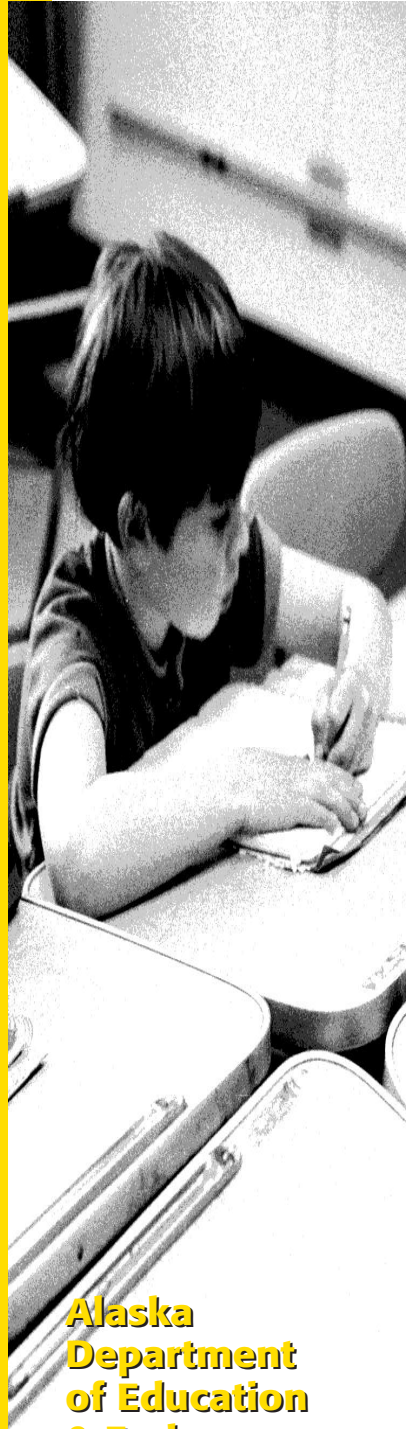


PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES

For Alaska Students
in State Assessments

Limited English Proficient
and Special Education



**Alaska
Department
of Education
& Early
Development
June 2005**



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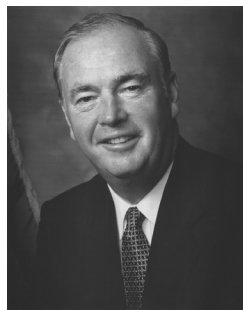
MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR

The *Participation Guidelines for Alaska Students in State Assessments* is a critical part of Alaska's effort to make sure all children reach their potential, a promise Alaska has made to each young person in our state. It's a promise we must keep.

This promise extends to students with disabilities and to students who are not yet proficient in English language skills. These students must be taught and assessed appropriately for them to reach their full potential in our society.

Taken seriously and used well, the information in this booklet will help us all—educators, parents, school board members and others involved in the schooling of children—better prepare students to do well on state exams.

My administration offers this booklet, which has been adopted in regulation by the State Board of Education & Early Development, as an important road map for helping each young Alaskan confidently step forward after high school prepared to tackle the next stage of life.



Frank H. Murkowski
Governor

MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

Dear Alaskans,

Several forces are driving Alaska's school accountability initiatives. These include (1) the Legislature's passage in 1997 and 1998 of the High School Graduation Qualifying Examination (HSGQE) and other accountability measures, and (2) the passage by the U.S. Congress of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

The Alaska Department of Education & Early Development in response to both measures developed and amended the state's Comprehensive System of Student Assessments as the primary tool for assessing the academic achievement of students, and for measuring the effectiveness of individual school districts and schools.

The assessment system consists of the HSGQE and standards based exams in grades 3 through 9.

In the past, schools excluded some students from participating in assessments, particularly those not proficient in English and those with severe disabilities. This changed in 1997 when the federal government mandated that schools include each and every student in all state mandated assessments. This call was a major challenge for public education.

The *Participation Guidelines for Alaska Students in State Assessments* is designed to help Alaska fulfill the commitment to include all students in state assessments. This booklet provides guidance to school district officials, administrators, teachers and other persons responsible for making decisions about the participation in assessments of students on an Individualized Education Program (IEP), students on federal 504 Plans and students with limited English proficiency. It also provides guidance for deciding if a student requires a testing accommodation, modification, the Modified HSGQE or the Nonstandardized HSGQE.

The information in this booklet should be viewed as a work in progress and has been published knowing the difficulty of anticipating each circumstance that may arise when making decisions about assessing students with disabilities.

This booklet is a vital tool to help school professionals and IEP teams target methods of assessment that will appropriately measure the knowledge and skills of each student in our state.



Roger Sampson
Commissioner of Education
& Early Development

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OVERVIEW

The State of Alaska requires statewide assessment of students in grades 3–10. Assessments help identify the educational needs of the student and track how well the schools and the teachers are performing.

