Types of Support

Smarter Balanced breaks out various supports for students into categories: accommodations, designated supports, and universal tools. These are further broken down into embedded and non-embedded categories. Embedded supports are available directly through the Test Delivery System (TDS), such as the masking tool or text-to-speech, while non-embedded supports are provided to the students outside of the TDS, such as noise buffers or a separate setting to complete the test. See the below table for a definition of each of these student setting categories.

Definitions for Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations

Type	Definition
Universal Tools	Access features of the assessments that are either provided as digitally delivered components of the test administration system or separate from it. Universal tools are available to all students based on student preference and selection.
Designated Supports	Access features of the assessments available for use by any student for whom the need has been indicated by an educator (or team of educators working with the parent/guardian and student). They are either provided as digitally delivered components of the test administration system or separate from it.
Accommodation	Accommodations are changes in procedures or materials that increase equitable access during the Smarter Balanced assessments. Assessment accommodations generate valid assessment results for students who need them; they allow these students to show what they know and can do. Accommodations are available for students with documented IEPs or 504 Plans. Consortium-approved accommodations do not compromise the learning expectations, construct, grade-level standard, or intended outcome of the assessments.

- Accommodations should be offered to a select group of students designated by a 504 or IEP (IDEA) plan.
- Designated supports should be offered to students based on need assessed by local staff and parent/guardians, but do not require an IEP (IDEA) or 504 plan.
- Universal tools are available to all students.

Accommodations and designated supports, whether embedded or non-embedded, are represented in TIDE as Test Settings.

Text-to-Speech

The text-to-speech function, in which the computer reads the text of stimuli (math/ELA PT), passages (ELA CAT), items, or items accompanied by stimuli/passages, is available to students as either an accommodation or an embedded designated support.

Text-to-Speech is available at all grades for reading passages where the student has the accommodation documented in a 504 or IEP (IDEA) plan. A student with this documented need can receive the text-to-speech accommodation for passages/stimuli, items, or passages/stimuli and items.

Text-to-Speech is available for items in ELA as an embedded designated support, regardless of whether the student has an IEP (IDEA) or 504. A student without an IEP (IDEA) or 504, but whose team has recommended the embedded designated support, should only ever receive the text-to-speech for items. Text-to-speech for passages/stimuli or passages/stimuli and items is not available as an embedded designated support.

TIDE does not differentiate between accommodations and embedded designated supports; rather, TIDE has a combined section titled Test Settings on the student demographic information page representing both accommodations and designated supports.

Non-embedded designated supports and accommodations are also available on this page, appearing in the column on the right of the screen sorted by designated support/accommodation first and test second. Test setting options in each category are selected using check boxes.

The column on the left contains embedded accommodations and designated supports, selected by dropdown menus. These are sorted by the type of support first and by test second.

Text-to-speech is available for the ELA CAT, ELA PT, and both the Math CAT and Math PT. If Stimuli (or Passages for the ELA CAT) is selected, the text-to-speech function will read the text/problem portion of the test but not the items associated with the material. If Items is selected, the test question and available answers (if applicable) will be read to the student. Finally, if Stimuli&Items (or Passages&Items for the ELA CAT) is selected, text-to-speech will read everything to the student.

Text To Speech

ELA	Passage&Items ▾
ELA-PT	Stimuli ▾
Mathematics	Items ▾

While it is required that a student have documented need in the form of an IEP (IDEA) or 504 plan to receive the text-to-speech accommodation, note that TIDE will not prevent the selection of this accommodation if no need has been documented. Review all students' test settings thoroughly before starting the assessment to ensure that students with no documented need are not receiving these supports. It is also important to confirm that students with documented need have the necessary supports selected in their test settings before beginning the assessment. A student starting an assessment with supports that they don't need or a student who needs supports starting a test without the necessary test settings is a testing irregularity and will need to be reported using the appeals module in TIDE.