

## Overview

The Smarter Balanced Pilot Test will offer a menu of accessibility and accommodation (A&A) options for students with special needs. The development of a full array of A&A features for the Smarter Balanced assessments is an ongoing project, and the options available for the Pilot Test represent a subset of those that will be available for the Field Test and Operational assessments.

- The Pilot A&A options do not represent the full array of accessibility options that will be offered through the Smarter Balanced operational test.
- Some of the A&A options within the Pilot will be available to only a limited sample of students to support the Consortium’s research agenda for the development of A&A tools for the Field Test and Operational assessments.
- More detail on decision-making considerations and implementation will be provided in the Test Administration Manuals.

The A&A options being implemented in the Pilot can be divided into three categories: Universal Digital Tools, Accommodations Supports, and Research Forms. Each is described below. Detailed descriptions of each tool are found in the Pilot Test administration manuals.

The purpose of this document is to provide 1) a high level description of the tools available to students who participate in the Pilot Test and 2) guidance to school personnel on student participation in the Pilot Test. More detailed information is provided in the Pilot Test administration manuals.

## Universal Digital Tools

Universal Digital Tools are features that have been built into the test administration software and that are available for all students taking the Smarter Balanced Pilot Test. Access to and use of the Universal Digital Tools is under the student’s control during the testing session, and use of these tools does not require any advanced decision-making by adults to “turn on” or “turn off” these options. Students likely to use any of these tools should be made aware of how to use them during a training session(s) prior to participating in the Pilot Test.

*Universal Digital Tools available on all Pilot Test forms for all students:*

- Pausing
- Variable font size (5 sizes)
- Highlighting
- Marking for review
- Answer eliminator
- Expandable passages
- Tab-enter navigation
- Font background color alternatives
- Breaks (an option that allows students to take one or more breaks during the test administration)

- Calculator<sup>1</sup>

*Universal Digital Writing tools (available only for ELA performance tasks):*

- Bold, Italics, Underline
- Indent
- Cut, Copy, Paste
- Spell check
- Undo/Redo

## Accommodations Supports

Accommodations are available to students based on evidence of demonstrated need, as identified at the local level by school personnel who are familiar with the student's assessment needs. These are available on all Pilot Test forms for identified students.

Local accommodations not described in this document are **not** permitted for Pilot Test administration. Adults should not review nor have access to Pilot Test questions.

- Extended time
- Frequent breaks
- Quiet environment
- Print on request (items/stimuli/passages)<sup>2</sup>

## Research Forms

Smarter Balanced is committed to providing as broad access to the assessment as possible, while ensuring that the assessment yields fair and accurate results. Test forms used by a small number of students in the spring 2013 Pilot Test will be "research forms." These forms will help the Consortium investigate specific assessment A&A issues.

Students receiving the research forms will be pre-identified by the Consortium before the beginning of the Pilot Test. There is no need for local school personnel to pre-select students for the research forms. However, scientifically selected schools will be notified, through the recruitment process, if eligible students in their school will be receiving research forms.

The table below shows the grades and content areas in which research forms may be administered.

---

<sup>1</sup> Calculators will not be displayed and will not be available on items when their use will interfere with intended construct. As an example, the calculator would not be displayed for an item that assesses fluency with mathematics operations.

<sup>2</sup> Tool should be used only for students who cannot use computer screens. Given the high security risk, districts will decide if tool will be made available.

**Table 1. Research Forms Distribution**

	<b>English Language Arts</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>
Full Spanish translation	N/A	3, 7, 11
Online Spanish glossaries	N/A	3, 7, 11
Online refreshable Braille	4, 7, 11	3, 7, 11
Text to speech	4, 7, 11	3, 7, 11
Online English glossaries	4	3

## Exemption from the Pilot

Smarter Balanced is in the final stages of crafting a comprehensive A&A framework for students with special assessment needs, and is developing a variety of innovative digital accessibility tools that will be embedded in the Smarter Balanced assessment delivery platform. However, this work will not be completed in time for the spring 2013 Pilot Testing, resulting in a menu of A&A options for the Pilot Test that represent a subset of those that will be available for Field Testing and operational assessments. The pilot will feature several of the new universal digital accessibility tools, and a variety of accommodations supports, as described in this document.

The purpose of the pilot is to collect as complete and valid information on the items as possible. As many students as possible, in the scientific sample, should participate if the available Universal Digital Tools and Accommodations Supports (described above) provide adequate supports to ensure valid assessment. However, we understand that the Pilot Test will not offer a sufficient set of A&A tools and supports for all students. Therefore, some students may need to be exempted from Pilot Test participation.

- For the Pilot Test only, schools may exempt individual students from participation. This must be determined by school personnel, who are familiar with the student’s assessment needs.
- Student exemption may be warranted when appropriate school personnel determine that the available tools and accommodations will not be sufficient to allow valid assessment of the student’s knowledge and skills.
- In order to make the pilot sample as complete as possible, schools are strongly encouraged to use this exemption judiciously and to include students in the pilot whenever possible.
- School personnel should follow state and local policies regarding student participation.
- In the case of an exemption, school personnel must adhere to local and state policies.
- For answers to questions about the tools and accommodations available for the Pilot Test, school personnel should contact the Smarter Balanced Pilot Test help desk at: [smarterbalancedhelpdesk@air.org](mailto:smarterbalancedhelpdesk@air.org), phone: 1-866-815-7246.

Please note that exemption allowances apply only to the Pilot Test. An expanded set of accessibility and accommodations tools will be available for the Smarter Balanced Field Test in 2014 as well as for the operational assessments in 2015.