Compiled using data obtained from Clapper et al. (2005) and a review of state accommodation policies.

**Table 10. Sign Interpret Directions, 2003 Policies/Guidelines**

State	Allowed without Restriction	Allowed in Certain Circumstances	Allowed with Implications for Scoring	Notes/Comments
Alabama	X			
Alaska	X			
Arizona			X	Considered a nonstandard accommodation on the reading portion of AIMS (i.e., affects the comparability of scores).
Arkansas	X			
California	X			
Colorado	X			
Connecticut	X			
Delaware	X			
Florida	X			
Georgia	X			
Hawaii	X			
Idaho	X			
Illinois	X			
Indiana				
Iowa	X			
Kansas	X			
Kentucky	X			
Louisiana	X			
Maine	X			
Maryland	X			
Massachusetts	X			
Michigan	X			
Minnesota	X			

<b>State</b>	<b>Allowed without Restriction</b>	<b>Allowed in Certain Circumstances</b>	<b>Allowed with Implications for Scoring</b>	<b>Notes/Comments</b>
Mississippi		X		Not allowed on the reading section of the test or on the California Test of Basic Skills, 5th edition (CTBS/5).
Missouri	X			
Montana	X			
Nebraska	X			
Nevada	X			
New Hampshire	X			
New Jersey	X			
New Mexico	X			
New York	X			
North Carolina	X			
North Dakota			X	This is considered a "Category 2" accommodation, that is, using sign language to present directions may have an effect on student performance that should be considered when interpreting individual student scores.
Ohio				
Oklahoma	X			
Oregon	X			
Pennsylvania	X			
Rhode Island	X			
South Carolina	X			
South Dakota	X			
Tennessee	X			
Texas	X			
Utah	X			
Vermont	X			
Virginia	X			



<b>State</b>	<b>Allowed without Restriction</b>	<b>Allowed in Certain Circumstances</b>	<b>Allowed with Implications for Scoring</b>	<b>Notes/Comments</b>
Washington	X			
West Virginia	X			
Wisconsin	X			
Wyoming	X			
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	

Sources: Compiled using data obtained from Clapper et al. (2005) and a review of state accommodation policies.

**Table 11. Sign Interpret Questions, 2003 Policies/Guidelines**

State	Allowed without Restriction	Allowed in Certain Circumstances	Allowed with implications for scoring	Notes/Comments
Alabama				
Alaska		X		Test questions on the reading test may not be signed to the student except if approved on the optional high school exam.
Arizona		X	X	Considered a nonstandard accommodation (i.e., affects the comparability of scores) on the reading portion of AIMS.
Arkansas		X		Not allowed on the reading test.
California		X	X	This accommodation is available only to students with documentation in their IEP or 504 plan. This accommodation is considered a modification (i.e., it fundamentally alters what the test measures) if used on any English Language Arts (ELA) or reading subtest.
Colorado		X		Questions/items may not be signed on the reading test.
Connecticut				
Delaware		X	X	Allowed with implications for scoring (i.e., produces non-aggregated scores) when signing passages or texts on the reading test.
Florida		X		Signed presentation may be provided for all items other than reading items.
Georgia		X	X	Considered a nonstandard accommodation on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) and the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS); considered a standard accommodation on the Georgia Kindergarten Assessment Program-Revised (GKAP-R), writing assessments, and the Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHSGT).
Hawaii		X		Not allowed on the "Reading Comprehension" subtest of the Stanford 9.
Idaho	X			
Illinois	X			
Indiana		X		Test questions that measure reading comprehension may not be signed.
Iowa				
Kansas				
Kentucky	X			

