

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

# Special Accommodations



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## PURPOSE

The purpose of this **Special Accommodations Guidance Document** is to outline policies and procedures for local education agencies (LEAs) to request test accommodations not currently allowable on the statewide assessments, as outlined in Idaho’s Comprehensive Assessment Program<sup>1</sup>. This guidance document:

1. Defines and provides examples of the two types of special accommodations – temporary accommodations and non-standard accommodations;
2. Describes the process an LEA follows to request a special accommodation;
3. Describes how the Idaho Department of Education (Department) will review and process such requests; and
4. Describes how an LEA can appeal any denied requests.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

Test accommodations are changes in procedure or materials that increase equitable access during the administration of an assessment. Test accommodations are not modifications and do not impact the validity and reliability of student performance scores. Test accommodations are specific to each assessment and are typically outlined within the test specific guidance, see Table 1.

**Table 1. Statewide Assessment List & Accessibility Guidance Manuals Links**

Statewide Assessment	Link to Test Specific Accessibility Guidance
ISAT	<a href="#">Idaho Usability, Accessibility, &amp; Accommodations Guidelines</a>
ELPA	<a href="#">ACCESS for ELLs Accessibility &amp; Accommodations Manual</a>
P/SAT	<a href="#">College Board Accommodations</a>
IRI	<a href="#">Idaho Reading Indicator Test Administration Manual</a>
IDAA	<a href="#">IDAA Test Administration Manual</a>
NAEP	<a href="#">NAEP Accommodations webpage</a>

### Test Accommodation Examples

- Braille or Large Print
- Scribe
- Extended Test Time

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<sup>1</sup> English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA), Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI), Idaho Standards Achievement Test (ISAT), Idaho Alternate Assessment (IDAA), College Board Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) and Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

- Closed Captioning
- American Sign Language

## SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

Special accommodations can be categorized into two sub-groups; temporary accommodations and non-standard accommodations. Temporary accommodations are provided to a student to alleviate a disability caused by a temporary condition, while non-standard accommodations are accommodations that are unique to the student's identified need and are outside the published list of allowable accommodations found in a specific assessment's accessibility or accommodations manual. LEAs must receive approval from the Department to implement a special accommodation prior to its application and use. Special accommodations should be based on the student's individual needs, should align with accommodations provided during instruction, and should minimize alterations to the standard test administration as much as possible.

### Temporary Accommodations

In some cases, a student may require a special accommodation during a state assessment due to the emergence of a disability that is the result of a temporary condition. A temporary condition is defined as a condition that is present for no longer than three months. If a student has a temporary condition that makes it challenging for them to take one or more statewide assessments, as outlined in Comprehensive Assessment Program, a temporary accommodation may be requested and made available during testing. A temporary accommodation does not require the district to create a 504 Plan.

#### Temporary Accommodation Examples

1. *Broken arm*: A student requires the "scribe" accommodation due to an inability to use a pencil or keyboard.
2. *Inpatient care*: A student requires the use of the "non-standard test environment" accommodation due to an inability to complete the assessment at a school site.
3. *Concussion*: A student requires "extended testing time over multiple days" due to a recent football injury. The effects of the concussion are present for two weeks.

### Non-Standard Accommodation

A non-standard accommodation is an accommodation that is not explicitly listed in the approved accessibility manuals/webpage (see Table 1) but is used by the student on a regular

basis during instruction. Non-standard test accommodations may be requested for students who have an IEP, a 504 Plan, or do not have an identified disability. The accommodation must align with instructional practices, be individualized for the student, and not change what the test is designed/intended to measure.

**Important:** A non-standard accommodation for turning off the timer on the Idaho Reading Indicator must be supported by a compelling reason. Contact the IRI Coordinator, at 208-322-6800 before submitting a special accommodations request for turning off the timer.

**Note:** An accommodation that is categorized as a non-standard accommodation in one assessment, could be a published accommodation on another state assessment. A thorough review of all state assessment accessibility/accommodations manuals is recommended prior to an LEA submitting a Special Accommodations Request.

#### Non-Standard Accommodation Examples

1. *Religious/cultural beliefs:* A student requires a paper version of the test due to the beliefs that limit the use of technology.
2. *Medical device for monitoring a diabetes:* The student needs access to a smartphone or other medical device to self-monitor insulin levels during testing.
3. *Family member providing medical care:* A student requires the presence of a family member in the testing environment to provide medical care.

## SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS REQUEST PROCESS

To assign and implement a special accommodation (temporary accommodation or non-standard accommodation), LEAs must first complete and submit the Special Accommodations Request Form within the appropriate portal [Test Incident Log (TIL) for ELPA and IRI or TIDE for ISAT and IDAA]. The decision to apply an accommodation is not made in a vacuum. It is paramount that all educational partners are included in the collaborative decision-making process to identify a student's need for accommodations that reduces barriers to participate in Idaho's Comprehensive Assessment Program.

**Note:** A Special Accommodations Request Form must be received, reviewed, and approved by the Department prior to the application of a special accommodation on any assessment listed under the Idaho Comprehensive Assessment Program.

**Note:** A special accommodation approval only applies to the test and school year for which the accommodation was approved.

## Submitting an ELPA/IRI Special Accommodations Request – Test Incident Log

District Test Coordinators (DTCs) or District Administrators (DAs) submit a special accommodations request for the ELPA and the IRI through the Test Incident Log (TIL) found on the [ISEE Education Application Portal](#).

Outlined below are the steps to submit an ELPA/IRI special accommodations request, along with screenshots to illustrate the process. Steps 3 and 4 are illustrated in Figure 1, and steps 5-16 are illustrated in [Figure 2](#).

1. Download and complete the [Special Accommodations Request Form \(See Appendix A\)](#).
2. Login to the [Test Incident Log](#).
3. Select “My Incidents” tab.



Figure 1: Screenshot of the Test Incident Log application illustrating steps 3 and 4.

4. Select “Add Incident” function.
5. Test Type: Identify and select the assessment for which the special accommodation is being requested.
6. Incident Type: Select “Other – Special Accommodation”.
7. Initiation Type: Select “Adult”.
8. School: Select the school where the student is currently enrolled.
9. Incident Date/Time: Date the request is being submitted.
10. Content Area: Select the assessment domain.
11. Incident Category: Select “Special Accommodation”.
12. Grades: Select the student’s current grade.
13. Incident Description & Immediate Resolution: Input the following templated text based on the assessment selected in step 4:
  - a. ACCESS for ELLs: “Special Accommodations request submission for ACCESS for ELLs.”

- b. Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI): “Special Accommodations request submission for IRI.”
14. Affected Students: Select the “Add/Delete Students” action, select “+ Add new record”, once prompted, input the student’s EDUID # for whom the special accommodation is being requested.
  15. Evidence: Upload a completed copy of the Special Accommodation Request Form
  16. Select: Submit to SDE
    - a. Note: If “Submit to District” is selected, the request will not be sent to the Department. Special Accommodations requests are only reviewed by the Department when users select the “Submit to SDE” action.
    - b. District Test Coordinators and District Administrators must have the “**TestIncidentLog.DistrictReviewer**” admin tool role assigned for them to be able to submit the request to the Department (“Submit to SDE” option within the TIL).

