Vermont Science Assessment (VTSA) Accessibility Guide

2017–2018

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Introduction to This Guide

The *Vermont Science Assessment (VTSA) Accessibility Guide (AC)* is intended for school-level personnel and decision-making teams, particularly IEP teams, as they prepare for and implement the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) assessments. The *AC* provides information for classroom teachers, English development educators, special education teachers, and related services personnel to use in selecting and administering universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations for those students who need them. The *AC* is also intended for assessment staff and administrators who oversee the decisions that are made in instruction and assessment.

The universal tools described in the *AC* apply to all students. The *AC* recognizes the critical connection between accessibility and accessibility tools in instruction and accessibility and accessibility tools during assessment. This *AC* is supported by the VTSA *Test Administration Manuals (TAMs)* and *Test Coordinators Manuals (TCMs)[1].*

Organization of This User Guide

This guide contains the following sections:

- [Section I, Selecting Accessibility Tools](#), describes the distinction between instructional accessibility tools and testing accessibility tools.

- [Section II, Introduction to VTSA and Accessibility Tools](#), describes what accessibility tools are available to students taking the online VTSA assessment.

- [Section III, Universal Tools](#), includes descriptions, and information on the VTSA universal tools.

- [Section IV, Designated Supports](#), includes descriptions, and information on the VTSA designated supports.

- [Section V, Accommodations](#), includes descriptions, and information on the VTSA accommodations.

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[1] The VTSA TAM is located on the Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal (https://vt.portal.airast.org).

Section I. Selecting Accessibility Tools

The appropriate use of accessibility tools provides all students with increased ability to participate in assessments. Decisions about appropriate accessibility tools must be made carefully and be based on the needs of individual students. School and district staff must be trained annually on the use and selection of features and accommodations, so they can determine which students are eligible to receive them and update the selected accessibility tools in the Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE)[2].

The Appropriate Use of an Accessibility Tool: Finding the Balance

There is an important distinction between instruction accommodations and testing accommodations.

Instructional Accessibility Tools

Supports provided at the beginning of the instructional process are designed to help students' first experience, learn, and practice for a new skill. The long-term purpose of instructional accessibility tools or other early supports is to ultimately help the student learn to become as fluent and as independent as possible in performing that skill. For this reason, instructional accommodations should incorporate a scaffolded fading process that provides much more support early in the learning process as skill acquisition is just beginning. Later in the instructional process the need for early levels of support should be challenged or tested to see how much control can be assumed by the student. The intensive supports used very early in instruction may at times greatly simplify or may even modify the skill the student is learning. These supports may help to guide, shape, and successively approximate the student's behavior to ensure that he or she experiences some early success while moving closer to real skill performance. When planning instructional supports, the path to student independent must always be kept in mind. Plan with the end in mind, always move toward independence.

As effective instruction continues, early intensive supports (or modifications) are faded, allowing the student to demonstrate the academic skill with increasing independence. As higher levels of skill independence are achieved, supports are faded back further still until the least intrusive accommodation or, perhaps even full independence is achieved. The least intrusive accommodation is the level of support that will allow the student to demonstrate the skill in the most independent manner possible for that student.

For example, if a student has a certain type of visual processing difficulty, he or she may need (for some years) to use a straight edge to guide visual tracking while reading, but eventually learns to perform the actual reading task with full independence to the extent of his or her capability. At the point of testing, this student no longer has a person holding the tracking tool or reading the passage to him or her. This has become the independent responsibility of the student; yet remaining student needs for support are still being met. Independent use of the visual tracking tool has become the least intrusive accommodation for the student at this point.

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[2] For more information on TIDE, see the TIDE User Guide on the Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal.

Testing Accessibility Tools

Testing accessibility tools should be those tools that are the least intrusive tools possible to meet the needs of the student while allowing the maximum level of independence possible for that student. They represent the current balance point the instructional fading process has achieved. Testing accommodations, therefore, represent the highest point of independent skill acquisition that has been achieved with that student to date through the instructional process. Testing accommodations do not necessarily represent the instruction end point, but they do represent a point in time that lies beyond the earliest phases of skill acquisition. Some skill independence should be seen if instruction has been effective. Teams must remember to carefully consider long term independence and thoughtfully design the process of fading supports when choosing and planning instructional methods.

> **The key is finding the right balance of supports for a given student and actively, consistently, and constructively supporting the growth of student independence.**

Section II. Introduction to VTSA and Accessibility Tools

The VTSA is provided to students via an online testing environment using the Test Delivery System (TDS) provided by American Institutes for Research (AIR). There are three categories of accessibility tools to ensure that the assessment meets the needs of all students and include: universal tools; designated supports; and accommodations.

Universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations are grouped into two broader categories based upon how they are provided to the student. They are:

- **Embedded**: Available through the online test delivery system; and

- **Non-Embedded**: Provided to the student by the school.

Students are able to access embedded and non-embedded universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations depending on their learning needs and eligibility.

Universal tools are available to all students, including those receiving designated supports and those receiving accommodations. The majority of universal tools do not need to be set in TIDE, they default to on. If a teacher determines that a universal tool will distract a student rather than benefit the student, the tool can be turned off in the TA Interface before the TA approves the student for testing. For a list of the embedded universal tools that must be set in TIDE, please see Section III. Universal Tools.

Designated supports are available to all students; students do not need an IEP or 504 plan to use designated support accessibility tools. While students do not need an IEP or 504 plan, the need has been indicated by an educator (or team of educators with parent/guardian and student). This need can be indicated by setting the designated support in TIDE. It is important that all designated supports are entered into the TIDE system in order to ensure that all embedded designated supports are activated prior to testing. For more information on how to enter designated supports into TIDE, please see Appendix A.

Accommodations differ from universal tools and designated supports. Accommodations are changes in procedures or materials that increase equitable access during assessment and are available to only those students with document of the need through a formal plan (i.e., IEP). It is important that all accommodations are entered into the TIDE system in order to ensure that all embedded accommodations are activated prior to testing. For more information on how to enter accommodations into TIDE, please see Appendix A.

Assessment accommodations generate valid assessment results for students who need them; they allow these students to show what they know and can do.

Section III. Universal Tools

What are Universal Tools?

