

All students, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs), are expected to achieve the academic standards for their grades. Some students with disabilities and ELLs may receive services and accommodations to support them in reaching their goals. This frequently asked questions document provides families with information about testing accommodations for ELLs and students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or 504 Plans.

Parents can learn more about [ELL services](#), [IEPs](#), [504 Plans](#), and testing accommodations by viewing the linked resources in this document online or by speaking with their child's teacher.

## What Are Testing Accommodations?

Testing accommodations are changes to test format and/or the way tests are administered so that eligible students have the support they need to demonstrate their skills, knowledge, and abilities without being unnecessarily impacted by their disabilities or English proficiency. Testing accommodations do not change the skills or content that tests measure, nor are they intended to make tests less rigorous.

Generally, accommodations are grouped into four categories:

1. **Method of Presentation:** may include reading, repeating, and/or explaining directions and/or questions; use of Braille; etc.
2. **Method of Response:** may include allowing the student to record responses directly in the answer booklet; using assistive technology devices; etc.
3. **Timing and/or Scheduling:** may include extended time to take tests; breaks; etc.
4. **Setting:** may include taking the test in a separate location or in a small group; special lighting or furniture; etc.

## Who Is Eligible for Testing Accommodations?

### Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who have IEPs or 504 Plans may be eligible to receive testing accommodations on New York State (NYS) and local New York City (NYC) assessments, including auditions, if their IEP Team or 504 Team, as appropriate, determines their eligibility. A student who has been declassified may still need the testing accommodations previously documented in his/her IEP. If the IEP Team makes and documents this determination on the Declassification from Special Education Services Document, the testing accommodations must continue to be consistently provided to the student for the remainder of his/her public school education unless:

- It is revised or eliminated by the IEP or 504 Team;
- The student receives a Local, Regents, or Advanced Regents diploma; or
- The student ages out of school at 21 years old.

### English Language Learners (ELLs)

ELLs, and certain former ELLs, who do not have IEPs or 504 Plans may also receive testing accommodations for NYS and

NYC assessments. Former ELLs are only eligible to receive testing accommodations for an additional two years after achieving proficiency/commanding on the NYS English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT). However, ELLs and former ELLs may not receive testing accommodations for the NYSESLAT unless they also have an IEP or a 504 Plan.

## Can Students Without IEPs, 504 Plans, or Non-ELLs Receive Testing Accommodations?

Yes, but only in emergency situations. Students who demonstrate disabilities or temporary impairments within 30 days of a NYS or NYC assessment may receive certain testing accommodations, if approved by the principal. If students who are approved for emergency testing accommodations are expected to continue to need testing accommodations, the school should initiate an IEP or 504 referral and evaluation process, as appropriate. Principals may only approve the following emergency testing accommodations:

- **Extended time;**
- **Separate location;**
- **Alternate method of response; and**
- **Tests read** (for visually impaired students only).

## How Are Testing Accommodations Developed?

Testing accommodations may be included in the services and supports provided for students with IEPs, students with 504 Plans, and current/former ELLs. School-based teams consider each student's case to determine whether testing accommodations are needed. These teams consider a variety of information and data when making eligibility determinations and include parents and school staff who are knowledgeable about the student and also the use of testing accommodations (among other supports).

If appropriate, testing accommodations are developed to be consistent with the supports students receive in the classroom. In all cases, the decision to provide certain accommodations must be made based on students' individual needs and must directly address the documented diagnosis, disability, or language need. All services and accommodations are clearly documented on students' IEPs, on 504 Plans, and in documentation kept for ELLs, as appropriate.