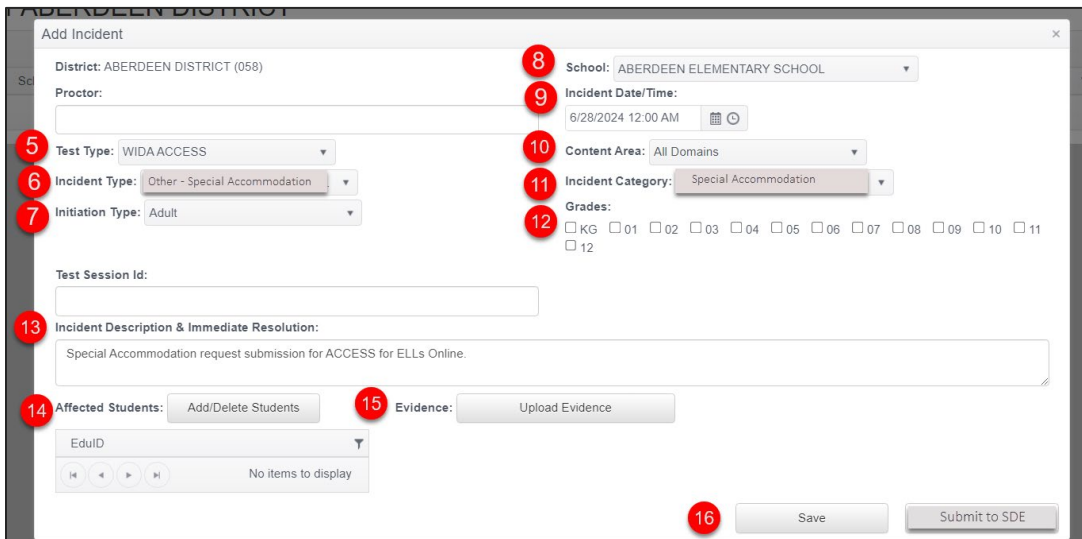


Figure 2. Screenshot of the Test Incident Log application illustrating steps 4 - 16 described above.

17. Once Department staff have reviewed and made a decision on the request, district personnel who submitted the Special Accommodations Request Form will receive an email from either the ELPA or IRI Coordinator. The email indicates approval or denial of the request with an explanation for the Department’s decision.

## Submitting an ISAT/IDAA Special Accommodations Request – TIDE

District Test Coordinators (DTCs), District Administrators (DAs), and School Test Coordinators (STCs) use the Special Accommodations Request Form located in TIDE to submit ISAT and IDAA special accommodations requests. The steps are outlined in the [TIDE User Guide](#) and the steps below.

1. Login to TIDE.
2. From the Preparing for Testing menu, select “Submit Forms”, as illustrated in Figure 3.

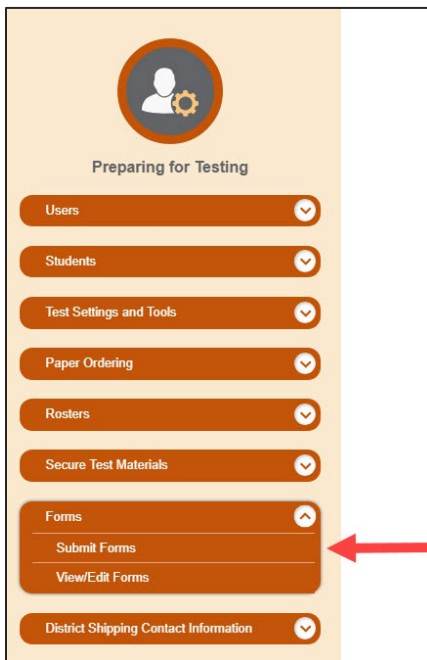


Figure 3. Screenshot of the Preparing for Testing section in TIDE with an arrow pointing to “Submit Forms” in the Forms dropdown menu.

3. Select the “Special Accommodations Request Form” from the dropdown list as illustrated Figure 4.

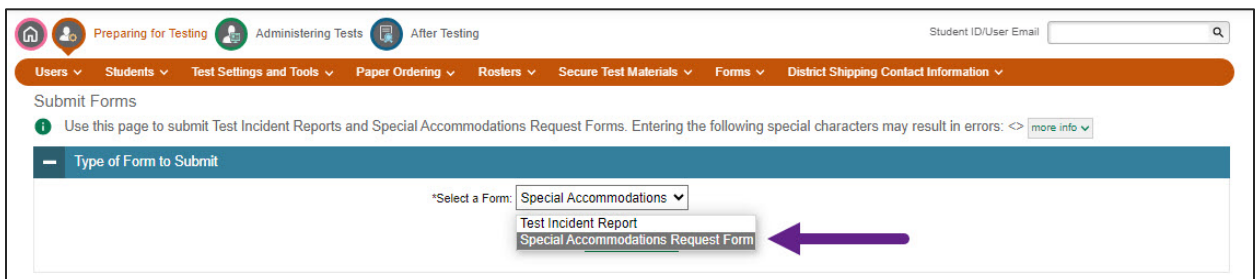


Figure 4. Screenshot of the Submit Forms window showing the Select a Form dropdown menu and an arrow pointing to Special Accommodations Request Form.



4. Once selected, the Special Accommodations Request Form appears.
5. Use available drop-down lists, checkboxes, and text boxes to fill out the request form.
  - a. LEAs are responsible for providing sufficient information to support a special accommodation request. This is to ensure Department staff can fully understand a student’s circumstances and make an informed decision on the approval or denial of the request.
  - b. Forms submitted with insufficient information will be rejected for insufficient information.
  - c. LEAs may submit a new Special Accommodations Request Form when a request is rejected for insufficient information.
6. Select the “submit” button at the bottom of the form to submit it.
7. Once Department staff have reviewed and made a decision on the request, the person who submitted the Special Accommodations Request Form receives an email from TIDE. The email includes approval or denial of the request with an explanation for the decision.

