

Assistive Technology Guidelines

NJSLA and NJGPA Test Administration

These guidelines provide guidance for schools to determine if certain assistive technology (AT) already in use by students with disabilities may be used and how to test the functionality of certain assistive technology for possible use on the assessments.

For students using assistive technology, including screen readers and other AT applications, this must be indicated on the student's Student Registration/Personal Needs Profile (SR/PNP) prior to testing within PearsonAccess^{next}.

Assistive technology may not have embedded grammar check, connect to the internet, or save information. If these features cannot be disabled or monitored closely by an administrator, the device must not be used on an assessment.

The online assessment platform used to deliver assessments (TestNav) is designed to comply with the [World Wide Web Consortium \(W3C\) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.0, Level AA](#). To be compatible with the online assessment platform, browsers and assistive technologies should comply with the W3C's [User Agent Accessibility Guidelines \(UAAG\)](#) and support WCAG 2.0, Level AA and the [Web Accessibility Initiative \(WAI\) - Accessible Rich Internet Applications \(ARIA\)](#) recommendation from the W3C. All assistive technology that is required to interact with the online assessment platform, but does not conform to W3C standards and guidelines, may present challenges for students during testing.

New for testing in Spring 2022, web extensions for Co:Writer Universal and Read&Write will be available in the TestNav desktop app for students who have speech-to-text and/or word prediction listed in their Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 plan. See Category One for additional information.

There are **three** categories of assistive technology for use in assessments.

Category One: Allowable Assistive Technology Extensions

In previous administrations, Assistive Technology browser extensions have not been available for assessments in the TestNav app. However, starting with Spring 2022 testing, students who have speech-to-text or word prediction listed in their IEP or 504 plan will be able to access the Co:Writer Universal or Read&Write extension within the TestNav app.

To access these extensions:

- Select the Accommodated Non-Screen Reader form in the Student SR/PNP in PearsonAccess^{next}.
- Select the options for Assistive Technology Web Extensions in the Student SR/PNP in PearsonAccess^{next}.
- No other set-up is required. After the student logs into their assessment, the student will automatically be offered the choice between loading the Co:Writer or Read&Write extension into the application for the assessment.
- The test administrator (or student) must select the appropriate web extension to be used during the assessment.
- Both extensions have similar features, but it is important that the student select the web extension they are most familiar with and typically use for classroom work.
- There is an option to connect to a student's cowriter profile if they have an account

Category Two: Allowable Assistive Technology Software

The **second** category includes assistive technology that is used by the student to interact directly with the computer-based testing platform. These assistive technologies include third-party software applications such as screen readers, as well as standard input devices, such as adaptive keyboards, adaptive mice, and switch interfaces. Schools must confirm the functionality of the devices and software within their technology environment prior to testing by conducting a simulation of the day-of-testing environment. This can be completed in two phases.

Phase I

The Practice Tests are available through the resource support site or the TestNav desktop app. These practice tests are non-secure and provide students with exposure to the content and interactions. There are multiple versions of practice tests available. To test the functionality of assistive technology, select the appropriate practice test within each grade/subject tab.

Choose the:

- Accommodated Screen Reader version if testing with a screen reader; or
- Accommodated Non-Screen Reader version if testing with other assistive technology that is not a screen reader.

Note: Phase I is not via a secure student login. It is intended only to provide students with access to gain exposure to content and item interactions within the assessment. Phase II must be completed to confirm functionality in a secure assessment.

Phase II

The PearsonAccess^{next} Training Center will include the capability to verify assistive technologies within the secure versions of the practice tests. The instructions for conducting an infrastructure trial are available in the **Infrastructure Trial Readiness Guide** available at the [New Jersey Assessments Resource Center](#), located under **Technology Setup>User Guides**. Verification will require completing the same registration and PNP process used for the operational assessment in the PearsonAccess^{next} Training Center.

These activities will assist districts, schools, and students to determine whether their assistive technology will interact appropriately with the TestNav assessment platform and whether it can be used successfully during computer-based assessment. An infrastructure trial will also allow students to interact and gain familiarity with the actual computer-based interface.

