

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.

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.

First, districts should turn on permissive mode for a practice test to determine whether the student's use of the accessibility software during testing with the secure browser will allow the student to participate in online testing. Note that district use of permissive mode on the practice site does not require department approval. Second, if the student is comfortable using the assistive technology with the secure browser, the district must contact the Ohio Help Desk (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. Third, AIR will share this information with the Ohio Department of Education staff for review and approval. Upon approval, 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.

External Assistive Technology

Districts may determine that external assistive technology is most appropriate for the student during testing. External assistive technology is technology the student is using that does not interact with the online Student Testing Site. Examples of external assistive technology include, but are not limited to, personal speech-to-text devices or other augmentative or assistive communication devices (e.g., picture or word board). [Ohio’s Accessibility Manual](#) provides policies and procedures for the use of external assistive technology, including guidelines for the test administrator who must scribe the student’s responses.