Assessment of a student with a disability is complicated because a disability can mask a student's proficiency. Overcoming this masking effect can be especially important when a student is in high school and must pass the High School Graduation Qualifying Examination (HSGQE) in order to receive a high school diploma.

This booklet explains the assessment options available to a student with a disability and the decisions that must be made by the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or section 504 team. The first decision is whether a student is on a diploma track or a non-diploma track. A student who is not on a diploma track is required to participate in a state assessment; this is a special assessment called the alternate assessment.

Students on a diploma track will participate in the regular assessments. Decisions must be made regarding how best to accommodate students so that their disability does not mask proficiency during an assessment. In addition, if a student with a disability does not pass the HSGQE as a sophomore in high school, decisions must be made on how to provide the student with an alternative assessment program, which consists of the Modified HSGQE or Nonstandardized HSGQE.

MAKING DECISIONS

About Students who are Limited English Proficient

All students identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP), must participate in statewide academic assessments. Students identified as LEP must be provided reasonable accommodations on state academic content assessments, to the extent practicable. Accommodations are allowed for LEP students when testing for academic content knowledge and skills, but not when testing for English language proficiency.

Who makes the decision on LEP accommodations?

Teams of people (teachers, parents, etc.) who know the educational needs of the LEP student should make decisions concerning appropriate LEP accommodations to be used during statewide assessments. Teams should include a teacher or administrator, when available, who has specialized training or experience with limited English speaking students and instruction. Because of the close link between assessment and instruction, the accommodations provided for the assessment should reflect those provided in classroom instruction and assessment. Once a decision is made, it is necessary and important to document the accommodations in the LEP student's file.

TABLE 1. Accommodations Permissible for LEP Students

TIMING/SCHEDULING (see appendix for guidance)

- Allowing frequent breaks during testing.
- Allowing additional time.
- Administering the test over several days completing on or before the last day of the test window (must consult with department for security and timing reasons; see appendix for security procedures).

SETTING

- Administering the test individually or to small groups in a separate location.
- Administering the test by ESL or native language teacher within state guidelines for proctors.

PRESENTATION (see appendix for guidance)

Test Directions (According to the needs of the student, "test directions" includes those that are read aloud to all students by test administrators and/or clarification of test directions embedded within the tests.)

- Allowing students to ask for clarifications of directions.
- Clarifying test directions in the native language.
- Reading directions in the native language.
- Simplifying or repeating directions in English.
- Providing written version of oral directions in English or the native language.
- Writing helpful verbs in the directions on the board, or a separate piece of paper in English or the native language.
- Repeating or re-reading directions.
- Proctor or testing administrator asking student questions about directions to check understanding.
- Clarifying directions by having student restate them.

RESPONSE (see appendix for guidance)**Test Questions and Responses**

- Reading math or writing test questions aloud in English. (Questions on a reading test may not be read aloud.)
- Allowing student to use a word translation finder style dictionary or word to word dictionary from native language to English language or English to native language. Dictionaries that include pictures or word definitions are not allowed.
- Providing the native language word for an unknown word in test question or prompt if requested by student.

MAKING DECISIONS

About Students with Disabilities

Alternate Assessment Non-Diploma Track Students

Students with significant cognitive disabilities will have access to, participate in, and make progress in the general education curricula. These students must also participate in statewide assessments administered in all grades 3–10, but they will usually take an Alternate Assessment. The Alternate Assessment is based on Alaska Standards but measured against alternate achievement standards, and the Alternate Assessment does not lead to a diploma. Alternate achievement standards are expectations of performance that differ in complexity from grade-level achievement standards. It is expected that only a small number (less than two percent) of all students will participate in the Alternate Assessment. The department will provide districts with the test materials necessary for completion of the Alternate Assessment.

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) must document the reasons for placing the student on the non-diploma track Alternate Assessment. Parents must be informed when their child's achievement will be based on alternate achievement standards, and their child will **not** receive a diploma. Parental notification must be documented in the student's file.

Criteria for IEP teams in determining student eligibility for Alternate Assessment:

In deciding that a student should be on the non-diploma track, an IEP team must ensure that the following criteria are met:

- The student's cognitive ability and adaptive skill levels prevent completion of the standard academic curricula that lead to a diploma, even with adaptations.
- The decision is not being made for program administration reasons.
- The student requires extensive direct instruction in multiple settings to apply and transfer skills.

In deciding that a student should be on the non-diploma track, an IEP team must ensure that the student's inability to complete the standard academic curricula will not be **primarily** due to the following:

- extended absences;
- expectation of poor performance on state assessments;

-
- visual, auditory, physical, or emotional-behavioral disabilities;
 - inability to read at grade level;
 - anticipated test stress or test anxiety;
 - specific learning disabilities;
 - social, cultural, or economic differences.

Additional guidance to help IEP teams in determining if a student should be assessed with the Alternate Assessment is available on the Alternate Assessment Program website: www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/assessment/alternate_optional.html.

