Test Accessibility and Technology Guidelines – 2023-24 School Year

Topic	Summary	Considerations
General	The goal of STAAR accessibility is to ensure that each student can **interact appropriately** with the content, presentation, and response modes of the state assessments. In order to meet this goal, STAAR accessibility features and designated supports are designed to allow all examinees to **demonstrate their knowledge of the content being assessed without the format of the assessment, the nontested language, or the type of response needed to answer the questions being barriers**. The various accessibility features and designated supports made available on STAAR online and paper assessments are also designed to be the same as or **similar to the designated supports commonly used during classroom instruction.** For STAAR, including STAAR Spanish, accessibility falls into three categories: **Accessibility Features, Locally-Approved Designated Supports, and Designated Supports Requiring TEA approval** **Accessibility Features** and **Designated Supports:** • Must be based on a student needs • Can change over the course of the school year or from year to year based on a student needs • Might be appropriate for classroom use, but NOT be appropriate or allowable on a statewide assessment (policies relating to Accessibility Features or Designated Supports on state assessments should not limit an educator's ability to develop individualized **materials, techniques and/or strategies to support student learning in the classroom)** For more detailed information about Accessibility Features, Designated Supports, Technology Guidelines and Technology Use Guidelines, see the **DCCR** Additional resources relating to **Accessibility Features** and **Designated Supports** on state assessments, see the **quicklooks** posted on the Test Accessibility tab of the **lead4ward** Resources webpage at: **http://lead4ward.com/resources/**	
Accessibility Features	**Accessibility Features available on STAAR, STAAR Spanish, and TELPAS:** • May be provided to students based on their needs • Are available to any student who regularly benefits from the use of these procedures or materials during instruction (although a student cannot be required to use them during testing and there is no need to document their use on a student's answer document) • A student using an **Accessibility Feature** may need to complete the test in a separate setting in order to eliminate distractions to other students and to ensure that the security and confidentiality of the test are maintained. Students using an **Accessibility Feature** on a state assessment should have had practice and experience using the feature during instruction and there should be some indication or evidence that the feature benefits the student during assessment	

Locally-Approved Designated Supports	**Locally-Approved Designated Supports** include designated supports that may be made available without TEA approval to students who meet eligibility criteria.
	• The decision should be based on the eligibility criteria and aimed at addressing a student's consistent academic struggle in a specific area even after intensive instruction and remediation
	• Eligibility is determined by the appropriate team at the campus level as indicated in each policy document
	• The decision to use a designated support during a state assessment should be made on an individual student basis and should take into consideration the student's needs and whether the student routinely receives that designated support during classroom **instruction and classroom testing**. This does not mean that the designated support must be used every day during instruction but that:
	   ○ the student has used the support **often enough during classroom instruction and testing that the student can use it independently** during the state assessment (independent use applies to some designated supports [e.g., Calculation Aids] but might not apply to others [e.g., Oral Administration]); and
	   ○ the accommodation has been **proven to be effective in meeting the student's specific needs as evidenced by student scores or teacher observations with and without accommodation use**.	

Designated Supports Requiring TEA Approval	**For** designated supports requiring TEA approval, district personnel must submit an Accommodation Request Form (ARF) through the Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE) under the Administration and Security Forms module • ARFs must be submitted to TEA in a timely manner to allow committee members the ability to process and review requests, as well as to communicate to district personnel the appropriate procedures for administering a TEA-approved designated support • Requests should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the individual student's testing window • For circumstances that require a designated support request but occur after this time (e.g., newly enrolled student; medical emergency; updated admission, review, and dismissal [ARD] committee decision), the district coordinator should contact the Student Assessment Division at (512) 463-9536 and ask to speak to a member of the Accommodations Task Force for further instructions • This type of support must be documented in the student's paperwork as "pending TEA approval"	
Technology Guidelines	Districts are required to have procedures in place to prevent student use of personal electronic devices during assessment administrations. When districts are using allowed or approved technology, including technology-based accommodations (i.e., designated supports and accessibility features), the following guidelines for test security and validity must be followed in reviewing the technology prior to its use during an assessment. Appropriate review requires knowledge of both the TEKS for the specific grade level and subject and the capabilities and functions of the device or software that will be used during the assessment. Some technology may be useful during daily academic settings; however, that technology cannot be used during a state assessment if its functionality creates a security concern that cannot be addressed. District or campus personnel must conduct additional reviews of technology, including technology-based accommodations, after an upgrade or update to determine if it continues to meet Texas Education Agency (TEA) guidelines for use during a state assessment.	

Technology Use Guidelines	Test administrators must actively monitor the use of technology, including technology-based accommodations, during an assessment. All technology used during state assessments must adhere to the following guidelines.
	For a device or software to be considered appropriate for state assessment use, it must:
	• be set in a mode that locks the user into a specific software program; and
	• block the user from accessing functionality or features that may violate test security, such as:
	   ○ the ability to send secure test content (e.g., messages, captured images, videos);
	   ○ the ability to send or receive any person-to-person communication about secure test content (e.g., chat, video); and
	   ○ the ability to save secure test content.
	
	District testing personnel must ensure that applications on a tablet, laptop, or desktop computer do not provide functionality that compromises the curriculum assessed.	