Innovative Accessibility

Smarter Balanced is committed to providing accessibility resources and supporting formative assessment processes that help educators better serve the needs of diverse students, including students who are deaf or hard of hearing and/or blind or visually impaired.

How We Design Accessible Tests

All test questions are developed using the principles of Universal Design. Teachers and other educators help write test questions and collaboratively review drafts of new test questions to ensure that each item is accessible for the students who need to respond to the test question, as well as fair and unbiased. For example, educators who work with students who have disabilities help ensure that students can successfully answer Smarter Balanced test questions regardless of the students' ability to access auditory or visual information.

How We Support Students

All students who take the test may use embedded Universal Tools to support them while they read and respond to test questions. In addition, educators and IEP teams respectively may determine that students are eligible for additional supports and accommodations. Consortium members annually review and revise policies regarding the resources and how these resources may support students during testing. Students can try out and become familiar with all the resources by using practice tests that states make available.

Recommended Tools to Support Students

See the Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines (UAAG) for a comprehensive list of tools.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing	• Amplification • Illustration glossaries • Highlighter • English glossaries	• American Sign Language • Closed captioning • Strikethrough
Blind and Visually Impaired	• Keyboard navigation • Zoom • Color contrast • Mouse pointer • Streamline • Magnification • Abacus	• Text-to-speech (alternative text) for the visually impaired • Online braille in all codes that students may use as part of instruction • Braille transcript for listening passages embossable in all braille codes

Types of Accessibility Resources

UNIVERSAL TOOLS

Universal tools are **available to students** based on students' preferences. *Examples: Calculator, digital notepad, English dictionary, English glossary*

DESIGNATED SUPPORTS

Designated supports are **available to students when determined for use** by educators (with parent/guardian and student input, as appropriate) or specified in the student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan. *Examples: Color contrast, text-to-speech, Illustration glossary*

ACCOMMODATIONS

Accommodations are **permitted for eligible students** if specified in the student's IEP or Section 504 plan. *Examples: American Sign Language, Braille, Closed captioning*

How We Support Implementation and Administration

To support educators and students, the consortium provides:

- a traditional paper braille test and braille hybrid adaptive test that significantly reduce the time required to print graphics during the mathematics test;
- an accessible calculator that includes support for screen readers, color contrast, adjustable font size, and accessible graphs; and
- an Individual Student Assessment Accessibility Profile (ISAAP) which guides educators and IEP teams regarding a process that they may use to select resources on the assessments that meet individual student needs.

How We Support Assessment During Instruction

Smarter Balanced collaborated with educators to develop instructional accessibility strategies that help educators connect classroom use of accessibility practices to accessibility resources offered on the interim and summative assessments.