



PASS & HSAP

Questions & Answers

January 25, 2009

CLARIFICATION: As a result of the recently issued SDE memorandum relevant to PASS and HSAP Testing Accommodations, we are providing the following guidance regarding the process for revising HCS IEPs for students with disabilities.

PASS Changes

The items listed as Non-Standard Accommodations (Modifications) are not available to be used on the PASS test. Of immediate concern is the Writing test to be given in March.

- Alternative scoring* is not available for PASS writing in any grade.
- Use of grammar check, spell check or word prediction software for extended response is likewise not allowed for the writing test in any grade.

For the May test,

- Oral/signed administration is not allowed for the ELA (reading and research) test in grades 3 and 4.
- Use of a calculator is not allowed for the Mathematics test in grades 3 and 4.

HSAP Changes

Use of grammar check, spell check or word prediction software for extended response is considered a Non-Standard Accommodation (Modification).

If any of your students at these grade levels have these items listed as an accommodation or modification in Section VI of the IEP, you may use the "Modifying an IEP without a Meeting" process outlined on the special education web page for revising these student's IEPs. I have also attached a copy of those procedures and forms to assist you in this process.

Please let me know if you have any questions about the IEP revision process at lilly@horrycountyschools.net . If you have any questions about the SC Accommodations Policy or the administration of standard and non-standard accommodations, please contact the Office of Assessment at hshrieves@horrycountyschools.net

Q1. On the reading part of the ELA PASS, in grades 3 and 4 a student may not have oral administration accommodations of reading or it will count against us in AYP, but 5th grade may have oral administration and it does not count against our AYP? If I have the correct interpretation, why is this difference made between the grades in this situation? Please advise if this is correct.

A. You're correct in your interpretation; however, it is important that you pay attention to this language in our original memorandum:

The IEP team must consider and document all of the following in determining if a student should use the following accommodations for PASS.

Oral Administration of ELA (reading and research) in Grades 5–8

- The accommodation is necessary to provide access to the assessment due to the student's disability (e.g., the student has a specific disability that severely limits or prevents the student from reading text at any level of difficulty even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so);
- the student is a non-reader and not simply reading below grade level; and

- the student uses oral administration through a reader or electronic format routinely for instruction and assessment or receives signed administration presented through a sign language interpreter for routine instruction and assessment.

Q2. Thanks for the update on PASS, but I wish I had gotten it a week earlier. In connection with the ordering of PASS special test materials, we held IEP meetings last week to insure that the appropriate test accommodations matched those used in the classroom. These were held on students whose IEPs we had received from other schools or on our 3rd graders where as 2nd graders the accommodations were left off. Now we have to do additional changes to change PACT “standard” accommodations to what are now considered “nonstandard”.

My question is - what in your opinion is best to do for our students in grades 3 & 4 as far as oral administration and use of calculator? These are accommodations used daily, so we must provide them for testing. If use of these will invalidate their scores, then the information will be useless and testing will truly be a waste of time for these students. If they don't use the oral administration or calculator, then it is not only not following the IEP, but it is also unfair and frustrating to the child. I know we must test and provide the appropriate accommodations, but I wanted your opinion on this. I am sure parents will question this change and I need to be able to explain this to the parents.

A. We have been anxiously awaiting the SDE info on the PASS information; unfortunately, they just provided it to the districts state-wide. Students who receive instructional accommodation/modifications can certainly continue to receive these in their daily instruction; however, this particular test (PASS) does not allow them, so students can not use them as standard accommodations. If they do use those defined as non-standard accommodations, then they will be counted as students not tested and we are only allowed a small percentage of students to fall into this category and we must provide the student names and reasons by school to the SDE. We are expecting another guidance document today from the SDE (they said something else was coming) and we will pass it along as soon as we receive it.

Q3. Our Special Ed. Teachers want to know where on the IEP you put “oral administration” for Writing since the IEP has ELA listed. Oral administration for Reading in grades 3 & 4 is non-standard but is standard for writing. How do we differentiate between the two on the IEP? In grade 5 Oral Administration in Reading is standard for Non-readers ONLY, but oral administration for writing is a standard accommodation. I believe this is correct. We need to know where to indicate it on the IEP.

A. I went into EXCENT to see if we can modify the drop-down selections for teachers to use and found that we are able to do this without contacting the company. However, the SDE was supposed to issue another clarification regarding PASS accommodations on Friday, so I wanted to wait to see what they advised us in this regard. If you can hold tight until the end of the day on Monday or early Tuesday, we'll see if they issue this additional guidance and determine what else we can do to help teachers with adjusting their IEPs.