Diploma Track Students

Most students with a disability will be on the diploma track and will be taught and assessed under the performance standards contained in the Alaska Standards: Content and Performance Standards for Alaska Students. They will take the same statewide assessments taken by students without disabilities. If a disability interferes with a student's ability to demonstrate proficiency on an assessment, the student should be provided with an accommodation.

Test Accommodations and Modifications

Students with disabilities may use appropriate accommodations when taking assessments. A testing accommodation is a change made to ensure that information obtained from a test is an accurate reflection of what the test is intended to measure rather than a measure of the student's disability.

Example: Betty knows the answers to the math questions on the state standards-based assessment, but, because of her disability, she has trouble holding a pencil and filling in the ovals on the answer sheet or writing answers to open-ended questions. Unless Betty is given an accommodation, the assessment will measure her ability to hold a pencil instead of her knowledge of math. By providing Betty with a scribe, the school is able to accommodate her disability and measure her proficiency in math.

Accommodations are designed to meet specific needs of specific individuals. Accommodations must not compromise the validity of the test.

Changes to a test that alter what is measured by the test or the validity of the result are called test modifications. For example, reducing the number of questions on a multiple-choice test would alter what is measured, and lowering the passing score would alter the validity of the result. Modified tests would produce invalid test scores for the regular assessments in the statewide assessment system, and would not be scored by the test contractor.

Caution: Remember that the Modified HSGQE is a special assessment for students with disabilities that is available after a student has not demonstrated proficiency on the regular assessment—the HSGQE. As explained on page 18, some modifications are allowed on the Modified HSGQE.

Selecting Test Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The IEP or 504 team should select appropriate accommodations based on the student's needs, and must provide documentation and the rationale for the accommodations on the IEP or 504 plan. Because of the close link between assessment and instruction, the IEP or 504 plan must describe how the accommodations for assessment are included in the student's classroom instruction and assessment.

These guidelines will provide assistance in determining whether an adaptation is an accommodation or a modification. (If we don't know whether a device or change to a test is an accommodation or a modification, we call it an "adaptation" until we can determine which it is.) For assistance in selecting among accommodations, IEP or 504 teams should review www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/assessment/accommodations.html.

Research shows that an unfamiliar test accommodation given to a student with a disability can sometimes lower test performance results. Accordingly, an IEP or 504 team should be cautious about adding an accommodation shortly before an assessment. In general, a good practice is to make sure an accommodation has been used in the student's regular or special education classes for at least three months before testing. This will ensure that the student has experience with the accommodation and that the accommodation is appropriate for the student.

TABLE 2. Examples of Acceptable Accommodations

(NOT Exhaustive List) (Must Be Documented on IEP or in 504 Plan)

TIMING/SCHEDULING (see appendix for guidance)

- Allowing frequent breaks during testing.
- Allowing additional time.
- Administering at a time of the day most beneficial to the student.
- Administering the test over several days completing the testing on or before the last day of the test window (must consult with the department for security and timing reasons; see appendix for security procedures).

SETTING

- Administering the test individually in a separate location.
- Administering the test to a small group in a separate location.
- Providing special lighting.
- Providing adaptive or special furniture.
- Providing special acoustics.

- Administering the test in locations with minimal distractions, in a small group, in a study carrel, or individually.
- Using a communication device such as auditory amplification to give directions.
- Using a special test proctor, including the examinee's teacher.
- Preferential seating.
- Support of physical position of student by increasing or decreasing opportunity for movement.
- Using a checklist to remind student of tasks to be completed.

PRESENTATION (see appendix for guidance)

- Using the Braille edition or large-type (20 font) edition, which is provided by the state test contractor.

Test Directions (According to the needs of the student, "test directions " includes those that are read aloud to all students by test administrators and/or clarification of test directions embedded within the tests.)

- Signing directions to the student.
- Allowing student to ask for clarifications on test directions.
- Reading directions to student.
- Clarifying directions by having student restate them.
- Repeating/Re-reading directions.
- Providing written version of oral directions.
- Presenting directions via overhead and transparencies.
- Providing highlighted words in directions or the reading passages (must communicate with state to ensure test is not marked in any manner to cause test to be unscorable — **Caution:** Highlights on answer sheet will make the test unscorable).
- Writing helpful verbs in the directions on the board, or on a separate piece of paper.

Test Questions

- Reading or signing math and/or writing test questions on the state required examinations to student (test questions on the reading test may not be read or signed to the student). Signing is allowed as long as the sign does not cue the correct response to a question; for example, the sign for triangle is a triangle and should not be used if it is a possible answer.
- Using test contractor tape-recorded version of HSGQE writing and mathematics tests.
- Reading or signing multi-step math or writing test questions one step at a time.

