



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: English Learner Assessment Coordinators

FROM: Janet Stuck, Special Populations Education Consultant, Performance Office

DATE: December 23, 2021

SUBJECT: December LAS Links Clarification Text-to-Speech Accommodation and Updates

You are receiving this communication about the LAS Links text-to-speech accommodation, Alternate Assessment Eligible students and the DRC Portal, and a case study opportunity. Please share this communication with appropriate staff.

Text-to-Speech Accommodation Clarification

In response to recent communications from English Learner Assessment Coordinators following the [English Learner Assessment Coordinator Training](#) and other recent meetings, I wanted to clarify the use of the text-to-speech accommodation for dually identified students on the LAS Links.

As described in the [2021-22 Connecticut State Department of Education \(CSDE\) Online LAS Links Accommodation Guidelines](#) students meeting all the following criteria may use an accommodation if allowable on the LAS Links assessment as described in training.

Students must be:

- identified as English learners in the Public School Information System (PSIS), and
- identified as a student with disabilities with an active IEP or Section 504 Plan, and
- have the need for an accommodation documented in the IEP or 504 Plan, and
- use the accommodation regularly for instruction.

The Smarter Balanced system of designated supports and accommodations does not directly parallel the system of accommodations on the LAS Links assessment. Within the IEP or Section 504 Plan there may be an indication for reader of directions only. In these cases, if the student requires directions regularly read during instruction—and not the passages read during regular instruction—and it is documented this way in the IEP or Section 504 Plan, then for the LAS Links you will need to determine a few things first.

1. When entering accommodations in the DRC portal, keep in mind that the Online Directions for Administering LAS Links in Appendix A of the [LAS Links Form E Operational Field Test Online Test Directions and Test Administration Manual](#) (TAM) are to be read to all students for each domain, and many of the items are read by the test delivery system without text-to-speech (TTS) turned on. See the recently revised LAS Links Read Aloud Functionality: Without Text -to-Speech Accommodation Table attached and posted to the [Connecticut DRC LAS Links website](#).
2. Only dually identified students who have the accommodation of Reader for Passages may have the TTS accommodation for the LAS Links. Again, it must be described in their IEP or Section 504 Plan, and it must be regularly used during instruction.

3. The text-to-speech accommodation is available only for eligible students on the LAS Links if the student has a documented print disability and the IEP or Section 504 Plan states that the student needs the accommodation of Reader for Passages. For these students, TTS is selected, providing access to the appropriate test form. The student will automatically receive TTS in both the Reading and the Writing subtests. With the TTS accommodation, embedded test directions, items, and response options, as well as passages in Reading, are read to the student. That is why this accommodation must be determined before testing; it impacts multiple subtests and the specific test form the student will be given.

Students who do not have TTS selected for Reading because they are not eligible to have the Reading passages read to them, but need the TTS accommodation for the Writing content, may have a human reader for Writing only.

If you determine that the reading of embedded directions is a practice regularly used for this student during instruction, you should secure a human reader for the directions only, and that child will need to be tested in a separate setting. Please be aware that readers of directions should only read directions.

Alternate Assessment Eligible Students and the DRC Portal

As described in the Assessment Procedures for Dually Identified Students for 2021-22 School Year communication, dually identified students whose PPT determined they will participate in the Alternate Assessment System, or students in non-tested grades who are potentially eligible for participation in an alternate assessment, do not participate in the LAS Links for the 2021-22 school year. The information for these students are communicated to the CSDE via the submission of the [Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form](#) or the [English Learners Potentially Eligible for Alternate Assessment Form](#). The CSDE collects this information on a regular basis and collaborates with DRC to remove these students from the pool of students available for testing on the DRC portal. This ensures that test sessions cannot be created for these students and thus potential errors in testing will be reduced.

Case Study Opportunity

MetaMetrics is exploring how Lexile reading measures are used with English learners (ELs). MetaMetrics collaborated with DRC so that Lexile reading measures could be reported from the LAS Links Assessments (Forms C/D). MetaMetrics uses the student's results on the LAS Reading subtest to determine the student's Lexile measure, a recommended Lexile range, and a table of suggested reading titles with their associated Lexile measures, all of which are reported on page 2 of the LAS Links Student Proficiency Report. MetaMetrics is currently seeking districts and/or schools that use the Lexile reading measures on the LAS Links to support reading instruction to conduct a case study. If you are interested, please contact Cristi Alberino at cristi.alberino@ct.gov.

Wishing you all the best in the New Year!