Universal tools are access features of the assessment that are either provided as digitally-delivered components of the TDS or provided separately from the digital platform as a non-embedded tool. Universal tools are available to all students, whether or not they have an IEP or 504 plan.

Table 1 lists the embedded and non-embedded universal tools available to all students for the VTSA within TDS. For students where the embedded version of the universal tool may cause additional challenges for the student, or the student simply prefers to not use the embedded version of the support, there is a non-embedded equivalent that can also be used. Although these tools are generally available to all students, educators may determine that one or more might be distracting for a particular student, and thus might indicate that the tool should be turned off for the administration of the assessment to the student.

Embedded tools demarcated with an asterisk in Table 1 are available to students in the TDS by default. All other available embedded universal tools must be set for each student in the TIDE system prior to testing.

Table 1. Universal Tools

Universal Tools	Embedded Support (provided by the Test Delivery System)	Non-Embedded Support (provided by the test administrator)
100s Number Table	**NO**	**YES:** Students may be provided with a 100s Number Table as an accommodation.
Abacus	**NO**	**YES:** Students may be provided with an abacus. Student must be tested in a separate location.
Calculator	**YES:** An online Desmos calculator is available in the Test Delivery System for items requiring a calculator.	**YES:** Schools may provide external calculators to students. Four-function, graphing, and scientific calculators are acceptable.
Expandable Passages*	**YES:** This feature is available to all students in the Test Delivery System.	**NO**
Highlight*	**YES:** This feature is available to all students in the Test Delivery System.	**YES:** If a student utilizes the Print-on-Demand accommodation they may use a physical highlighter.

Universal Tools	Embedded Support (provided by the Test Delivery System)	Non-Embedded Support (provided by the test administrator)
Line Reader*	**YES:** This feature is available for all students in the Test Delivery System.	**YES:** If a student needs a paper copy of a passage or test item, two sheets of paper may be used as a line reader.
Mark for Review*	**YES:** Students/scribes can mark items for review and return to them at a later time. This feature is available to all students in the Test Delivery System.	**NO**
Masking	**YES:** This feature is to all students in the Test Delivery System.	**YES**
Multiplication Table	**NO**	**YES**
Periodic Table*	**YES:** This feature is available to students to access through the Test Delivery System.	**YES:** A paper copy of the periodic table can be provided to students as a Universal Tool.
Separate Setting	**NO**	**YES:** Student is tested in a separate setting.
Strikethrough*	**YES:** This feature is available to everyone in the Test Delivery System.	**NO**
Student Comments*	**YES:** Embedded note-taking is available to all students through the Test Delivery System.	**YES:** Scratch paper can be used.

* These embedded features and tools are automatically turned on for all students. All other embedded universal tools must be set for a student in the TIDE system.

Table 2 lists the universal tools available to all students for computer administered VTSA. This table includes a description of each feature and tool. Although these features and tools are generally available to all students, some may be turned off for a particular student. Educators may determine that one or more might be distracting for a particular student, and thus might indicate, if possible, that the feature or tool should be turned off for the administration of the assessment to the student.

Table 2. Embedded Universal Tool Descriptions

Universal Tools	Description
Calculator*	An embedded on-screen Desmos digital calculator can be accessed for items requiring a calculator when students click on the calculator button.

Universal Tools	Description
Expandable Passages	Each passage or stimulus can be expanded so that each occupies a larger portion of the screen.
Highlight	A digital tool for marking desired text, item questions, item answers, or parts of these with a color. Highlighted text remains available through the test segment.
Line Reader	The student uses an onscreen universal tool to assist in reading by raising and lowering the tool for each line of text on the screen.
Mark for Review*	Allows students to flag items for future review during the assessment. Marking are not saved when the student moves on to the next segment or after a break of more than 20 minutes.
Masking	Masking involves blocking off content that is not of immediate need or that may be distracting to the student. Students are able to focus their attention on a specific part of a test item by masking.
Periodic Table*	An arrangement of the chemical elements, ordered by their atomic number, electron configuration, and recurring chemical properties. The ordering shows periodic trends, such as elements with similar behavior in the same column.
Strikethrough	Allows students to cross out answer options. If an answer option is an image, a strikethrough line will not appear, but the image will be grayed out.
Digital Notepad*	This tool is used for making notes about an item. The digital notepad is item-specific and is available through the end of the test. Notes are not saved after a break of more than 20 minutes.
Zoom*	A tool for making text or other graphics in a window or frame appear larger on the screen. The default font size for all tests is 14 point. The student can make text and graphics larger by clicking the **Zoom In** button. The student can click the **Zoom Out** button to return to the default or smaller print size. When using the zoom feature, the student only changes the size of text and graphics on the current screen. To increase the default print size of the entire test, the print size must be set for the student in the Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE).

* These universal tools cannot be turned off.

Some universal tools may need to be provided outside of TDS. These tools are shown in Table 3, are to be provided by the test administrator for those students. They can be made available to any student.

Table 3. Non-Embedded Universal Tool Descriptions

Universal Tool	Description
100s Number Table	A paper-based table listing numbers from 1 – 100.
Abacus	This tool may be used in place of scratch paper for students who typically use an abacus.
Calculator	A non-embedded calculator for students unable to use the embedded calculator.
Multiplication Table	A paper-based single digit (1-9) multiplication table.
Separate Setting	Students who are easily distracted (or may distract others) in the presence of other students, for example, may need an alternate location to be able to take the assessment.

Section IV. Designated Supports

What are Designated Supports?

Designated supports for the VTSA are those features that are available for use by any student for whom the need has been indicated by an educators (or team of educators with parent/guardian and student). Students do not need an IEP or 504 plan to be assigned designated supports. The designated supports described in this section are not modifications. It is recommended that a consistent process be used to determine these supports for individual students. All educators making these decisions should be trained on the process and should be made aware of the range of designated supports available. The VTSA have digitally embedded and non-embedded designated supports for students for whom an adult or team has indicated a need for the support. Students do not need an IEP or 504 plan to be assigned a designated support.

Designated supports need to be identified prior to assessment administration. Embedded and non-embedded supports must be entered into the TIDE.

Who Makes Decisions About Designated Supports?

Informed adults make decisions about designated supports. Ideally, the decisions are made by all educators familiar with the student's characteristics and needs, as well as those supports that the student has been using during instruction and for other assessments. Student input to the decision, particularly for older students, is also recommended.