- Presenting test questions via an overhead projector and transparencies.
- Assisting student in tracking or sequencing test items.
- Providing detailed monitoring to ensure student marks responses in correct answer area.
- Turning pages for student.
- Masking portions of the test to direct attention to uncovered items.
- Using color screens to direct attention to specific sections on a page.

Use of Assistive Devices/Supports

- Using a calculator with minimal functions: having only addition, subtraction, division, multiplication, percentage, square root, and memory functions.
- Using visual magnification devices.
- Using templates to reduce visible print.
- Using auditory amplification device, hearing aid, or noise buffers.
- Securing papers to work area with tapes/magnets.
- Using a device to screen out extraneous sounds.
- Using masks or markers to maintain place.
- Using an adaptive keyboard.

RESPONSE

Test Format

- Using graph paper.
- Allowing students to mark responses in test booklet if test employs a separate answer sheet.
- Using scratch paper.
- Providing student with additional room for writing response (must be re-copied into booklet by test administrator).
- Using color visual overlays.
- Using ruler or object to maintain place in test.
- Using shield to reduce glare.

Use of Assistive Devices/Supports

- Allowing student to tape response for later verbatim transcription.
- Using typewriter or computer without spell or grammar checker.
- Dictating to a scribe for all tests (suggested scribe procedures on the next page).
- Allowing alternative responses such as oral, sign, typed, pointing.
- Using a Braille.
- Using a large-diameter, special-grip pencil.

*Suggested scribe procedures:

1. Have student orally say how he or she wants the sentence to read, completing the full sentence (scribe should be familiar to the student).
2. After student has completed the sentence, paragraph, or passage (this depends on individual student ability and need to retain thought process) have student spell key words (e.g. nouns, verbs, etc.) in the sentence.
3. The scribe should record verbatim the words, punctuation, and spelling provided by the student.
4. After the student has spelled the words, the student may look at the writing and complete the punctuation. The student may make additional spelling corrections while completing the punctuation process.
5. Allow student to review and approve what scribe has written.

*Because the grade level expectations in math and reading do not require spelling and punctuation, math and reading scribes do not need to follow steps 2–4 of the suggested scribe procedures above.

What should an IEP or 504 team do when considering an adaptation on a regular assessment that is not on Table 2?

Any list of accommodations will be incomplete because of the unique needs of each individual child. In addition, advances in the technology of adaptive and assistive devices will lead to new accommodations. Accordingly, the accommodations listed in Table 2 are examples of acceptable accommodations, but an IEP team may need to consider the appropriateness of an accommodation not included in Table 2.

When evaluating an adaptation that is not included in Table 2, an IEP team should answer the following questions. First, the two threshold questions:

1. Would the adaptation help the student demonstrate proficiency by reducing the effect of the disability on the student’s performance?
2. Would the student use the adaptation in the classroom, including during regular classroom assessments?

If the answer to either 1 or 2 is no, then the adaptation is probably not a reasonable or appropriate accommodation for the assessment. If the answer to both is yes, then the next step is to determine whether the adaptation is an accommodation or a modification. To help make this distinction, the IEP or 504 team should answer the following questions:

3. Does the adaptation impede the measuring of the skill that is being tested? This question is often difficult to answer, and the following questions might help:

-
- a. Would the adaptation give the student an unfair advantage over a student who has the same proficiency level, and who is not eligible to use the adaptation?
 - b. Does any research support the conclusion that this adaptation does not alter the ability of the test to measure the student's skill level? (IEP or 504 teams may consult with the department at any time.)

Next, the team should consider questions that relate to whether the test could still be administered:

4. Would use of the adaptation cause a breach of test security? Before rejecting an adaptation for security reasons, an IEP or 504 team member or other school or district official should consult with the department. In special cases, security can be bolstered to accommodate special needs.
5. Would use of the adaptation make it impossible to score the test? Before rejecting an adaptation because it changes or alters the test answer sheet, an IEP or 504 team member or other school or district official should consult with the department. In many cases, the adaptation may still be allowed if a test proctor can transfer the student's answers to another answer sheet after the student completes the test.

If the answer to questions 3, 4, or 5, is yes, then the adaptation is a modification, and is not allowed on regular assessments. IEP and Section 504 teams may still give students modifications, but the exams will be invalidated and not scored. If the examination is the HSGQE, the student will not be eligible for a high school diploma.

If the answers to questions 3, 4, and 5 are no, then the adaptation is an allowable accommodation, and it may be used on regular assessments. This is particularly true if research supports the use of the accommodation.

Example: John has an IEP for a learning disability and would like to take his standards based assessments at home where he feels more relaxed. He does not take his regular classroom tests at home, but is provided extra time and a smaller setting. His request is denied, because he does not use this accommodation in regular classroom work.

Example: Anne has an IEP that directs she receive all of her instruction, including tests, at home. Anne requests to be able to take the HSGQE at home. After consulting with the department, the district can protect test security by offering proctors for Anne's assessment to be administered in her home. This accommodation is allowed.