State	Allowed without Restriction	Allowed in Certain Circumstances	Allowed with implications for scoring	Notes/Comments
Louisiana		X		Not allowed on the "Reading and Responding" section of the English/Language Arts test in the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program for the 21st Century (LEAP 21) and Graduate Exit Examination for the 21st Century (GEE 21) nor on the "Reading Comprehension" section of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS), or the "Ability to Interpret Literacy Materials" section of the Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITED).
Maine		X		Not allowed on the reading passages.
Maryland	X			
Massachusetts	X			
Michigan	X			
Minnesota		X		Sign language presentation of the math test is allowed.
Mississippi		X	X	Not allowed on the reading section of the test or on the California Test of Basic Skills, 5th edition (CTBS/5). If non-allowable accommodations are used, the resulting scores are not included in district summary statistics.
Missouri				
Montana		X		No portion of the reading comprehension or vocabulary tests should be cued in any way.
Nebraska				
Nevada				
New Hampshire		X		Reading passages in English Language Arts may not be signed or interpreted.
New Jersey		X		Reading passages and reading questions may not be signed.
New Mexico		X		Allowed except for on the reading comprehension test.
New York	X			
North Carolina		X		Allowed on math and writing assessments but not on the reading assessment.

State	Allowed without Restriction	Allowed in Certain Circumstances	Allowed with implications for scoring	Notes/Comments
North Dakota		X	X	This is considered a "Category 2" accommodation, that is, using sign language to interpret questions may have an effect on student performance that should be considered when interpreting individual student scores; if used on the reading comprehension test, this is considered a "Category 3" accommodation, that is, use of this accommodation may have an effect that alters the interpretation of individual scores and may also change what is being measured.
Ohio				
Oklahoma		X		Allowed if the test is not a reading test.
Oregon	X			
Pennsylvania		X		Allowed in mathematics and reading only; no sign language output for writing.
Rhode Island				
South Carolina		X		Allowed on mathematics, science, and social studies tests.
South Dakota				
Tennessee	X			
Texas		X		Allowed on mathematics, science, and social studies tests.
Utah	X			
Vermont	X			
Virginia		X	X	Considered a nonstandard accommodation on the English/Reading test. If a student uses a nonstandard accommodation, the record of that score will be accompanied by a notation explaining that the score resulted from a nonstandard administration.
Washington		X		Allowed for mathematics or science items.
West Virginia	X			
Wisconsin	X			
Wyoming		X		Allowed on math tests only.
Total	13	27	7	

Sources: Compiled using data obtained from Clapper et al. (2005) and a review of state accommodation policies.

**Table 12. Sign Responses to a Sign Language Interpreter, 2003 Policies/Guidelines**

State	Allowed without Restriction	Allowed in Certain Circumstances	Allowed with Implications for Scoring	Notes/Comments
Alabama	X			
Alaska	X			
Arizona		X		Allowed only on math and reading tests.
Arkansas				
California	X			
Colorado	X			
Connecticut		X		Allowed only on multiple-choice and griddable items; students may not sign answers to open-ended questions.
Delaware		X		Allowed except on reading and writing tests.
Florida	X			
Georgia				
Hawaii				
Idaho	X			
Illinois				
Indiana			X	Must be documented on Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress-Plus (ISTEP+) test booklet on the Student Information Questionnaire; accommodated norm referenced scores are not included in any aggregate reports.
Iowa				
Kansas				
Kentucky				
Louisiana	X			
Maine				
Maryland	X			
Massachusetts	X			

<b>State</b>	<b>Allowed without Restriction</b>	<b>Allowed in Certain Circumstances</b>	<b>Allowed with Implications for Scoring</b>	<b>Notes/Comments</b>
Michigan		X		Allowed except on the constructed response items.
Minnesota				
Mississippi				
Missouri	X			
Montana				
Nebraska				
Nevada				
New Hampshire	X			
New Jersey	X			
New Mexico		X		Not allowed on writing tests.
New York				
North Carolina				
North Dakota		X	X	Use of this accommodation is permitted for selected response items. If this accommodation is used on the reading comprehension test, then it is considered a "Category 3" accommodation, that is, it may have an effect that alters interpretation of individual scores and may also change what is being measured.
Ohio				
Oklahoma	X			
Oregon		X		Allowed only on math tests.
Pennsylvania		X		Allowed on math and reading tests but not on writing tests.
Rhode Island	X			
South Carolina	X			
South Dakota				
Tennessee	X			
Texas				

<b>State</b>	<b>Allowed without Restriction</b>	<b>Allowed in Certain Circumstances</b>	<b>Allowed with Implications for Scoring</b>	<b>Notes/Comments</b>
Utah				
Vermont				
Virginia	X			
Washington	X			
West Virginia	X			
Wisconsin				
Wyoming	X			
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	

Sources: Compiled using data obtained from Clapper et al. (2005) and a review of state accommodation policies.