Table 4 lists the designated supports available to all students for whom the need has been indicated.

Table 4. Designated Supports

Designated Support Name	Embedded Support (provided by the Test Delivery System)	Non-Embedded Support (provided by the test administrator)
Color Contrast	**YES:** Color Contrast is available to all students in TDS. The Color Contrast options are: -Black on Rose -Black on White -Medium Gray on Light Gray -Reverse Contrast -Yellow on Blue	**YES:** Students outside of the Test Delivery System can use Color Overlay.
Text-to-Speech (TTS)	**YES:** Computer-based audio of test items is available. Student must use headphones. If a student cannot use headphones, then they must be tested in a separate location.	**YES:** Human read aloud in English is available. The English *VTSA Test Administration Manual (TAM)* will contain the script in English and will contain guidelines for reading the test items. Student must be tested in a separate location.

Designated Support Name	Embedded Support (provided by the Test Delivery System)	Non-Embedded Support (provided by the test administrator)
Spanish	**YES:** Spanish versions of the test items are available in a stacked format with Spanish on the top and English on the bottom.	**NO**

Table 5. Embedded Designated Support Descriptions

Embedded Designated Support	Description	Recommendations for Use
Color Contrast	Test content of online items may be printed with different colors.	Students with attention difficulties may need this support for viewing the test when digitally-provided color contrasts do not meet their needs. Some students with visual impairments or other print disabilities (including learning disabilities) also may need this support. Choice of colors should be informed by evidence of those colors that meet the student's needs.
Text-to-Speech (TTS)	Text is read aloud to the student via embedded Text-to-Speech technology. The student is able to control the speed as well as raise or lower the volume of the voice or via a volume control.	Students who are struggling readers may need assistance accessing the assessment by having all or portions of the assessment read aloud. This support also may be needed by students with reading-related disabilities, or by students who are blind and do not yet have adequate braille skills. This support will likely be confusing and may impede the performance of students who do not regularly have the support during instruction. Students who use Text-to-Speech will need headphones unless tested individually in a separate setting.

Table 6. Non-Embedded Designated Support Descriptions

Non-Embedded Designated Supprt	Description	Recommended Use
Bilingual/dual language word-to-word dictionaries	A bilingual/dual language word-to-word dictionary is a language support. A bilingual/dual lanuage word-to-word dictionary can be provided for the VTSA.	For students whose primary language is not English and who use dual langauge supports in the classroom, use of a bilingual/dual language word-to-word dictionary may be appropriate. Students participate in the assessment regardless of the language. The use of this support may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment.
Color Overlays	Color transparencies are placed over a paper-based assessment.	Students with attention difficulties may need this support to view test content. This support also may be needed by some students with visual impairments or other print disabilities (including learning disabilities). Choice of color should be informed by evidence of those colors that meet the student's needs.
Read Aloud	Text is read aloud to the student by a trained and qualified human reader who follows the *VTSA Test Administration Manual (TAM)*. All or portions of the content may be read aloud.	Students who are struggling readers may need assistance accessing the assessment by having all or portions of the assessment read aloud. This support also may be needed by students with reading-related disabilities, or by students who are blind and do not yet have adqueate braille skills. If not used regularly in instruction, this support is likely to be confusing and may impede the performance on assessments. Readers should be provided to students on an individual basis – not to a group of students. The use of this support may result in the student needed additional overall time to complete the assessment and/or the use of a separate setting.

Section V. Accommodations

General Information About Accommodations

Accommodations provided to a student during VTSA must be accommodations provided during classroom instruction and other assessments given throughout the school year.

Accommodations for test administration are provided to allow students with disabilities the opportunity to demonstrate their aptitude and achievement in testing situations rather than reflect their impairments. Although test accommodations provide students with an equal opportunity to demonstrate their skills and knowledge, they do not guarantee equal outcomes. Again, an appropriate or reasonable accommodation should not interfere with the use of interpretation of a student's scores. Accommodations for the VTSA must be entered in TIDE[3] prior to testing.

Accommodations are changes in procedures or materials that increase a student's ability to access a test in order to demonstrate their understanding of what is being tested.

Who Makes Decisions About Accommodations?

As with decisions about any test support, Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams and educators make decisions about accommodations based on the needs of the student. For more information on selecting test supports for students, please see Appendix A of this guide. All test supports required by a student must be noted in the student's IEP or 504 plan.

Determination of which accommodations an individual student will have available for the assessment is necessary because these accommodations must be made available before the assessment, by entering information in TIDE for embedded accommodations, or by ensuring that the materials or setting are available for the assessment for non-embedded accommodations. For more information on how to enter student accommodations in TIDE, please see Appendix A.

Table 7 lists the accommodations and descriptions of its embedded and non-embedded versions.

Table 7. Embedded and Non-Embedded Accommodations

Accommodation Name	Embedded Accommodation (provided by the Test Delivery System)	Non-Embedded Accommodation (provided by the test administrator)
American Sign Language	**NO**	**YES:** Sign language interpreters may translate the test directions, items, and response option into sign language.

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[3] For information about entering student test settings in TIDE, please see Appendix A.

Accommodation Name	Embedded Accommodation *(provided by the Test Delivery System)*	Non-Embedded Accommodation *(provided by the test administrator)*
Amplification	**NO:** The student adjusts the volume control beyond the computer's built-in settings using headphones.	**YES:** The student may use amplification assistive technology (e.g., headphones, FM System, noise buffers, white noise machines) to increase the volume provided in the assessment platform.
Assistive Technology/ Augmentative and Alternative Communication Devices (Alternate Response Options)	**NO***: There are no AT/AAC built-in programs.	**YES:** BigKeys, switches, adaptive mouse, etc., if a student needs assistive technology, they must have Permissive Mode[4] set in TIDE prior to beginning testing.
Braille	**YES:** Refreshable Braille in UEB Nemeth is available.	**YES:** A paper form in UEB Nemeth Braille is available.
Magnification	**YES:** The type on the computer screen can be enlarged. The mouse pointer size can also be increased. To increase mouse pointer size, this must be selected in TIDE under Embedded Supports.	**Yes:** External devices such as SmartBoards, projectors, or hand-held devices used with paper copies of test items or passages may be used.
Paper Edition of Individual Test Items Only/Print-on-Demand	**YES:** Individual items, passages, response options will need to be printed using Print-on-Demand feature.	**YES**
Scribe Items	**YES:** A scribe can enter the student's responses directly into the online system	**YES:** A scribe can write student responses on paper and transcribe their answers into the Data Entry Interface (DEI) at the time of assessment.
Simplified Test Directions	**NO**	**YES:** The test administrator can simplify the test directions using the guidelines found in the *VTSA Test Administration Manual (TAM).*

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[4] Permissive Mode is an accessibility tool that must be turned on in TIDE for a student to use an assistive technology while testing in the Secure Browser. Permissive Mode allows assistive technology software to run in the test background.

