

Embedded and Non-Embedded Designated Supports for English Learners/Multilingual Learners

Students who are advancing toward English language proficiency (including identified English learners/multilingual learners (ELs/MLs) and dually identified ELs/MLs with disabilities) may benefit from using designated supports that promote language access when participating in the Connecticut state-wide assessments. Districts should establish a systemic and consistent process for identifying, determining, recording, and providing these supports for those students that require them based on documented needs. Accessibility supports should be consistently embedded and accessed in the student's instructional setting for familiarization, otherwise they may be a distraction and impede student performance on assessments.

Communication, organization, and careful planning among test administrators, English Language Assessment Coordinators, Directors of Special Education (if applicable), and teachers are critical aspects of promoting fair, reliable, and appropriate test opportunities for students. Refer to the [CSDE Assessment Guidelines](#) for information on how to determine if these supports are appropriate for your students.

What are designated supports?

Designated supports for the Smarter Balanced and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) Assessments are features available to **any student** for whom the need has been indicated by an educator (or team of educators) in consultation with the parent/guardian and student.

- **Embedded designated supports** are accessibility features provided directly *through the test delivery interface*.
- **Non-embedded designated supports** are accessibility features provided *by the teacher/test administrator* during testing (as permitted by the CSDE and as defined by the Assessment Guidelines).

Which designated supports support access to language?

[Table 1](#) on the following page indicates the embedded and non-embedded designated supports available for the *Smarter Balanced Assessments* for ELs/MLs in Grades 3-8.

[Table 2](#) indicates the embedded and non-embedded designated supports available for the *NGSS Assessments* administered to students in Grades 5, 8, and 11.

It is important to note that the designated supports described in this document are those accessibility features that may promote access for language learners, and ELs/MLs may benefit from additional designated supports not listed in this resource. The [CSDE Assessment Guidelines](#) contain a complete list and description of universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations.

Table 1. Smarter Balanced Mathematics and English Language Arts Embedded and Non-Embedded Designated Supports

Designated Support	Available Subjects	Available Format of Designated Support
Translation (Glossary) A language support provided for selected construct-irrelevant math terms. Translations (with an audio recording) appear on the computer screen when students click on the word (marked by an underscore). Only students with the <i>language glossary</i> setting enabled in TIDE can view the translated glossary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mathematics 	Embedded
Text-to-Speech (English)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English Language Arts (ELA) items only (Does NOT include ELA Reading Passages) Mathematics items & stimuli 	Embedded
Text-to-Speech (Spanish) Note: Presentation must be set to <i>Stacked Spanish</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mathematics items & stimuli 	Embedded
Spanish Presentation (Stacked)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mathematics 	Embedded
Read Aloud (English) (Refer to the Smarter Balanced Read Aloud Guidelines)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ELA items (NOT ELA Reading Passages) Mathematics items & stimuli 	Non-Embedded
Read Aloud (Spanish) (Refer to Guidelines for Spanish Read Aloud, Test Reader)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mathematics items & stimuli 	Non-Embedded
Translated Test Directions (for select languages only) available on the Connecticut Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal Note: This is a word -to- word translation of the directions and functions students encounter when using the online test delivery system (TDS).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English Language Arts Mathematics 	Non-Embedded
Guidelines for Simplified Test Directions Simplified Test Directions (as scripted in the Smarter Balanced Test Administration Manual)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English Language Arts Mathematics 	Non-Embedded

Table 2. NGSS Assessments – Embedded and Non-Embedded Designated Supports

Designated Support	Available Format of Designated Support
Bilingual Dictionaries and Glossaries Authorized for Use by English Learners (Provides resources for bilingual word-to-word dictionaries allowed on Connecticut’s NGSS statewide assessment.)	Non-Embedded
Text-to-Speech (English)	Embedded
Text-to-Speech (Spanish) Note: Presentation must be set to <i>Spanish Toggle</i>	Embedded
Spanish Presentation (Toggle)	Embedded
Read Aloud (English) (Refer to Read Aloud Guidelines)	Non-Embedded
Read Aloud (Spanish) (Refer to Guidelines for Spanish Reader, Read Aloud)	Non-Embedded
Native Reader of Test Directions as scripted in the NGSS Test Administration Manual (any Language)	Non-Embedded

How are designated supports activated?

Once the team identifies the designated support(s) appropriate for a student, they must be manually activated on the student’s Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE) test settings dashboard or entered using a batch upload process to TIDE **prior to testing**.

Important: Designated supports and accommodations approved in CT-SEDS for dually identified EIs/MLs with an IEP or 504 Plan will be automatically uploaded to TIDE by the CSDE and do not need to be set in TIDE by the district/school.

Individuals with a teacher (TE) status in TIDE can view student test settings, while only those with higher-level administrative access to TIDE, such as School or District Coordinator, can add or edit a student’s test settings. Refer to the [TIDE User Guide](#) and the [Manually Setting Designated Supports and Accommodations](#) brochure for more information.

Staffing/Training Considerations:

Certain staffing considerations may be required when providing specific designated supports to students; for example, when a student cannot access text-to-speech and needs to work with a test reader. Optimally, this is a person that knows the student and is familiar with their unique language needs.

