

Accommodation considerations for remote testing

How will students with disabilities receive their accommodations in remote and hybrid learning models? While distance learning poses some challenges, schools should be moving forward with student accommodations as indicated on Individualize Education Programs (IEPs) and/or 504 plans under the IDEA or civil rights. Driven by a commitment to help all students learn, NWEA is proud to offer solutions purpose-built with features and enhancements to support students with disabilities (SWD).

Not all SWD are the same

NWEA® recognizes each student has their own unique strengths. Our assessments and tools show what students know and are ready to learn, so their teachers can provide the best possible instruction. To do so, we need to make sure the right assessments are assigned to students.

The majority of SWD will be able to take any assigned MAP® Growth™ assessments with their accommodations. However, if your student has a visual disability or is blind, they will need to be assigned the Accessible MAP Growth tests. These tests have been designed with students with visual impairments in mind. The Accessible MAP Growth and standard MAP Growth tests have the same adaptive functionality and gives scores on the same RIT scale, so the scores are comparable. However, there are some important differences that ensure the content is accessible. For more information on how to assign the Accessible MAP Growth assessment and to understand the differences, please read the document titled [“What is the difference between the Accessible MAP and standard MAP tests”](#) on our [Community site](#).

SWD and remote assessment

It’s important to understand that some accommodation related features are built into the assessment. These kind of features are called **embedded features**, and are available to students on their MAP Growth test screen. Most of these embedded features are deemed **universal**, which means they are provided to all students. Other embedded features, such as text-to-speech, are called **designated features**, which means they need to be individually assigned to a student prior to testing using the “assign accommodations” button on the proctor’s test screen.

Administering an Accessible MAP Growth test may require additional steps in a remote learning environment. The tables below provide strategies and guidance for incorporating universal and designated features and accommodations during remote tests.

Universal features are accessibility supports that are either embedded and provided digitally through instructional or assessment technology (e.g., answer eliminator), or non-embedded and provided non-digitally at the local level (e.g., scratch paper). Universal features are available to all students as they access instructional or assessment content.

EMBEDDED UNIVERSAL FEATURES		
FEATURE	DESCRIPTIONS	DISTANCE LEARNING RESOURCES AND SUGGESTIONS
<p>Amplification (audio amplification, increase volume, audio aids)</p>	<p>The student raises or lowers the volume control, as needed, using headphones.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow the student to test in a separate room or one with a door • Allow the student to wear headphones either provided by the school or home • The student could have music playing or a noise canceling machine
<p>Calculator</p>	<p>An embedded on-screen digital calculator can be accessed for calculator-allowed items when students click on the calculator button. When the embedded calculator, as presented for all students, is not appropriate for a student (for example, for a student who is blind), the student may use the calculator offered with assistive technology devices (such as a talking calculator or a braille calculator).</p>	<p>For students that need an accessible calculator, we recommend the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal handheld, school approved accessible calculator • A school issued accessible calculator <p>If the aforementioned are not available, we recommend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DESMOS: https://www.desmos.com/fourfunction https://www.desmos.com/scientific
<p>Highlighter (highlight tool)</p>	<p>The student uses this digital feature for marking desired text, items, or response options with a color.</p>	<p>Embedded for all, optional for students to use.</p>
<p>Keyboard navigation (keyboard shortcuts, two-switch system)</p>	<p>The student is able to navigate throughout test content by using a keyboard, e.g., arrow keys. This feature may differ depending on the testing platform.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a student uses an alternate keyboard (e.g., switch, joystick), we recommend they try using their own personal equipment • If the student needs an alternate keyboard (e.g., switch, joystick) and does not have one, we recommend the school provides this to students