## Discussion

Including students with a wide range of disabilities on statewide assessments has brought both greater accountability and opportunities for all children to reach high standards. However, research on accommodations and testing lags behind. State policies regarding accommodations on reading assessments have been ad hoc and inconsistent, leaving many questions unanswered.

### Accommodations and Disability Categories

Only three states permitted questions to be read aloud without restriction, while 13 states permitted the use of sign interpretation of questions without restriction. Since these are very similar accommodations, the somewhat troubling implication of these results is that some states may have different expectations for students who are deaf than for other students.

One state's policy (Oklahoma) required that a student's IEP must indicate visual impairment in order for that student to use the "large print" or "braille" accommodation. No justification was provided in this policy as to why there was a need to restrict those accommodations to students with a visual impairment, though perhaps the state considers it costly to provide braille and large print editions of all tests. While the braille accommodation would probably be used only by students with a visual impairment, it is less obvious why students with disabilities other than visual impairment were prohibited from taking a test using a larger font size. It has been argued that some students with learning disabilities, autism, mental retardation, or emotional behavioral disabilities may be able to more meaningfully access an assessment when a larger font size is available.

### Purpose of the Test

It is important to consider the purpose of a test when decisions are made about which accommodations should be used. For example, if a test or subtest is designed to measure decoding skills, then the read aloud questions accommodation may be inappropriate. However, if the test is designed to measure comprehension and understanding, then the read aloud accommodation may have a role in enabling some students to meaningfully access the assessment.

### Norm-referenced Tests

It might be expected that states that use the same norm-referenced test would allow (or not allow) the use of the same accommodation. However, this is not the case. For example, four states (Arizona, Arkansas, Delaware, Oklahoma) used the 9th edition of the Stanford Achievement Test. The sign interpret responses accommodation was not allowed on reading and writing tests in Delaware, allowed only on math and reading tests in Arizona, and allowed without restrictions in Oklahoma. Both the sign interpret questions and read aloud questions accommodations were not allowed on reading tests



in Arkansas and Oklahoma, but were allowed with implications for scoring if used on reading tests in Arizona and Delaware. These differences suggest that the way students with disabilities are included in this and other norm-referenced tests differs across states.

## Conclusions

Accommodation policies vary greatly across states. Different states have derived a variety of answers about which accommodations are appropriate to use on reading assessments and which are not. Current research is inconclusive about how some of the more controversial accommodations affect the reliability and validity of reading tests. Additional research on accommodations would provide states with guidance that they could use as they make decisions about how to appropriately use accommodations. Armed with this guidance, states can hopefully give every student equitable access to good instruction and fair testing.

The lack of consistency also calls for continued work on ways other than accommodations to increase the accessibility of assessments. Exploring features of the assessments themselves and how they interact with disabilities may open up access to better measurement of the desired constructs without having to resort to state-determined policies and guidelines for accommodations.

## References

Bolt, S. E., & Thurlow, M. L. (2004). Five of the most frequently allowed testing accommodations in state policy. *Remedial and Special Education, 25*, 141-152.

Clapper, A. T, Morse, A. B., Lazarus, S. S., Thompson, S. J., & Thurlow, M. L. (2005). *2003 state policies on assessment participation and accommodations for students with disabilities* (Synthesis Report 56). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.

Johnstone, C., Altman, J., Thurlow, M., & Thompson, S. (2006). *Summary of research on the effects of test accommodations: 2002 through 2004*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.

Thompson, S. J., Blount, A., & Thurlow, M. L. (2002). *A summary of research on the effects of test accommodations: 1999 through 2001* (Technical Report 34). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.

Thurlow, M. L., Lazarus, S. S., Thompson, S. J., & Morse, A. B. (2005). State policies on assessment participation and accommodations for students with disabilities. *The Journal of Special Education, 38*(4), 232–240.