Accommodation Name	Embedded Accommodation (provided by the Test Delivery System)	Non-Embedded Accommodation (provided by the test administrator)
Speech-to-Text	**NO**	**YES:** Speech-to-Text programs such as Dragon Naturally Speaking will work with TDS Permissive Mode must be selected in TIDE prior to testing. Please test the functionality of the student's Speech-to-Text program prior to testing to ensure that the program is compatible with TDS. *Note: Speech-to-Text does not work when a student is testing on a Chromebook device. Google Speech-to-Text is a web based program that cannot be accessed while a student is in the Secure Browser, not even while in permissive mode.*
Streamline Mode	**YES:** Streamline mode rearranges how the item is presented to the student. In this format, the item stimuli are displayed above the item stem and the response options. This feature is available to everyone in the Test Delivery System.	**NO**
Word Prediction	**NO**	**YES:** External word prediction devices and word prediction software on a separate computer, or in conjunction with the student's testing computer can be used. Student may need a separate setting. *Note: Network and internet connections have to be turned off on word prediction device.* *Note: If the student is using word prediction software on their testing computer, the student must have Permissive Mode set in TIDE prior to testing.*

Table 8. Embedded Accommodation Descriptions

Embedded Accommodation	Description	Recommendations for Use
Print-On-Demand	Paper copies of stimuli and/or items are printed for students. For students needing a paper copy of a stimulus or item, permission for the students to request printing must be first set in TIDE. *Note: If a student has an increased Print Size set in TIDE, that font size on the screen will print if the student uses Print-On-Demand.*	Some students with disabilities may need paper copies of stimuli and/or items. The use of this accommodation may result in the student needing additional time to complete the assessment.
Print Size	Print size allows the font size viewed by the student in TDS to be set in TIDE for the entire test. If a student requires the Print-On-Demand accommodation and an increased font size, stimuli and items will be printed in the font size set in TIDE. Print size options in TIDE are: -1x -1.5x -1.75x -2.5x -3x -5x -10x -15x -20x *Note: Levels 5x-20x will require streamlined mode to also be set in TIDE. For information on streamline mode, refer to Table 2.*	The Print Size is generally most beneficial for students with visual impairments. Print Size must be selected in TIDE prior to testing.

Embedded Accommodation	Description	Recommendations for Use
Braille	A raised-dot code that individuals read with fingertips. Graphic material (e.g., maps, charts, graphs, diagrams, and illustrations) is presented in a raised format. Contracted UEB and non-contracted UEB braille is available; Nemeth code is available for math.	Online braille is most beneficial to students comfortable with screen reader support with refreshable braille and with embosser-created braille.
Streamline Mode	This accommodation provides a streamlined interface of the test in an alternate, simplified format, in which the items are displayed below the stimuli.	This accommodation may benefit a small number of students who have specific learning and/or reading disabilities in which the test is presented in a more sequential format.
Spanish	Stacked Spanish translations are a language support. Stacked translations are available for some students; stacked translations provide the full translation of each test item above the original item in English.	For students who primary language is not English and who use dual language supports in the classroom, use of the stacked (dual language) translation may be appropriate. Students participate in the assessment regardless of the language. This support will increase reading load and cognitive load. The use of this support may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment.

Table 9. Non-Embedded Accommodation Descriptions

Non-Embedded Accommodation	Description	Recommendations for Use
Amplification	The student adjusts the volume control beyond the computer's build in settings using headphones or other non-embedded devices.	Students may use amplification assistive technology (e.g., headphones, FM System, noise buffers, white noise machines) to increase the volume provided in the assessment platform. Use of this resource likely requires a separate setting. If the device has additional features that may compromise the validity of the test (e.g., internet access), the additional functionality must be deactivated to maintain test security.
Magnification	The size of specific areas of the screen (e.g. text, formulas, tables, graphics, navigation buttons, and mouse pointer) may be adjusted by the student with an assistive technology device or software. Magnification allows increasing the size and changing of the color contrast, including the size and color of the mouse pointer, to a level not provided for by the zoom accessibility tool or universal tool, color contrast designated support, and/or mouse pointer designated support.	Students used to viewing enlarged text or graphics, or navigation buttons with or without changes to color contrast, may need magnification to comfortably view content. This support also may meet the needs of students with visual impairments and other print disabilities. The use of this designated support may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment.
Scribe Items	Students dictate their responses to a human who records verbatim what they dictate. The scribe must be trained and qualified and must follow the administration guidelines provided in the *VTSA TAM*.	Students who have documented significant motor or processing difficulties, or who have had a recent injury (such as a broken hand or arm) that make it difficult to produce responses may need to dictate their responses to a human, who then records the students' responses verbatim. The use of this support may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment.

Non-Embedded Accommodation	Description	Recommendations for Use
Simplified Test Directions	The test administrator simplified or paraphrases the test directions found in the *VTSA Test Administration Manual (TAM)* according to the Simplified Test Directions guidelines.	Students who need additional support understanding the test direction may benefit from this resource. This accommodation may require testing in a separate setting to avoid distracting other test takers.
Speech-to-Text	Voice recognition allows students to use their voices as input devices to the computer, to dictate responses or give commands (e.g., opening application programs, pulling down menus, and saving work). Voice recognition software generally can recognize speech up to 160 words per minute. Students may use their own assistive technology devices.	Students who have motor or processing disabilities (such as dyslexia) or who have had a recent injury (such as a broken hand or arm) that make it difficult to produce text or commands using computer keys may need alternative ways to work with computers. Students will need to be familiar with the software, and have had many opportunities to use it prior to testing. Speech-to-Text software requires that the student go back through all generated text to correct errors in transcription; thus prior experience with this accommodation is essential. If students use their own assistive technology devices, all assessment content should be deleted from these devices after the test for security purposes.