Once test accommodations have been selected and documented in the IEP or 504 Plan, the person responsible for administering the test must be informed so that he/she is aware of the need to provide the accommodation. Additionally, some accommodations may require the assistance of support personnel or

assistive devices, and plans should be made to ensure the necessary equipment and personnel are available at the time of testing.

Non-binding Advisory Opinion

IEP or 504 teams, schools, and districts may consult with the department at any time when considering new adaptations, particularly when the adaptation is requested by a parent. In general, most IEP or 504 teams will be able to resolve issues regarding the availability of adaptations. Sometimes, however, a district might determine that the adaptation is a modification while the parent thinks it is an accommodation. If that happens, the parent may request that the district consult with the department first before reaching its decision. The department will issue a non-binding advisory opinion on whether the requested change is an accommodation or a modification.

If a parent requests an adaptation that is declined by the IEP or 504 team, the district should advise the parent of parental appeal/due process rights, including the right to an administrative complaint or mediation. If possible, the district should provide notice to the parent in a timely manner, enabling the parent to appeal the decision before the test.

If an IEP or 504 team requests a modification for a regular assessment, the district should allow the student to take the assessment with the modification if possible. The district should inform the IEP or 504 team that the modification will make the assessment result invalid and that the test will not be scored.

Caution: Remember that the Modified HSGQE is different from regular assessments. Some modifications may be allowed when a student is eligible for the alternative assessment program, which is described in the next section.

ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

For High School Graduation

Diploma track students will participate in the regular HSGQE that is first offered in the spring of a student's sophomore year. As described in the previous section, a student with a disability should be offered appropriate accommodations when taking the HSGQE.

If a student with a disability is not proficient on one or more subtests of the HSGQE, the student is eligible for an alternative assessment program in the subtest(s) in which proficiency was not achieved. This is a special program for the HSGQE because it is a high-stakes examination required for a high school diploma.

The Alternative Assessment Program consists of two different assessments: The Modified HSGQE, which is appropriate for most students with disabilities, and the Nonstandardized HSGQE, which is available for only a very few students. The Modified HSGQE is offered in the spring and fall to all students with disabilities who have taken and not passed the HSGQE. The Nonstandardized HSGQE is limited to students with severe physical or emotional disabilities who have taken the HSGQE, and who can document that they are unable to demonstrate their proficiency on a standardized assessment.

Districts must apply to the department for approval of an alternative assessment. Furthermore, by February 1 of the student's junior year, or upon enrollment in the state if the student enrolls after February 1 of student's junior year, the IEP/504 team must declare and document in the IEP/504 the alternative program of choice.

Caution: Most students with disabilities are not eligible for the Nonstandardized HSGQE and should continue to take the Modified HSGQE even if they have difficulty passing it. Moreover, because the Nonstandardized HSGQE is a very rigorous assessment, some students who are eligible for this assessment may find that the Modified HSGQE is more advantageous to them.

If an eligible student receives a proficient score on either the Modified HSGQE or the Nonstandardized HSGQE, the student has satisfied state requirements for passing the HSGQE. An eligible disabled student may meet state requirements for passing the HSGQE using any combination of testing under standard conditions, testing with the use of accommodations, or passing an approved alternative assessment (Modified HSGQE or Nonstandardized HSGQE).

If a student does not achieve a proficient score on the HSGQE or the alternative assessment program, the student is eligible to receive a certificate of achievement if all other state and local requirements for graduation have been met.

The Modified HSGQE

The Modified HSGQE is the HSGQE given with allowable modifications—changes to the test situation that normally would not be allowed. Some modifications are permitted here because of the high stakes of the HSGQE and because the significant help they provide to a student outweighs their compromising effect on the validity of the test.

The department and the IEP or 504 team have an important role to play in deciding whether a modification should be provided to a student. The IEP or 504 team will determine whether a particular modification will be helpful to a student on the subtests of the HSGQE on which the student has had difficulty. The IEP or 504 team will then apply to the department for approval of the proposed modification. Forms are available online: <http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/assessment/modified.html>. The department will determine whether the benefit of the modification outweighs its potentially adverse effect on the validity of the test. As explained in the next section, not all modifications will be approved.

When is a modification allowed on the Modified HSGQE?

No definitive list of allowable modifications can be made because of the variety of disabilities and educational programs provided to students with disabilities. Some changes to the HSGQE and its test administration procedures cannot be allowed because the changes would make the test score meaningless or compromise the security of the test. Although the following list of disallowed modifications is not exhaustive, it should give guidance to IEP and 504 teams. Examples of disallowed modifications include:

- Changing the cut score on the test.
- Reducing the number of questions on the test.
- Helping a student find the correct answer to a question.

These modifications would prevent the state from measuring a student's proficiency.