Variability has been found in the compatibility of different assistive technologies, other than screen readers, with the TestNav app. Because of this, it is required that each user undergo an infrastructure trial where the students' AT can be tested in a secure TestNav environment. The intent is to confirm if the assistive technology will interact appropriately with the TestNav assessment platform and whether it can be used successfully during computer-based testing.

As a result, with the exceptions of Co:Writer Universal and Read&Write, assistive technologies that rely on browser toolbars or individual student account login will not work in the TestNav desktop app.

TestNav Technology guidelines provide detailed information on minimum system specifications. The guidelines are available at [TestNav System Requirements](#).

IMPORTANT NOTES about Operating Systems and Assistive Technology use:

- **Chromebooks:**

- The Co:Writer Universal and Read&Write TestNav extensions are available on Chromebooks when in kiosk mode.
- ChromeVox - the screen reader embedded within the Chromebook Operating System can be used on Chromebooks and will interact directly with the TestNav app. Accessibility testing has shown that no barriers exist.
- Except for those technologies listed in bullet #1, Chromebooks cannot be used with any other Assistive Technology interacting directly with TestNav. Chromebook extensions are blocked when in Kiosk mode (Required for secure assessment).
- Chromebooks can be used as a stand-alone Assistive Technology for response accommodations as defined in the Accommodations Manual. If you plan to use a Chromebook or iPad as a third-party external assistive technology device, contact your state department for additional guidance for administration.
- Embedded operating system (OS) Accessibility Features must be disabled unless otherwise allowed per the student's IEP. If not disabled, they will be active during assessment as they cannot be blocked by TestNav. Examples for Chrome OS include ChromeVox and Sticky Keys.

- **macOS and iOS - iPads**

- Must be full size iPads only (no iPad Mini).
- Refer to [TestNav System Requirements](#) to determine supported iOS.
- **VoiceOver for iOS is not allowed for use on the assessments.** There is currently no configuration that will provide a barrier-free testing experience for VoiceOver users on iOS systems. The Pearson TestNav and Accessibility teams are working with Apple to include improvements in future releases.
- Embedded operating system (OS) Accessibility Features must be disabled unless otherwise allowed per the student's IEP. If not disabled, they will be active during assessment as they cannot be blocked by TestNav. Examples for macOS and iOS include Voiceover, Sticky Keys, Speak Selection, and Speak Screen.

- **Windows**

- Embedded operating system (OS) Accessibility Features must be disabled unless otherwise allowed per the student's IEP. If not disabled, they will be active during assessment as they cannot be blocked by TestNav. Examples for Windows OS include Windows Narrator, Windows Speech Recognition, and Sticky Keys.

Category Three: External Assistive Technology

The **third** category includes “stand-alone” assistive technology that does *not* interact directly with TestNav and is not accessed on the same device used by the student to complete the computer-based assessment. Instead, this will be used by the student at a separate station during the assessment.

Assistive technologies in this category include speech-to-text, augmentative communication, word prediction, self-contained word processors, and other technologies not directly connected to the computer on which the student is being tested. These “stand-alone” assistive technologies do not need to be tested via an Infrastructure Trial and may be used during the assessment, according to the provisions of the accommodations policies. However, they may require a test administrator to assist the student with transition between the computer used for assessment and the external assistive technology.

All responses generated on a “stand-alone” assistive technology device must be transcribed verbatim by a test administrator to the student’s computer-based test or into the accommodated answer document. Please refer to the Protocol for the Use of the Scribe Accommodation and for Transcribing Student Responses available in the accommodations manual for steps that must be followed when transcribing a student’s response.

NOTE: If stand-alone assistive technologies are used for the assessments, all grammar check, internet access, and stored file functionalities must be disabled.

If you plan to use a Chromebook or iPad as a third-party external assistive technology device, contact your state department for additional guidance for administration. Reference the Accommodations Manual for more detailed instructions.