# Appendix A. Managing Student Test Settings in TIDE

Students' embedded accommodations, non-embedded accommodations, and designated supports must be set in TIDE prior to test administration. Test settings can be added and/or edited by a District Administrator (DA), District Coordinator (DC), or School Test Coordinator (SC) via file upload for one or multiple students. They can also be manually edited within individual student records.

Test Settings via File Upload Format

A file upload allows a user to work with multiple student settings at one time. **Students included in a new file upload will have any previous settings overwritten.**

To Upload Student Settings

1. Log into TIDE via The Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal (https://vt.portal.airast.org).
2. Click the **Student Information** task menu, then click **Upload Student Settings**.
3. Download either the Excel or CSV template from the **Download Templates** drop-down menu. You may use this template file to enter student settings.
4. Open the file in a spreadsheet application or text editor and add a row for each test setting you want to add or modify. Follow the guidelines in the section titled **Entering Student Settings into the Template** in the **TIDE User Guide.** Save the file locally on your computer.
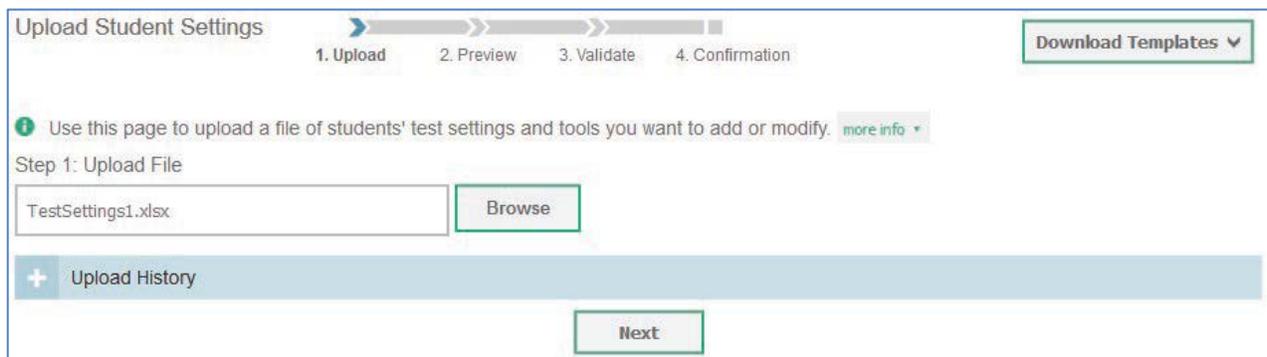
5. In the **Upload Student Settings** page, click **Browse**, and navigate to the upload file you created and saved to your computer in the previous step. Click **Next**.
6. Preview the file and click **Next**.
7. Validate that the file has the correct values. If the file has the correct values, click **Continue with Upload**. Otherwise, click **Upload Revised File** and repeat steps 4–7.
8. You will receive a confirmation that your records have been committed. Click **OK**.

Entering Student Settings into the Template

Each row represents one test setting for one student. One or multiple rows can be entered. The first column should include the student's SSID as it appears in TIDE. The following columns list the test subject, tool name, and value for the tool specified. Appropriate values will be auto-generated in drop-down menus for columns B–D of the upload template file. Refer to the **TIDE User Guide** for a detailed list of test settings and their corresponding tool names and values.

	A	B	C	D
1	SSID	Subject	Tool Name	Value
2	9999999999	Science	Color Contrast	Black on Rose

This example student settings upload file displays the selected test setting for a student with the SSID of 9999999999. For this student's science test, the Color Contrast tool has been selected with the corresponding value Black on Rose. If you need to upload multiple test settings for one student, please use one row for each test setting, ensuring that all test settings for one student occupy consecutive rows.

Test Settings via Individual Student Record

Test settings can be set or changed manually within an individual student's record.

To Edit Test Settings Within a Student Record:

1. Log into TIDE via The Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal (https://vt.portal.airast.org).

2. Click the **Student Information** task menu, then **View/Edit/Export Student**.

3. Enter search criteria into the fields provided to retrieve student records. Click **Search**.

4. Click the ✏ next to the appropriate student's individual record in order to view and edit student test settings.

5. On the **View/Edit Student** page, the student's test settings will be displayed. Select the settings you would like from the drop-down menus or by using a switch to turn a setting on or off.

This example shows Medium Gray on Light Gray Color Contrast, Large Green Mouse Point and Masking being set to ON.

6. Click **Save** at the bottom of the page. The student's settings have been updated. **Allow up to 24 hours for test setting changes to be reflected in the system before testing.**

Appendix B. Applicable Technology Skills

Skills	Examples and notes
General navigation skills	
Using navigation buttons	Login, first name, Session ID, save, resume
Keyboarding	Identify, locate, use letter, number, and punctuation keys to enter characters
Scrolling	Scroll horizontally and vertically, within and across pages or screen views
Magnifying/zooming	Enlarge the screen or a portion of the screen
Pointing and selecting	Single-click/double-click/right-click/click-and-drag/highlight text/move mouse pointer
General Answering	
Dragging and dropping	Distinguish between instances when an answer option can be used only once or can be dragged and dropped multiple times
Selecting from drop-down menus	Use a drop-down menu to make a selection
Understanding simulations	Analyze a topic or solve a problem by consulting several kinds of stimuli or media within a single test item
Multiple-select vs. multiple choice	Know the difference between these two item types and select multiple responses when required to do so

Appendix C. Manuals and User Guides

[Table 10](#) lists additional manuals and user guides applicable for the VTSA.