Examples of modifications that the department may approve are listed in Table 3. An IEP or 504 team must apply and receive approval for any modifications used on the Modified HSGQE, even if the modification is listed in Table 3. Table 3 is not comprehensive, however, and the department may approve other modifications for the Modified HSGQE. Applications for the Modified HSGQE will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

TABLE 3. Examples of Acceptable Modifications for the Modified HSGQE

- Allowing a student with a specific learning disability in reading, writing, and/or mathematics to ask a test proctor for clarification of a test question.
- Allowing signer to clarify test questions for a deaf student.
- Allowing use of a spell check on a word processor.
- Allowing all tests to be read aloud (see appendix for guidance).
- Allowing use of a grammar check on a word processor.
- Allowing use of a graphing calculator.
- Allowing a student the use of a dictionary or thesaurus.
- Allowing a student to use math or writing commercially published resource guides.
- Allowing voice recognition software and word processor.
- Allowing proctors to provide synonyms for unknown words if requested by student.

Caution: These modifications may be used only in the Modified HSGQE. Use of these modifications in a regular assessment would render the assessment invalid.

Steps for using the Modified HSGQE

Convene a meeting of the IEP or 504 team for the team to discuss and determine the need for the Modified HSGQE. Make sure that the IEP or 504 plan specifically mentions or lists the need for the modification(s) proposed for the Modified HSGQE.

Complete the **Application for Modified HSGQE** form and mail, fax, or email it to the department. Be sure to include a copy of the page in the IEP or 504 plan that calls for a Modified HSGQE, and make sure that it identifies the student. Forms are available online: www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/assessment/modified.html, and may also be obtained directly from the department. Modified HSGQE applications must be received 60 days before the date of test administration to ensure that the request will be processed. If an application is received late, the department may not be able to process it before the test administration and no reconsideration will be allowed on a decision made on a late-filed application.

If the student's application is accepted or partially accepted, it is the district's responsibility to ensure that the modifications are available on examination day and the test proctor understands the testing procedures.

If an application is rejected, the IEP or 504 team may submit a new application.

The department will approve a Modified HSGQE only if it meets the following requirements:

1. The student has made at least one attempt to pass all sections of the HSGQE with or without accommodations.
2. The student's IEP or 504 team has designed the modification to fit the student's needs and documented in the IEP or 504 plan the need for the modification.
3. The student uses the proposed modification on a regular basis in the classroom, or if not, an explanation of why not.
4. The modification does not breach test security.
5. The modification does not prevent the measurement, to the maximum extent possible, of the student's proficiency on the standards tested on the HSGQE.
6. The modification does not make it impossible for the test company to score the test.
7. The application includes a copy of the relevant page(s) from the IEP or 504 plan listing and detailing the modification(s).
8. The requested Modified HSGQE is for only those content areas in which the student received a score of less than proficient on the HSGQE.

What to do if you disagree with a rejection of requested modification

The department's Alternative Assessment Program manager makes the initial decision regarding modifications requested in an application for the Modified HSGQE. If a district disagrees with that decision, the district may request reconsideration of the decision by the commissioner, as provided in 4 AAC 06.775.

The Nonstandardized HSGQE

The Nonstandardized HSGQE requires a student to prepare an extensive collection of work that reflects competency in each of the state standards tested on the HSGQE. The work is then graded by a jury to ensure that the student has met those standards. The Nonstandardized HSGQE is available only to disabled students who:

- are working at or near grade level;
- have taken but not passed the HSGQE with or without accommodations; and
- have a documented history of being unable to demonstrate proficiency on a standardized assessment because of one or more of the following conditions:
 - the student has a severe emotional or behavioral impairment or a pervasive

developmental or other disability that causes the student to be unable to maintain sufficient concentration to participate in standard testing, even with accommodations or appropriate modifications;

- the student cannot cope with the demands of a prolonged test administration because of multiple physical disabilities, severe health-related disabilities, or a neurological disorder;
- the student has a significant motor or communication disability that causes the student to need more time than is reasonable or available for testing, even with the allowance of extended time.

An IEP team must confirm that a student meets these requirements before allowing a student to submit a Nonstandardized HSGQE. The special education director or superintendent must approve the student's eligibility for the Nonstandardized HSGQE. Most disabled students, including those who have not yet passed the Modified HSGQE, will take the Modified HSGQE rather than participate in the Nonstandardized HSGQE.

To have a student participate in the Nonstandardized HSGQE, an IEP team should submit an application for the Nonstandardized HSGQE on a form provided by the department. All information and forms are available online: www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/assessment/modified.html, and may also be obtained directly from the department. The Nonstandardized HSGQE application must be submitted on or before September 30 of the student's intended year of graduation. The application must include evidence to support the student's eligibility, including:

- diagnoses from a mental health clinician or the school psychologist;
- evidence that the student is performing at or near grade-level, including unmodified grades or performance on nonstandardized assessments;
- evidence that the student cannot demonstrate the student's proficiency on standardized assessments.