Read Aloud supports must be provided in a 1:1 test setting—not to a group of students, because each student depends on the test reader to read the test questions accurately, pronounce words correctly, and speak clearly throughout the test, while meeting the appropriate pace preferred by that individual student. A student should have the option of asking a reader to slow down or to repeat text. Determine how many staff are needed to serve as readers based on the number of students eligible and the language supports needed.

The teacher/reader, including biliterate adults serving as a human reader, must be employed by the school district and participate in local training on statewide assessments as provided at the district or school level prior to test administration. This is to ensure appropriate adherence to test security protocols and the standardization of test

administration while meeting the students’ access needs. Readers should review the Smarter Balanced and/or NGSS Read Aloud Guidelines prior to testing.

Test Time Considerations:

Though Smarter Balanced and NGSS Assessments are untimed, test-timing considerations may be required when providing certain supports to students on statewide assessments. For example, the provision of a translation glossary or stacked Spanish (mathematics) requires additional scrolling and reviewing of translated test content. Be considerate of the increased reading and cognitive load. Best practice is to schedule a Practice Test in advance of summative testing to provide students with an opportunity to practice supports. Teachers should meet with the student to discuss their experience and adjust if necessary.

Breaks, a universal tool available to participating students for Smarter Balanced and NGSS assessments, can be set by the test administrator or provided on demand by the student (as appropriate). Breaks of more than 20 minutes will prevent the student from returning to items already attempted. There is no limit on the number of breaks a student might be given though it may result in the student needing additional time overall to complete the assessment.

What are reader options available?

Students who are advancing toward English language proficiency, including students who are not identified as EL/ML, may need assistance accessing the assessment by having all or portions of the assessment read aloud by the computer (TTS) or by a teacher. This support can be confusing and may impede the performance of students who **do not regularly use this support during instruction**. Below is a list of the various reader options with a brief description. Refer to Tables 1 and 2 for details specific to content area.

TTS of ELA Test Items Only (NOT Reading Passages)	<p>Available in English on the ELA assessment as an embedded designated support. The TTS must be activated in TIDE <u>prior to testing</u>.</p> <p>Students need to click the TTS icon on their screen to activate the audio. Students should have an opportunity to practice using TTS on a practice test prior to any official testing.</p> <p>A headset is required unless testing in a 1:1 test setting.</p>
TTS in English for ELA Reading Passages	<p>Available for those eligible dually identified ELs/MLs with a visual or print disability who require this embedded accommodation per their IEP or 504 Plan.</p> <p>The district needs to complete the Decision Guidelines for TTS of Smarter Balanced ELA Reading Passages and file locally and set the accommodation in TIDE <u>prior to testing</u>.</p> <p>A headset is required unless testing in a 1:1 test setting.</p>
Read Aloud for Test Items Only (NOT Reading Passages)	<p>Available in English on the ELA assessment as a non-embedded designated support that must be set in TIDE prior to testing.</p> <p>The teacher must read the test items exactly as presented on the student’s test screen. The teacher must review the Smarter Balanced Read Aloud Guidelines prior to test administration.</p> <p>The student must test in a 1:1 setting.</p>

Read Aloud in English for ELA Reading Passages	<p>Available for eligible dually identified ELs/MLs with a visual or print disability who require this non-embedded accommodation per their IEP or 504 plan.</p> <p>This non-standard accommodation requires a special documented accommodations petition to be submitted to the CSDE Performance Office for approval unless the accommodation is approved in the CT-SEDS system. Refer to the CSDE Assessment Guidelines for details.</p> <p>The teacher must review the Smarter Balanced Read Aloud Guidelines prior to test administration.</p> <p>The student must test in a 1:1 setting.</p>
Read Aloud in Spanish for Directions or Test Stimuli and Items (Math and Science)	<p>This non-embedded designated support and <i>Spanish Presentation</i> must be set in TIDE <u>prior to testing</u>.</p> <p>The teacher assigned as reader will read the Spanish presentation from the student’s computer in a 1:1 test setting. Teachers should NOT be translating off the English version of the assessment.</p> <p>The teacher must review the Guidelines for Spanish Read Aloud, Test Reader <u>prior to testing</u>.</p>
Spanish Presentation for Mathematics (Stacked)	<p>The full translation of each math item appears above the original item presented in English. This may be helpful for students whose primary language is not English, who are proficient readers in Spanish and not proficient in English, and who use dual language supports in the classroom.</p> <p><i>Spanish Presentation</i> must be set in TIDE <u>prior to testing</u>.</p>
Spanish Presentation for NGSS (Toggle)	<p>The NGSS assessments can be presented in Spanish or English based on the how the toggle is set by a student during the assessment.</p> <p><i>Spanish Presentation</i> must be set in TIDE <u>prior to testing</u>.</p>
Text-to-Speech in Spanish for Stimulus and Items (Math and Science)	<p>This embedded designated support functions when both <i>Spanish Presentation</i> (Toggle, Stacked) and <i>TTS</i> are activated in TIDE.</p> <p>The student can control the speed and raise or lower the volume. A headset is required unless testing in a 1:1 test setting.</p>

For more information, visit the [Connecticut Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal](#) or contact Deirdre Ducharme, Performance Office, at 860-713-6859; email deirdre.ducharme@ct.gov or Janet Stuck at 860-713-6837; email janet.stuck@ct.gov .