Table 10. VTSA Manuals and User Guides

Document	Description	Location on Vermont Portal
Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE) User Guide	The Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE) User Guide is designed to help users navigate TIDE. Users can find information on managing user account information, managing student account information, student test settings and accommodations, and appeals in this user guide.	[Test Information Distribution (TIDE) User Guide](#)
Practice Test User Guide	The Practice Test User Guide provides an overview of the Practice Test Site and information about accessing the Practice Test.	[Practice and Training Test User Guide](#)
VTSA Test Administration Manual (TAM)	This manual provides information for Text Examiners administering the online VTSA. It includes screenshots and step-by-step instructions on how to administer the online assessments.	[Vermont Science Assessment (VTSA) Test Administration Manual (TAM)](#)
VTSA Test Coordinator Manual (TCM)	This manual provides information for District/School Test Coordinators regarding policies and procedures for the 2017-2018 VTSA.	**This document will be made available in Spring 2018.**

Document	Description	Location on Vermont Portal
Test Administrator (TA) User Guide	The user guide is designed to help users navigate the Test Delivery System (TDS) including the Student Interface and the Test Administration (TA) Interface, and help support Test Administrators manage and administer testing for students participating in the online VTSA.	*Test Administrator (TA) User Guide*

Table 11 lists technical documentation for administering online assessments.

Table 11. VTSA Technical Resources

Document	Description	Vermont Location
Braille Requirements and Testing Manual	This manual includes information about supported operating systems and required hardware and software for Braille testing. It provides information on how to configure JAWS, navigating an online test with JAWS, and how to administer a test to a student requiring online Braille.	*Braille Requirements and Testing Manual*
End-of-Life Support Document	This document outlines the supported operating systems during the upcoming test administration and following years. This plan helps districts and schools manage operating system deployment based on the support timelines.	*End-of-Life Support Document*

Secure Browser Installation Manual	This manual provides instructions for downloading and installing the secure browser on supported operating systems.	*Secure Browser Installation Manual*
Technical Specifications Manual for Online Testing	This manual provides technology staff with the technical specifications for online testing, including information on Internet and network requirements, general hardware and software requirements, and the text-to-speech function.	*Technical Specifications Manual for Online Testing*
System Requirements for Online Testing	This document outlines the basic technology requirements for administering an online assessment, including operating system requirements and supported web browsers.	*System Requirements for Online Testing*

Appendix D. Read Aloud Guidelines

Guidelines for Read Aloud, Test Reader

When a student cannot access text-to-speech, an embedded resource available on the VTSA, the student may be eligible to work with a test reader. A test reader is an adult who provides an oral presentation of the assessment text to an eligible student. The student depends on the test reader to read the test questions accurately, pronounce words correctly, and speak in a clear voice throughout the test. The test reader must be trained and qualified and must follow these guidelines for Read Aloud, Test Reader presented here. The guiding principle in reading aloud is to ensure that the student has access to test content.

On VTSA, test readers are allowable across all grades as a designated support.

Qualifications for Test Readers
- The test reader should be an adult who is familiar with the student, and who is typically responsible for providing this support during educational instruction and assessments.
- Test readers must be trained on the administration of the assessment in accordance with member policy, and familiar with the terminology and symbols specific to the test content and related conventions for standard oral communication.
- Test readers must be trained in accordance with Vermont Agency of Education security policies and procedures as articulated Test Coordinator Manual (TCM).

Presentation
- Test readers should read and sign a test security/confidentiality agreement prior to test administration.
- Test readers are expected to familiarize themselves with the test environment and format in advance of the testing session. Having a working familiarity with the test environment and format will help facilitate reading of the test.
- Test readers should have a strong working knowledge of the accessibility features, embedded and non-embedded designated supports, and embedded and non-embedded accommodations available on the VTSA.
- Test readers should be familiar with the Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 plan if the student for whom they are reading has access to additional designated supports and/or Rhode Island Next Generation Science Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual. This will ensure that there are plans in place for providing all needed accessibility features, designated supports, and accommodations.
- In addition to a test reader, students may make use of any other approved specialized tools or equipment during the test as appropriate and in accordance with the Rhode Island Next Generation Science Assessment Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual. Test readers should be familiar with any assistive technology or approved supports the student requires.
- Test readers should have extensive practice in providing read aloud support and must be familiar and comfortable with the process before working directly with a student.
- The reader should be knowledgeable of procedures for reading aloud text by content area.

- The test reader should meet with the student in advance and inform the student of the parameters of the support. A suggested test reader script is included at the end of the Guidelines for Read Aloud, Test Reader.
- Unless otherwise specified by a student's IEP or 504 plan, the test reader does not have a role in manipulating the test or assisting with any other support tools. Test readers should be ready with appropriate script that reinforces the parameters during the test session.

General Guidelines
- The test reader's support should ideally be provided in a separate setting so as not to interfere with the instruction or assessment of other students.
- Read each question exactly as written as clearly as possible.
- Throughout the exam, strive to communicate in a neutral tone and maintain a neutral facial expression and posture.
- Avoid gesturing, head movements, or any verbal or non-verbal emphasis on words not otherwise emphasized in text.
- Avoid conversing with the student about test questions as this would be a violation of test security; respond to the student's questions by repeating the item, words or instructions verbatim as needed.
- Do not paraphrase, interpret, define, or translate any items, words, or instructions as this would be a violation of test security.
- Spell any words requested by the student.
- Adjust your reading speed and volume if requested by the student.

Post-Administration
- The test reader must collect scratch paper, rough drafts, and login information immediately at the end of the testing session and deliver it to the Test Administrator in accordance with RIDE policies and procedures.
- The test reader must not discuss any portion of the test with others.

English Usage/Conventions
- Punctuation: Read all text as punctuated.
- Ellipses: When an ellipsis is used to signify missing text in a sentence, pause briefly, and read as 'dot, dot, dot.'
- Quotations: Quotation marks should be verbalized as "quote" and "end quote" at the beginning and end of quoted material, respectively.
- Emphasis: When words are printed in boldface, italics, or capitals, tell the student that the words are printed that way. In order not to provide an unfair advantage to students receiving this support, test readers should be cautious not to emphasize words not already emphasized in print. Emphasis is appropriate when italics, underlining, or bold is used in the prompt, question, or answers.
- Misspellings: In some cases a test item may present a word or phrase that is intentionally misspelled as part of the assessment. In these instances the student is required to respond in a specific way. When presented with intentionally misspelled words test readers should not attempt to read the word(s) aloud as pronunciation is somewhat subjective.

