



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: District Test Coordinators

FROM: Ellen Cohn, *EC*
Interim Chief Academic Officer

DATE: January 23, 2015

SUBJECT: 2015 Smarter Balanced Accommodations for Students who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Deaf-Blind

Connecticut continues to work with stakeholders to ensure that students have appropriate access to all statewide assessments. Over the past year, representatives from the Academic Office and the Bureau of Special Education have been working with stakeholders from the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) community, focusing on assessment accommodations. Recognizing that the currently available Smarter Balanced accommodations do not provide the breadth of communication supports that Connecticut students have experienced in the legacy CMT and CAPT assessments, and which are defined in their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), as well as the required Language and Communication Plan, or Section 504 Plans, we have proposed additional accommodations to the Smarter Balanced Consortium. Connecticut is working cooperatively with the Smarter Balanced Consortium, which is reviewing our recommendations through the appropriate processes allowing all consortium states to consider this addition to the Smarter Balanced Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines.

While Smarter Balanced is processing our recommendations, we are preparing proactively for the 2015 administration of the Smarter Balanced Assessment including the additional accommodations of Human Signer and Human Signer Passages for our students who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Deaf -Blind. These accommodations are defined below and additional requirements for the individual providing the accommodation are described in the attached documentation.

- Human Signer Accommodation: text is provided to the student identified as Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Deaf-Blind, in the communication mode the student uses regularly, and may include one or more of the following: American Sign Language (ASL), Signed Exact English (SEE), Speech reader (lip reading), or Cued Speech.
- Human Signer Passages Accommodation: English Language Arts (ELA) reading passages text is provided to the student in Grade 6 or above identified as Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Deaf-Blind **and** Print Disabled in the communication mode the student uses regularly, and may include one or more of the following: American Sign Language (ASL), Signed Exact English (SEE), Speech reader (lip reading) or Cued Speech.

Districts are now confirming the assessment accommodation needs of their students with IEPs and Section 504 Plans and entering their accommodations into the [CSDE Accommodations Collection Website](#). Therefore, additional attention can be focused on students who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Deaf-Blind.

If the additional communication support described in the Human Signer Accommodation and the Human Signer Passages Accommodation is included in the IEP and is evident in the student's Language and Communication Plan or Section 504 Plan, the student is eligible for the Petition for Approval of Special Accommodations for Students Identified as Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Deaf Blind.

Please find attached the following documents describing the procedures to access the Human Signer Accommodation and the Human Signer Passages Accommodation:

1. Petition for Approval of Special Accommodations for Students Identified as Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Deaf-Blind
2. Special Accommodation Procedure (Excerpt of Appendix B from CSDE 2014-2015 Assessment Guidelines)
3. Human Signer Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf-Blind Protocol
4. Connecticut's Accommodations for Students Identified as Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or Deaf-Blind for the 2015 Smarter Balanced Assessments

Districts may need to amend the IEP's of students served both within the district and those placed in out of district settings to ensure eligible students have access to these newly defined accommodations.

If you have additional questions, please contact Janet Stuck or Joe Amenta in the Academic Office. Their contact information is as follows:

Janet Stuck
860-713-6837
janet.stuck@ct.gov

Joe Amenta
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joseph.amenta@ct.gov

Thank you.

EC:js

Attachments