### Which Specific Testing Accommodations Can ELLs and Former ELLs Receive?

ELLs and eligible former ELLs (students who passed the NYSESLAT within the past two years) may receive certain ELL testing accommodations on NYC assessments (e.g. the Specialized High School Admissions Test, Gifted & Talented test, classroom tests, etc.) and NYS assessments (English Language Arts, Math, and Regents content assessments). The only testing accommodations permitted for ELLs and former ELLs who do not have IEPs or 504 Plans are:

- **Extended time:**
- **Flexible setting:** 1:1 or small group; separate location;
- **Bilingual glossary:** direct word translations, not definitions;
- **Test form:** use of English and alternate language test forms at the same time;
- **Oral translation:** only available for NYS tests that do not have alternate language forms;
- **Flexible response format:** writing responses in the native language, if using alternate language test forms or receiving oral translations; and
- **Test content read aloud:** having the listening section of the NYS English Language Arts and Regents Comprehensive Examination in English read aloud three times.

### Can Students Use Testing Accommodations on NYS English Language Arts and Math Exams (Grades 3–8) and Regents Exams?

Yes, but there are specific testing accommodations that are not permitted on these tests because they change the skills or content the tests are trying to measure. Beginning with the Spring 2016 administration of the Grades 3–8 English Language Arts and Math assessments, all students, including students with disabilities, who are working productively will be allowed to continue working past the recommended testing times for these assessments. Even though all students will now essentially have the accommodation of extended time, students with disabilities who have flexibility in scheduling, such as breaks at specified intervals, indicated as an accommodation in their IEPs or 504 Plans must be provided such accommodation. In addition, only test directions that are to be read aloud to all students may be read aloud and the use of spell-checking and/or grammar-checking devices are not allowed. For Math, students whose IEPs or 504 Plans specify the use of counting blocks, counters, or an abacus are permitted to use those with all books associated with the Grades 3–8 Math Tests. Calculators are not allowed for grades 3–5 and permitted in only specified books in grades 6–8. For students with disabilities whose IEP or 504 Plan documents the need, questions designed to measure reading ability in English may be read or signed to students when taking the English Language Arts Regents.

### Can Students Use Testing Accommodations on the NYC Gifted & Talented Test?

Yes. Parents of students with IEPs or 504 Plans that specify testing accommodations may be eligible for certain accommodations on the G&T test. Parents should review the G&T Program Handbook ([www.nyc.gov/schools/gt](http://www.nyc.gov/schools/gt)) or contact [GTHelp@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:GTHelp@schools.nyc.gov) with questions about testing accommodations for students with disabilities and ELLs. Parents should note that there are certain accommodations that are not permitted on the G&T test because they change the skills the test is trying to measure.

### Can Students Use Testing Accommodations on NYC Middle School or High School Admissions Assessments, Including Auditions and the Specialized High Schools Admissions Test (SHSAT)?

Yes. For school-based admissions tests and auditions, parents should contact the schools to which their children are applying to ensure the school is aware of the student's accommodations and is prepared to provide them.

Testing and applying for Specialized High Schools is a centralized process managed by the NYCDOE. Parents and students should carefully review the Specialized High School Student Handbook to learn about how to ensure a student's need for testing accommodations on the SHSAT is communicated to the central team. Parents and students should be mindful that requests for accommodations on the SHSAT must be aligned to testing accommodations the student receives as part of his/her IEP, 504 Plan, or ELL program. Requests for accommodations solely for the SHSAT are not permitted, except in emergency situations.

### Can Students Use Testing Accommodations on College Board Exams?

Yes. This includes the SAT School Day Initiative. Parents must give their consent for the SSD Coordinator to apply for accommodations. It is important to discuss this process with the SSD Coordinator at your child's school.

#### RESOURCES

- For information about IEPs and Special Education, review the Parent Guide to Special Education:  
<http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/SpecialEducation/tellmemore/importantDocuments.htm>
- For information about services for English Language Learners, visit:  
<http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/ELL/default.htm>
- For information about 504 Accommodations, visit:  
<http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/Health/SchoolHealthForms/default.htm>
- For information on Gifted & Talented, visit: [www.nyc.gov/schools/gt](http://www.nyc.gov/schools/gt)
- For information on Specialized High Schools, visit:  
[www.nyc.gov/schools/highschool](http://www.nyc.gov/schools/highschool)