Images/Graphics

- Before describing a picture or graphic, the test reader should determine whether the details of the picture are necessary to understanding and responding to the item(s). In many cases, an image will be used to accompany a passage or reading excerpt as a piece of visual interest that is not essential in responding to the item.
- Describe the image/graphic as concisely as possible following a logical progression. Focus on providing necessary information and ignoring the superfluous. Use grade-appropriate language when describing the image/graphic.
- Read the title or caption, if available.
- Any text that appears in the body of an image may be read to a student. Read text in images in the order most suited for the student's needs. Often the reader moves top to bottom, left to right, in a clockwise direction, or general to specific in accordance with teaching practices.

Graphic Organizers

- Before reading a graphic organizer, the test reader should discern the most appropriate and logical manner in which to present the information. In general, information should be presented from broad to specific as indicated by the visual components of the document. The test reader should read the terms exactly as indicated in the graphic organizer. No other information about it should be articulated. For example, the test reader should not create sentences if information is bulleted or appears in a title or label.
- Use common grade-appropriate language throughout the item and the test when referring to graphic organizers and their attributes (labels, blank cells, stems, etc.).

Mathematical Expressions

- Mathematical expressions must be read precisely and with care to avoid misrepresentation by a student who has no visual reference. For mathematics items involving algebraic expressions or other mathematical notation, it may be preferable for the reader to silently read the mathematical notations or the entire question before reading it aloud to the student.
- Test readers must read mathematical expressions with technical accuracy. Similar expressions should be treated consistently.
- In general, numbers and symbols can be read according to their common English usage for the student's grade level.
- Numbers greater than 99, however, should be read as individual numbers.
- Additional examples may be found in the table below.
- Abbreviations and acronyms should be read as full words. For example, 10 cm needs to be read as "ten centimeters." Some abbreviations may be read differently by different readers. For example, $cm3$ may be read as "cubic centimeters" or "centimeters cubed."

Table 12. Test Reader Guidance for Mathematics

Numbers		
Description	**Example(s)**	**Read as:**
Large whole numbers	632,407,981	"six three two comma four zero seven comma nine eight one"
	45,000,689,112	"four five comma zero zero zero comma six eight nine comma one one two"
Decimal numbers	0.056	"zero point zero five six"
	4.37	"four point three seven"
Fractions - common Fractions - not common • read as "numerator over denominator"	$\dfrac{1}{2}\ \dfrac{1}{4}\ \dfrac{2}{3}\ \dfrac{4}{5}$	"one half, one fourth, two thirds, four fifths" Other common fractions include "sixths, eighths, tenths"
	$\dfrac{14}{25}$	"fourteen over twenty-five"
	$\dfrac{487}{6972}$	"four eight seven over six nine seven two"
Mixed numbers - read with "and" between whole number and fraction	$3\,\dfrac{1}{2}$	"three and one-half"
	$57\,\dfrac{3}{4}$	"fifty-seven and three fourths"
Percents	62%	"sixty-two percent"
	7.5%	"seven point five percent"
	0.23%	"zero point two three percent"
Money - if contains a decimal point, read as "dollars AND cents"	$4.98	"four dollars and ninety-eight cents"
	$0.33	"thirty-three cents"
	$5368.00	"five three six eight dollars"
Negative numbers • do NOT read negative sign as "minus"	- 3	"negative three"
	$-\dfrac{5}{8}$	"negative five eighths"
	-7.56	"negative seven point five six"
Dates (years)	1987	"nineteen eighty-seven"
	2005	"two thousand five"

Roman Numerals	I	"Roman Numeral one"
	II	"Roman Numeral two"
	III	"Roman Numeral three"
	IV	"Roman Numeral four"
Ratios	$x:y$	"x to y"

Operations		
Description	**Example(s)**	**Read as:**
Addition	$\begin{array}{r} 13 \\ +27 \end{array}$ 13 + 27 =	"thirteen plus twenty-seven equals"
	13 + 27 =?	"thirteen plus twenty-seven equals question mark"
Subtraction	$\begin{array}{r} 487 \\ -159 \end{array}$ 487 - 159 =	"four eight seven minus one five nine equals"
	487 - 159 =?	"four eight seven minus one five nine equals question mark"
Multiplication	$\begin{array}{r} 63 \\ \times 49 \end{array}$ 63 x 49 =	"sixty-three times forty-nine equals"
	63 x 49 =?	"sixty-three times forty-nine equals question mark"
Division – Vertical or Horizontal	$\frac{120}{15} = 8$ $120 \div 15 = 8$	"one two zero divided by fifteen equals eight"
Operations with boxes	$3 + \square = 8$	"three plus box equals eight"

Expressions		
Description	**Example(s)**	**Read as:**
Expressions containing variables (any letter may be used as a variable)	$N + 4$	"'N' plus four"
	$8x - 3$	"eight 'x' minus three"
	$4(y - 2) + 5 = 7$	"four open parenthesis 'y' minus two close parenthesis plus five equals seven"
	$V = \frac{4}{3} \pi r^3$	"'V' equals four-thirds pi 'r' cubed"
	$\frac{|t| - 2}{6} \leq 15$	"the absolute value of 't' (pause) minus two (pause) over six is less than or equal to fifteen"

	$x^2y^3 = -36$	"'x' squared 'y' cubed equals negative thirty-six" or "'x' to the second power times 'y' to the third power equals negative thirty-six"
	$156x \geq 4$	"one five six 'x' is greater than or equal to four"
Coordinate pairs	the point (-1, 2)	"the point (pause) negative one comma two"
Answer choices with no other text	the point A is at (6, 3)	"the point 'A' is at (pause) six comma three"
	A. (-3, -4)	"'A' (pause) negative three comma negative four"
Parallels	$\overline{AB} \parallel \overline{CD}$	"line segment AB is parallel to line segment CD"
Perpendiculars	$\overline{AB} \perp \overline{CD}$	"line segment AB is perpendicular to line segment CD"

Suggested Test Reader Script (To Be Used with Student in Advance of the Day of Testing)

Hi_____,

I'm the person who will be reading your test to you when you take your Rhode Island Next Generation Science Assessment Field Test next week. I wanted to let you know how we'll work together. When I'm reading a test to you, it's very different from when I'm reading to you during class time. I have to follow certain rules.

- I cannot help you with any answers.