The department's Alternative Assessment Program manager makes the initial decision regarding whether to accept an application for the Nonstandardized HSGQE. If a district disagrees with that decision, the district may request reconsideration of the decision by the commissioner, as provided in 4 AAC 06.775.

The Nonstandardized HSGQE Process

The district must first convene a team to evaluate the Nonstandardized HSGQE, and certify that:

- the work presented for evaluation was prepared exclusively by the student;

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- the extensive collection of work covers each of the standards described in the publication “The Nonstandardized Assessment Administrative Manual”; and
 - the extensive collection of work demonstrates proficiency on each of the standards described in “The Nonstandardized Assessment Administrative Manual.”

The district team must include representatives from the IEP team and a content teacher for each content area addressed in the collection of work. If the district cannot verify that these conditions have been met, the district should not forward the collection of work to the department for review by the state jury.

The state Nonstandardized HSGOE jury is a panel or panels of educators with expertise in the subject being tested. The jury will apply rigorous standards in evaluating a collection of work to ensure that the work validly reflects proficiency in the state standards tested by the HSGOE. If, in evaluating the work, a jury cannot conclude that the work was prepared by the student or that the work demonstrates proficiency, the jury will reject the Nonstandardized HSGOE. If the jury confirms that the student has demonstrated proficiency, the student will have successfully completed the Alternative Assessment Program, and be eligible for a diploma.

The scoring of the Nonstandardized HSGOE will be based on “The Nonstandardized HSGOE Holistic Scoring Guide.” The scoring guide requires significant quantities of evidence and consistency to ensure that the assessment is a valid and reliable indicator of proficiency. The scoring guide is located in the “Nonstandardized Assessment Resource Guide.” All forms and scoring guides are available online: www.eed.state.ak.us/assessment/modified.html.

Special Cases

In some rare and unusual circumstances, the situation might require that a student receive a waiver from the HSGOE requirement. For example, a student who has arrived late to the system or experienced a sudden and traumatic event close in time to the student’s final test may be eligible for a waiver. Districts, IEP and 504 teams, and parents should carefully review the regulations governing waivers: 4 AAC 06.772, 06.773, and 06.774, which can be accessed through the department’s web site at: <http://www.eed.state.ak.us/organization.html>.

If a diploma track student is unable to participate in one or more subtest of the HSGOE, the student may be able to take the Modified HSGOE for that subtest, or, if eligible, the Nonstandardized HSGOE, in the student’s sophomore year. He or she may then obtain a waiver of the requirement to have first taken the HSGOE for that subtest. A student who is unable to participate should request permission from the district’s governing body to take the Modified or

Nonstandardized HSGOE in place of the HSGOE by October 31, of the student's sophomore year, or in the first year that the student enrolls in public school in the state. The request must include the following:

- a history of the student's participation in assessments, including standardized assessments, for the subject area in which the student is unable to participate;
- evidence from the historical record of the student's IEPs that document and validate the student's need for modification on standardized assessments; and
- other evidence, which may include medical evidence, that documents the link between the disability and the modification.

A governing body will grant this request only if the student has a history of not being able to participate in standardized assessments. If permission is granted, and the student passes all subtests and meets the other requirements of graduation, the IEP/504 team then applies for a waiver of the requirement to take the HSGOE in a standard format without modifications from the governing body.

Example: Mark is blind and because of a physical disability cannot read Braille. He has excellent comprehension of written material, but must have all reading assessments read aloud or presented on tape. He applies to take the Modified HSGOE for reading in place of the HSGOE in his sophomore year, and his request is granted. He passes the modified reading subtest, and passes the regular math and writing subtests. In his senior year he receives a waiver of the requirement that he take the HSGOE for reading.

Caution: A request to take the Modified or Nonstandardized HSGOE in place of the HSGOE will not be granted unless a student is actually incapable of participating in the HSGOE. The inability of a student to achieve a proficient score on a standardized assessment is not evidence that a student cannot participate in the HSGOE.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND PHRASES

used in the Participation Guidelines

504 Plan—A legal document falling under the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. It is designed to plan a program of instructional services to assist students with special needs who are in a regular education setting. A 504 plan is not an Individualized Education Program (IEP) as is required for special education students.

Adaptation—Any device or change provided to a student for testing: "Adaptation" includes an accommodation or a modification.

Accommodation—A change in format, response, setting, timing, or scheduling that does not alter in any significant way what the test measures or the comparability of scores.

Alternate Achievement Standards—Expectations of performance that differ in complexity from grade-level achievement standards.

Alternate Assessment—An assessment used with significantly cognitively disabled students, that measures the student's proficiency on the general curriculum against alternate achievement standards. Students taking the Alternate Assessment are on the non-diploma track.

Alternative Assessment Program—The Modified HSGQE and the Nonstandardized HSGQE.

Certificate of Achievement—A certificate acknowledging that a student has met all district requirements for graduation, but has not passed the HSGQE.