Q4. What will it mean for our school/report card, if we have student with non-standard accommodations/modifications on PASS and they “are considered non-participants under Title I”? Is this something we should really be concerned about?

A. It depends on the numbers for your school and the count of students in your sub-group. I believe your Principal may be able to help you figure this out based on your student population. If you have a high number of students who are considered non-participants, they will show up on your school report card as students not tested. We must provide a listing of all students that did not test and provide the school and the reason.

Q5. Thanks for the quick response! I want to make sure I have this all correct. So in May for ELA (Reading and Research) 5th grade can have it oral admin as a standard accommodation and it will not affect AYP. However, if 3 and 4th have ELA oral admin as a non standard accommodation it will be like what used to be called a modification and will count against us for AYP?

A. You appear to have it correct as I understand it. There is one more important consideration. Oral administration of ELA is intended for the non-reading student only. This is implicit in the following language:

Oral Administration of ELA (reading and research) in Grades 5–8

- The accommodation is necessary to provide access to the assessment due to the student's disability (e.g., the student has a specific disability that severely limits or prevents the student from reading text at any level of difficulty even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so);
- the student is a non-reader and not simply reading below grade level; and
- the student uses oral administration through a reader or electronic format routinely for instruction and assessment or receives signed administration presented through a sign language interpreter for routine instruction and assessment. (Students who use sign language as their primary mode of communication may receive a signed administration instead of an oral administration if the IEP team determines and documents the need.)

Q6. Can we read the grammar questions on PASS to IEP students? I didn't think we could but then when we got the info last week from Tom about standard accommodations it said -

Oral administration in grades 3–8 writing, mathematics, science, and social studies tests is a standard accommodation for students with disabilities.

This lead me to think we can read grammar questions to IEP students since grammar is a part of the writing test. If so, what do we need to do now to make sure the IEP's are written correctly?

A. Yes, oral administration is a standard accommodation for the PASS writing test. Oral administration of the ELA test, given in May, is a non-standard accommodation in grades 3 and 4.

Q7. What will it mean for our school/report card, if we have student with non-standard accommodations/modifications on PASS and they “are considered non-participants under Title I”? Is this something we should really be concerned about?

A. It depends on the numbers for your school and the count of students in your sub-group. I believe your Principal may be able to help you figure this out based on your student population. If you have a high number of students who are considered non-participants, they will show up on your school report card as students not tested. We must provide a listing of all students that did not test and provide the school and the reason.

Q8. I am unclear on the accommodations for Oral administration for grades 5-8. I serve fifth grade students through resource in a reading pullout daily who currently have oral administration in their IEP at this time. I also have two students whom I serve through an inclusion setting that have Oral Administration in their IEP. After reading the examples I am unclear on how severe their reading ability has to be in order to do oral administration on PASS. If they received oral administration last year on PACT do they get oral administration this year on PASS? I just want to make sure that I am doing the right thing. There is some confusion after reading the examples sent to us. Could you please help me clarify this?

A. According to the memo from the SDE, the accommodation of oral administration of ELA (reading and research) can be used if it is necessary for the student to access the assessment due to the student's disability (the disability severely limits or prevents the student from reading text at any level of difficulty even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so); the student is a non-reader (not simply reading below grade level); AND uses oral administration through a reader or electronic format for instruction. This would, as you can see, apply to very few of our students at the 5-8 grades. We have asked for some further guidance from the SDE on this and will provide it as soon as we know something. We are also discussing this in our office to see if we might be able to help assist you all; however, at this point, this is all we have to go by.

Q9. (This was a question sent by HCS to the SDE Office of Assessment) A question has come up regarding your and our definition of “non-reader.” Can you give us an operational definition that

we may use to denote that category of student. It would be our hope that your definition would be used statewide.

NEW** January 27, 2009**

A. We are sending an FAQ with responses to a number of questions, hopefully today. Here is a summary of the response regarding non-reader. The IEP team determines if a student is a non reader based on the information that they have. The few states that allow oral administration of ELA and are much more prescriptive than we choose to be. We believe that it is an IEP team decision.

As you know accommodations are to provide access to the grade level assessment as the purpose of the assessment, of course, is accountability with respect to how students are achieving on grade level standards. The SCDE will not second guess an IEP team decision but we are charged with providing guidance to IEP teams that they can use to make decisions.

These are the kinds of things that I would encourage a team to consider: past performance on the state assessment, use of text books on tape, oral administration of classroom materials and assignments and assessments, use of assistive technology such as screen readers that provide oral access to grade level material.