- I cannot click on anything on the screen.[5]

- I will not be using different character voices or changes in my tone when I read. I will be using a very direct voice that does not change very much, no matter how exciting the story or test item gets.

- If there is a picture that has words in it, I will read those words. If you ask, I will re-read the words as well.

- Sometimes there may be something about a word or phrase that might give you a hint if I read it out loud. In those cases, I will skip the word, point to it on screen [or on your booklet if braille or print on demand], and continue to read.

- I can still help you with your [**list any assistive technology that the student may require that would need adult support -- if that support is provided by you].

- You can ask me to re-read parts of the test if you didn't hear me or need more time to think.

- You can ask me to pause my reading if you need to take a break.

- You can ask me to slow down or speed up my reading, or read louder or softer if you are having trouble understanding what I read.

- I will only read certain types of punctuation, but if you need me to re-read a sentence and tell you how it was punctuated, I can do that.

- If you ask me a question about the test all I will say is: "do your best work. I cannot help you with that."

- Do you have any questions for me about how we'll work together during the test?

---

[5] A reader may click on something on the screen only if this is an identified need in the student's IEP or 504 plan and the reader has received appropriate training on when and how to do so.

Appendix E. Scribing Guidelines

A scribe is an adult who writes down what a student dictates in a variety of ways (e.g., speech, American Sign Language (ASL), braille, assistive communication device, etc. The guiding principle in scribing is to ensure that the student has access to and is able to respond to test content.

Scribes are allowable on VTSA as a documented accommodation.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR SCRIBES

- The scribe should be an adult who is familiar with the student, such as the teacher or teaching assistant who is typically responsible for scribing during educational instruction and assessments.

- Scribes must have demonstrated knowledge and experience in the subject for which scribing will be provided.

- Scribes should have extensive practice and training in accordance with VTSA security policies and procedures as articulated in this TAM.

PREPARATION

- Scribes should read and sign a test security/confidentiality agreement prior to test administration.

- Scribes are expected to familiarize themselves with the test format in advance of the scribing session. Having a working familiarity with the test environment will help facilitate the scribe's ability to record the student's answers. Scribes may wish to review the practice test to become familiar with the assessment.

- Scribes should be familiar with the Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 plan if the student for whom they are scribing has a disability, so that there are plans in place for providing all needed designated supports and accommodations.

- Scribes should also have a strong working knowledge of the embedded and non-embedded universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations available on VTSA.

- Scribes should review the *Scribing Protocol* with the student at least one to two days prior to the test event.

- Scribes should practice the scribing process with the student at least once prior to the scribing session.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Scribing must be administered so that the interaction between a scribe and a student does not interrupt other test-takers, or inadvertently reveal the student's answers.

- If not in a separate setting, the scribe should be situated near enough to the student to prevent their conversations from reaching other students in the room.
- For computer-based administrations, scribes must enter student responses directly into the test interface, making use of the embedded and non-embedded tools available for a given item and student.
- Scribes are expected to comply with student requests regarding use of all available features within the test environment.
- Scribes may respond to procedural questions asked by the student (e.g., test directions, navigation within the test environment, etc.).
- Scribes may not respond to student questions about test items if their responses compromise validity of the test. The student must not be prompted, reminded, or otherwise assisted in formulating his or her response during or after the dictation to the scribe.
- Scribes may ask the student to restate words or parts as needed. Such requests must not be communicated in a manner suggesting that the student should make a change or correction.
- Scribes may not question or correct student choices, alert students to errors or mistakes, prompt or influence students in any way that might compromise the integrity of student responses. A scribe may not edit or alter student work in any way and must record exactly what the student has dictated.
- Students must be allowed to review and edit what the scribe has written. If necessary, the student can request the scribe to read aloud the completed text before final approval.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR STUDENTS ALSO USING ASL OR OTHER SIGN SYSTEM

- The scribe should be proficient in the sign system utilized (e.g., ASL) or the scribe should be working with an interpreter proficient in the sign system, as determined by the member.

- When a constructed response is required, the interpreter/scribe should convey the meaning behind the student's indicated response.

- The interpreter/scribe should show the student the written response, but NOT sign the response to the student.

- Probing or clarifying is allowed in the case of classifiers for students using ASL or other sign systems.

- Students may review the written or typed response on paper or on the computer screen and indicate any changes or revisions to the scribe.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR STUDENTS USING BRAILLE

- The scribe should be proficient in reading (visually or tactually) braille in UEB and Nemeth.

- The scribe should enter the responses on paper or online exactly as the student has brailled. In addition to following the content specific guidelines above,

errors in braille code should not be corrected.

- The scribe may ask for the student to read back brailled responses for clarification ifthe brailled response is difficult to read due to student corrections.

- Students may review the written or typed response on paper or on the computer screen by either using the scribe to read back the entered response or using assistive technology. Students may indicate any changes or revisions to the scribe.

POST-ADMINISTRATION

- The scribe will submit online or paper-based student responses and collect scratch paper, rough drafts, and login information immediately at the end of the test session and deliver it to the Test Administrator.

Appendix F. VTSA Contact Information

If you have any accommodations questions regarding the VTSA, contact:

Vermont Agency of Education (AOE)

Website: education.vermont.gov

Linda Moreno, Assessment Coordinator for Special Populations
Linda.Moreno@vermont.gov

Appendix G. Help Desk Information

Please contact your state's help desk for questions regarding:

- AIR online systems including: the portal, the secure browser, TA Certification Course, the Practice Test, TIDE, the TA Interface, the Student Interface

- VTSA technology requirements

- Documentation available on your state portal

- Ordering paper tests

Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program Help Desk

Toll-Free Phone Support: 1-844-218-1184

Email Support: vthelpdesk@air.org

Please provide the help desk with a detailed description of your problem, as well as the following:

- If the issue pertains to a student, provide the SSID and associated district or school for that student. Do not provide the student's name.

- If the issue pertains to a TIDE user, provide the user's full name and email address.

- Any error messages that appeared.

- Operating system and browser information, including version numbers (e.g., Windows 10 and Firefox 52 or Mac OS 10.9 and Safari 7).

Appendix H. Change Log

Change	Section	Date
Added Appendix D	Appendix D. Read Aloud Guidelines	4/9/18
Added Appendix E	Appendix E. Scribing Guidelines	4/9/18