NON-EMBEDDED UNIVERSAL FEATURES

FEATURE	DESCRIPTIONS	DISTANCE LEARNING RESOURCES AND SUGGESTIONS
Breaks (frequent breaks)	Students are allowed to take breaks when individually needed to reduce cognitive fatigue when they experience heavy assessment demands. The use of this universal tool may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Breaks are essential for many students• Note: Some students perform better in the mornings, other students in the afternoons. Consider this when determining the best time to have a student take a test.
English dictionary	An English dictionary can be provided to the student. The use of this universal feature may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment.	Options for a physical book: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal English dictionary• The school could provide one• Check your library
Noise buffer (headphones, audio aids)	The student uses noise buffers to minimize distraction or filter external noise during testing. Any noise buffer must be compatible with the requirements of the test.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal headphones• The school could provide them• Alternatively, provide a quieter room, a fan, or a noise machine to muffle other distracting sounds
Scratch paper (blank paper)	The student uses scratch paper or an individual erasable whiteboard to make notes or record responses. All scratch paper must be collected and securely destroyed at the end of each test domain to maintain test security. The student receives one sheet (or more as needed) of scratch paper. A marker, pen, or pencil should be provided as well. The student can use an assistive technology device to take notes instead of using scratch paper as long as the device is approved by the state. Test administrators have to ensure that all the notes taken on an assistive technology device are deleted after the test.	
Thesaurus	A thesaurus containing synonyms of terms can be provided to the student. The use of this universal tool may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment.	Options for a physical book: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal thesaurus• The school could provide one• Check your local library
Spanish dictionary	A Spanish dictionary can be provided to the student. The use of this universal feature may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment.	Options for a physical book: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal dictionary• The school could provide one• Check your local library

Designated features are those features that are available for use by any student for whom the need has been indicated by an educator (or team of educators including the parents/guardians and the student if appropriate) who is familiar with the student’s characteristics and needs. Embedded designated features (e.g., text-to-speech) are provided digitally through instructional or assessment technology, while non-embedded designated features (e.g., magnification device) are provided locally. Designated features must be assigned to a student by trained educators or teams using a consistent process.

EMBEDDED DESIGNATED FEATURES		
FEATURE	DESCRIPTIONS	DISTANCE LEARNING RESOURCES AND SUGGESTIONS
Text-to-speech (audio support, spoken audio)	The student uses this feature to hear audio of item content.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This feature is embedded which means it is part of the test experience • The proctor/teacher will need to assign it to students who need it
NON-EMBEDDED DESIGNATED FEATURES		
FEATURE	DESCRIPTIONS	DISTANCE LEARNING RESOURCES AND SUGGESTIONS
Bilingual dictionary (word-to-word dictionary [English/native language])	A bilingual/dual language word-to-word dictionary is provided to the student as a language support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal dictionary • The school could provide one • Check your local library
Color contrast	Test content of online items may be displayed with different colors.	<p>We are compatible with the third-party software, ZoomText Magnifier or Mag Reader</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ZoomText not only provides screen magnification, but color contrast as well • Your school district may have a group license for ZoomText check with your special education team to see if your child qualifies • If color contrast software is needed this should be something a student is using on a daily basis. This type of software should not be introduced the day of testing • Also, students can use native accessibility features for color contrast such as Mac Display or Windows contrast <p>See this document for additional details on testing visually impaired students: https://community.nwea.org/docs/DOC-1681</p>
Human reader (human read aloud, read aloud)	Test and question content is read aloud by a qualified human reader.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If possible, have a teacher or paraeducator support this student either with a home visit or using online communication platforms • Parents can support with guidance from the teacher and/or proctor

NON-EMBEDDED DESIGNATED FEATURES (CONT.)

FEATURE	DESCRIPTIONS	DISTANCE LEARNING RESOURCES AND SUGGESTIONS
Magnification device (low-vision aids)	The student adjusts the size of specific areas of the screen (e.g., text, formulas, tables, and graphics) with an assistive technology device. Magnification allows increasing the size to a level not provided for by the zoom universal feature.	<p>We are compatible with most native magnification features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windows Magnifier • Mac Zoom • iPad Zoom <p>We are compatible with the third-party software, ZoomText Magnifier or Mag Reader.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your school district may have a group license for ZoomText check with your special education team to see if your child qualifies • If magnification software is needed this should be something a student is using on a daily basis. This type of software should not be introduced the day of testing <p>See this document for additional details on testing visually impaired students: https://community.nwea.org/docs/DOC-1681</p>
Native language translation	Test and question content is translated by a test administrator who is fluent in the language.	<p>This is possible remotely, but this needs to go through district/school APPROVAL:</p> <p>General Guidelines/Requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student should use a standard browser instead of the secure testing browser • The student's communication platform (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams) needs to offer screen share capabilities and audio communication <p>Step by step instructions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student logs into test • Student shares their screen with the teacher/translator • Teacher/translator translates the question into the student's native language, and communicates with the student using a microphone • Student selects answer and moves onto next question
Separate setting (alternate location)	Test location is altered so that the student is tested in a setting different from that made available for most students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This feature is usually given to students who are distracted in large settings with lots of other students. • If the test is taken at home and a separate/quiet setting within the house is not available, consider using a noise buffer such as headphones, a noise machine or a fan to muffle distracting sounds
Student reads test aloud (student reads assessment to him- or herself)	The student reads the test content aloud. This feature must be administered in a one-on-one setting.	