Evidence may support that a student comprehends grade level content when it is presented orally but cannot access the grade level content through reading. An example of this might be an eighth grade student who comprehends content in all subjects at grade level when information is presented orally but is actually reading at a much lower grade level. The IEP team could support that the accommodation provides access to the content and to the assessment so that the student can demonstrate what he or she knows and can do with respect to the grade level standards.

There must be evidence that the student has received instruction in reading and that even with repeated and varied attempts he or she can still not access the assessment without oral administration. This could be class grades, information on performance in various reading programs etc. that the IEP team could review as they make the decision.

All of this documentation is typically found in the IEP in the present levels of performance and the section related to accommodations to the general education environment. This is consistent with previous expectations for documenting the need for oral administration in both instruction and assessment.

Only about 5 states allow oral administration of ELA but most states have not really studied the constructs as we have. We chose this approach as opposed to just automatically counting all of our modifications on PACT as non-standard for PASS, it has taken longer but in the long run I think it is the best thing for students. I realize the timing is not good for you.

Q10. I realize this is new information for us all; however I have a question that we feel needs to be answered as soon as possible. According to the new PASS modifications and accommodations, if a 3rd or 4th grader takes the ELA part orally, and this is a nonstandard accommodation (modification) and the student receives an invalid score would this be a zero and does this affect the school's AYP in any way?

A. The use of nonstandard accommodations would be interpreted as the student being "not tested." This would affect AYP since we are expected to test all students.

Q11. According to this, we need to modify all third and fourth grade IEP's. What if the child needs this and has been given oral administration all year and use of a calculator? Is it legal to take these away from them for a test?

A. These are not allowable under PASS. Students who receive these on this assessment will be considered non-participants and, you know, we are only allowed a small portion of our population to be non-participants and must provide the reason for their non-participation to the SDE by student and by school. IEPs are developed with instructional accommodations/modifications to be used on a daily basis and they should be provided these, **if allowable**, by the test being administered.

Q12. Just for my own clarification.....oral is no longer a modification for HSAP? It is an accommodation.....for ELA and math?

A. According to the memo, I read it that oral administration remains the same as it was before for HSAP – “oral administration of ELA and mathematics is considered a standard accommodation.”

Q13. Sorry if this is a dumb question – is an electronic speller (Franklin Speller) considered to be spell check or word prediction software?

A. Use of an electronic speller during the PASS extended writing, subject to the same limitations as in the PACT ELA test, is a “standard accommodation” for PASS.

Q14. Is Poor Speller Dictionary allowed for the writing assessment, or should that be removed also?

A. According to the Office of Assessment, a poor speller’s dictionary used for extended response remains a standard accommodation for PASS.

Q15. Do we know about the dictation of extended writing response (scribe)? Is it still going to be allowed for 5th grade writing as a modification? Or can we no longer have scribe with PASS?

A. Anything that was an “accommodation” for PACT is a “standard accommodation” for PASS. That includes dictation of responses to a scribe.

Q16. For the test in March, extended response, can scribing still be used? We considered that a modification, or was it under accommodation?

A. The response option, “Dictation of Responses”, has always been an accommodation in PACT and will continue to be a standard accommodation in PASS.

Q17. Typing was an accommodation, thus, can a student continue to have typing but with no spell-check, etc (use Word Pad)?

A. Word Pad is a good option for typing responses. If the student uses Microsoft Word, then Spell Check, Grammar Check, etc. must be disabled.

Q18. Poor speller was under accommodations, thus, can writing students continue to use this? The terms "spell- check, grammar check, etc". Are those relating to typing or to actual hand written prompts?

A. The spelling accommodation for extended response remains as a standard accommodation for PASS.

POSTED ON January 27, 2009

Q19. Should students with disabilities be taking the field test of PASS and, if so, would accommodations be available for them?

A. According to the SCDE the field test participation guidelines will remain as they were in the 2008 PACT Test Administration Manual. Students with disabilities will participate unless they require customized materials – Braille, large print, loose leaf, oral administration, etc. Accommodations that don’t involve customized materials would be available for student use.

Q20. Oral administration of ELA was previously listed as a modification in Appendix C of the HSAP Test Administrator’s Manual 2008. However, the SDE memorandum, on page 1 of the chart, leads us to believe that oral administration of ELA was an accommodation and continues to be an accommodation now. Can you please clarify? Are we correct in that oral administration on ELA was a modification, but is now a standard accommodation?

A. Your last sentence sums it up pretty well, "...was a modification, but is now a standard accommodation." The SCDE has some research data that shows the oral administration of HSAP ELA does not alter the construct being measured. Thus, the change in policy to make it a standard accommodation.