EED—Alaska Department of Education & Early Development

High Stakes Test—A test used to provide results that have important, direct consequences for examinees, programs, or institutions involved in the testing. The HSGQE is a high stakes test because students are required to pass the HSGQE in order to receive a diploma.

HSGQE—High School Graduation Qualifying Examination

IEP—Individualized Education Program

LEP—Limited English Proficiency

Modification—A change in the content, format, and/or administration of a test that alters what the test is designed to measure or the comparability of scores. Generally, a

modification makes an assessment invalid. The HSGQE may be taken with approved modifications because it is a special case.

Modified HSGQE—The HSGQE given with modifications that have been approved by EED through an application process.

Non-Diploma Track—An alternate academic approach that does not lead to a diploma.

Nonstandardized HSGQE—An assessment for students with disabilities that requires a student to prepare an extensive collection of work. Proficiency on the Nonstandardized HSGQE requires competency in every one of the state standards that are tested on the HSGQE.

Participation Guidelines (PG)—A booklet providing guidance to school district officials, administrators, teachers, and other persons responsible for making decisions about the participation in assessments of students on an Individualized Education Program (IEP), students on federal 504 Plans and students with limited English proficiency. It also provides guidance for deciding if a student requires a testing accommodation, modification, the Modified HSGQE or the Nonstandardized HSGQE.

Proficiency—Achievement of the performance criteria required.

Proctor—Refers to a person who administers the HSGQE. Proctor qualifications are determined through regulation (4 ACC 06.755(c)). Proctors are required to administer the HSGQE.

Test Administrator—Includes anyone who administers a statewide assessment, including proctors. The Standards Based Assessments do not require a proctor; therefore those administering the examinations are referred to as test administrators.

APPENDIX

for the Participation Guidelines

Timing/Scheduling Tables 1, 2, and 3

Administering the test over several days completing by the last day of the test window.

Students who use the Scheduled Extended Time accommodation do not have to complete the entire subtest in the testing day. However, the testing must be completed on or before the last day of the testing window.

Description

This accommodation allows the test to be administered over a period of days. As with all accommodations, the extended time request must be documented in the IEP/504 plan or LEP documentation. Furthermore, this type of request should reflect like-type accommodations taking place in the classroom. All documentation necessary for this accommodation is available on the State's Assessment website: www.eed.state.ak.us/forms/forms1.html#Assessment.

Considerations and Instructions

1. The Flexible Scheduling Terms of Agreement form (05-05-030) must be reviewed with the student and parents before administration. The form with the signatures from all involved parties must be sent or faxed to the department (907-465-8400) before testing.
2. Test administrators must document how security will be maintained (e.g., testing location, testing dates, pages to be completed, and storage procedures to maintain security). The required Flexible Scheduling Application form (05-05-029) along with documentation and proof showing the student cannot finish one subtest in one day, must be sent or faxed to the department for review and confirmation prior to testing (907-465-8400).
3. Special arrangements may be needed to accommodate the extension. The student will need a secure space for testing.
4. Students may not revisit completed parts of a test or review future portions of a test. Paper clips or rubber bands may be used to secure the pages completed or planned for future testing sessions. **Do not staple or tape any part of the test.**

Presentation and Response Tables 1, 2 and 3

Reading the test directions or questions aloud. (individual or small group)

The read aloud accommodation may be used to read aloud any directions, writing prompts, test questions, and/or answer choices on the mathematics and writing subtests included in the HSGQE and the Standards Based Assessments. This accommodation applies beyond the testing directions that proctors and test administrators are directed to read aloud in the test administration manuals.

The read aloud modification for the **reading subtest** is only available through the Modified HSGQE application process. The read aloud modification allows the reading of all test directions, reading passages, test questions, and/or answer choices on the reading subtest for the Modified HSGQE.

Description

This accommodation or modification permits directions embedded in the test as well as content to be read aloud to a student during the test administration. As with all accommodations and modifications, the use must be documented in the IEP/504 plan or LEP documentation. Furthermore, this type of accommodation or modification must reflect like-type classroom instruction. Finally, the following considerations and instructions do not consider other accommodations or modifications in conjunction to the read aloud. Consequently, proctors must assemble groups which reflect identical IEP/504 or LEP programs for assessment purposes.

Considerations and Instructions

1. Students who use this accommodation or modification must be tested in a separate room to avoid disturbing other students.
2. For words located on a map, chart, table, etc., the proctor may either (a) read all words to the student at one time or (b) inform the student that the information can be read aloud upon student request.
3. The proctor must avoid any restating or paraphrasing of embedded directions, questions, and the like (these guidelines do not consider other accommodations or modifications in conjunction to the read aloud). Additionally, the proctor must not cue or prompt student responses.
4. The proctor must avoid any exaggerated inflection, which could be interpreted by the student as an encouragement or prompt.