Accommodations are changes in procedures or materials that ensure equitable access to instructional and assessment content and generate valid assessment results for students who need them. Accommodations are generally available for students for whom there is a documented need on an IEP or 504 accommodation plan, although some states also offer accommodations for English language learners.

NON-EMBEDDED ACCOMMODATIONS		
FEATURE	DESCRIPTIONS	DISTANCE LEARNING RESOURCES AND SUGGESTIONS
Abacus (individualized manipulatives)	This accommodation may be used in place of scratch paper for students who typically use an abacus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students can use a personal abacus, or have one provided to them by their school Learn how to make your own: http://www.homeschoolingheartsandminds.com/2013/03/math-craft-make-your-own-abacus.html
Assistive Technology (alternate response options, word processor or similar keyboarding device to respond to items)	The student is able to use assistive technology, which includes such supports as typing on customized keyboards, assistance with using a mouse, mouth or head stick or other pointing devices, sticky keys, touch screen, and trackball.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AT devices should be something a student is familiar with or is beginning to become familiar with AT devices and software may come from your school, district or even your state department of education <p>There are many supports and resources for students with disabilities. Checkout this partial list of AT devices https://www.orin.com/access/at_fund_sources.htm</p>
Screen reader	A software application that identifies and interprets what is being displayed on the screen (text, images, etc.). Screen readers are used by students with no or low vision.	<p>Please follow the steps outlined in the following documents to ensure successful testing: https://community.nwea.org/docs/DOC-1681</p> <p>And here: https://community.nwea.org/docs/DOC-1470</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are compatible with JAWS If your student needs a device, follow the suggestions under assistive technology
Refreshable braille	A raised-dot code that individuals read with their fingertips using a refreshable braille device.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure refreshable braille is working follow the steps outlined under screen reader If your student needs a device follow the suggestions under assistive technology
Calculator (calculation device)	A student uses a specific calculation device (e.g., large key, talking, or other).	<p>For students that need an accessible calculator or need a calculator for the entire test (as an accommodation listed on their IEP) we recommend the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal handheld, school approved accessible calculator A school issued accessible calculator <p>If the aforementioned are not available, we recommend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DESMOS: https://www.desmos.com/fourfunction https://www.desmos.com/scientific
Extended time	Allow flexible scheduling for a student test administration for example, testing longer than scheduled test session, multiple breaks, etc.	MAP Growth assessments are not timed. However, additional test sessions may need to be scheduled for students who need additional time and/or break

NON-EMBEDDED ACCOMMODATIONS (CONT.)

FEATURE	DESCRIPTIONS	DISTANCE LEARNING RESOURCES AND SUGGESTIONS
Human signer (sign language, sign interpretation of test)	Test and question content is signed by a test administrator who is fluent in the signed language. The student may also dictate responses by signing.	<p>This is possible remotely, but this needs to go through district/school APPROVAL:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student must use a standard browser so that they can use a communication platform to view a translator/signer • The student's communication platform (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams) needs to offer screen share capabilities • Students share their screen with the translator/signer, and the signer helps the student understand each question
Multiplication table	A paper-based single digit (1-9) multiplication table is available to the student.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This can typically be found in a student's math curriculum • The school could provide one • Create your own: http://www.sbcc.edu/mathematics/mathlab/docs/worksheets/multiplication_table_guide.pdf • Try an online table such as https://www.timestables.com/times-table-chart/
Scribe (human scribe, scribed response, test administrator entering of responses for student)	The student dictates her/his responses to an experienced educator who records verbatim what the student dictates.	<p>For distance learning only and with district/school APPROVAL:</p> <p>Step 1: Have the teacher log-in "as the student"</p> <p>Step 2: Have teacher display test to student using screen share, if the platform has the functionality. (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Team)</p> <p>Step 3: Have student provide answers to teacher in the way that is most comfortable to them (e.g. verbally, hand signals, etc.)</p> <p>Step 4: Teacher inputs the answer for the student, and navigates to the next question</p> <p>If a paraeducator is considered an essential worker and can enter the student's home, this may be an option.</p> <p>If the student is allowed to come onto campus for one-on-one assistance with precautions in place, this may be an option for your district/school</p>



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