

## Appendix D: Assistive Technology Guidance

Students may use a range of assistive technologies on Ohio's State Tests, including devices that are compatible and interact with the online Student Testing Site and those that are used externally (i.e., on a separate device).

### Interactive Assistive Technology for Online Testing

Interactive assistive technology includes assistive technology that the student uses to interact directly with the online Student Testing Site. These assistive technologies include third-party software applications, such as screen readers, as well as standard input devices, such as adaptive keyboards, adaptive mice and switch interfaces. Due to the variability among assistive technology, the American Institutes for Research (AIR) does not maintain a list of supported assistive technology. Instead, AIR encourages districts to determine whether the assistive technology that students are using in the classroom is compatible with AIR's secure browser for online testing using the Student Practice Site.

Three examples of assistive technology that students might use to interact directly with the online Student Testing Site include:

- Alternate response options, such as adapted keyboards, large keyboards, StickyKeys, MouseKeys, FilterKeys, adapted mouse, touch screen, head wand and switches;
- Speech-to-text software that allows the student to use his or her voice to dictate responses; and
- Screen reader software (e.g., JAWS).

Students should be familiar with the assistive technology that they will use during testing as a part of classroom instruction. Districts should provide many opportunities for students to use the technology prior to operational testing. Districts can access the [Student Practice Site](#) for Ohio's State Tests using the [secure browser or app](#) to assess the technology's compatibility with the testing platform.

### Permissive Mode

Note that some, but not all, assistive technology may not immediately work with the secure browser. By design, the secure browser blocks student access to other applications on the student's device to ensure test security. Thus, if a student's assistive technology requires the use of software (e.g., speech to text), districts must seek permission to test the student using permissive mode.

Permissive mode allows the student to use an application while testing with the secure browser.

Districts should start by turning on permissive mode for a practice test to determine whether the student's use of the accessibility software will allow the student to participate in online testing with the secure browser. District use of permissive mode on the practice site does not require department approval. If the software works with the secure browser and the student is comfortable using the assistive technology with the online test, the district must contact the Ohio Help Desk ([OHHelpDesk@air.org](mailto:OHHelpDesk@air.org); 1-877-231-7809) to submit a request for the student to use permissive mode during operational testing. The district should include information about why the student requires permissive mode and which subject(s) require permissive mode. AIR will share this information with the Ohio Department of Education staff for review and approval. If approved, AIR will turn on permissive mode for the student and notify the district. Please allow 48-72 hours for the help desk to enable permissive mode for the student.

On test day, the test administrator will need to take additional steps when approving the student to test to configure the assistive technology. Please refer to the [Test Administrator User Guide](#) for more information.

During operational testing, test administrators who administer Ohio's State Tests to students who have permissive mode turned "on" must actively monitor the student's testing to ensure that security is maintained and that the student does not access any unauthorized applications.

### Speech-to-text

While speech-to-text (STT) is not a new technology, requests to use it in statewide assessments have emerged and grown in the last couple of years. The primary driver of the increased usage of STT appears to be the free access afforded by cloud based programs such as Read&Write for Google Chrome™ and Co:Writer® Universal App for Chrome™.

Cloud based programs are not compatible with the Test Delivery System (TDS), even with permissive mode enabled. Only some third-party software, running on some devices with some operating systems will work with the TDS. To confirm that the software and operating system being used locally will work with the TDS, districts should test it following the permissive mode instructions in the section above.

If the STT used locally does not work with the TDS, students testing online can respond in the following ways:

1. Student can have a human scribe instead of using STT.
2. Student can test with the device they use daily for STT. The student takes the test with the TDS on one device, but uses their own device for constructed responses. Then one of the following apply:
  - a. During the testing session, after the student has produced their text on their device, the Test Administrator (TA) transcribes the student's response into the second device running the test. This is done after each constructed response. The student must confirm that the TA submits each response accurately. The TA must ensure that any responses on the student's device are deleted once they have been transcribed into the TDS.
  - b. The student uses their device during testing for constructed responses, but continues through the entire test. After the student has completed all the items on the test, the TA goes back to items with constructed responses and transcribes the student's responses into the TDS. The student must be present to confirm that the TA submits all responses accurately. The TA must ensure that any responses on the student's device are deleted once they have been transcribed into the TDS.
3. Student can learn to use software, device and operating system that is known to work with the TDS.

Read more about the challenges of speech-to-text and scribing in assessment in this report from NCEO: [Forum on Speech-to-Text and Scribing: Getting a Handle on What This Means.](#)