### Special Accommodation Submission Process for PSAT/NMSQT and SAT

College Board manages all accommodations for the PSAT/NMSQT and SAT exams. Learn more about temporary accommodations on the [College Board Temporary Medical Conditions webpage](#). Submit all accommodations requests directly to College Board following the process outlined in the [Request for Temporary Assistance form](#).

### Special Accommodation Submission Process for NAEP

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) accommodations should align similarly with other state assessments. NAEP School Coordinators should work with their Special Education teams to ensure students receive the correct accommodations from their IEP or Section 504 plans. If a student has recommended special accommodations that are not already on the NAEP accommodations list, please use the “other” button on the [NAEP Assessment Management System \(AMS\)](#) and specify what the special accommodation is when assigning accommodations for students. Visit the [NAEP Accommodations webpage](#) for more details.

## SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS DEPARTMENT REVIEW PROCESS

Outlined below are the steps the Department follows when processing special accommodations requests.

1. The Department receives notification that a Special Accommodations Request Form has been submitted.
2. The Department forms an ad hoc committee to review the request. The ad hoc committee includes the Department staff listed below:
  - Assessment Coordinator who oversees the assessment for which the request is made;
  - At least one other Assessment Coordinator familiar with the assessment; and
  - At least one Special Education Coordinator with relevant experience.

Based on the complexity of the request, the ad hoc committee may also include the Department staff listed below:

- Content and Curriculum Coordinator with relevant experience;
  - Director or Assessment and Accountability;
  - Director of Content and Curriculum; and/or
  - Director of Special Education.
3. The Department notifies the special accommodations requestor of approval or denial of the request within three business days.
    - a. Approval notification includes detailed instructions for providing the approved special accommodation.
    - b. Denial notification includes the Department's reason for rejecting the request.
    - c. When the request is made using the Test Incident Log, the requestor is notified via email.
    - d. When the request is made through TIDE, the requestor receives an email from TIDE.

## SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS APPEAL PROCESS

If a request is denied, the requestor or other LEA administrator may send an email to the test-specific assessment coordinator within five business days of receipt of the denial email to appeal the Department's decision.

- The email must contain a description of why the Department should reconsider the request and any additional information pertinent to the situation.
- The email must reference the date the request was submitted and the assessment form for which the request was made.
- **The email must not include any student personal identifying information (PII).**

The Department notifies the LEA of the approval or denial of the appeal within three business days. This decision is final. The Department retains electronic documentation of special accommodations requests for five years.

# APPENDIX A: ELPA/IRI SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS REQUEST FORM

LEAs are required to download and complete the [ELPA/IRI Special Accommodations Request Form](#). Once completed, the form must be submitted within the [Test Incident Log](#) to document and support the special accommodations request. Figures 5 and 6 provide screenshots of the ELPA/IRI Special Accommodations Request Form for reference.

The screenshot shows the 'SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS REQUEST FORM' from the Idaho Department of Education. At the top is the department's logo. Below the title is a brief instruction: 'This form is completed by a District Test Coordinator, School Test Coordinator, or District Administrator to request permission to use of a special accommodation on either the English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA) or Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI).' The form is divided into several sections: 'District, School, and Student Information' with fields for Date, District Name, School Name, District Contact Name, District Contact Role, District Contact Email, District Telephone, Student First Name, Student Last Name, Student EDUID #, and Student Grade; 'Special Accommodation Category' with checkboxes for Temporary and Non-Standard Assessment Accommodation; 'Idaho Comprehensive Assessment Program' with checkboxes for English Language Proficiency Assessment (ACCESS for ELLs) and Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI); and 'Special Accommodation Rationale' with a text area for providing context. At the bottom, contact information for Debbie Critchfield, Superintendent of Public Instruction, is provided.

Figure 5. Screenshot of the Special Accommodations Request Form page 1.

### Special Accommodation Request

Provide a detailed description of the special accommodation being requested. If the accommodation is already published within one of the approved accessibility manuals, copy the name and description and provide it below.

### Special Accommodations Supplemental Questions

- Select the personnel involved in identifying the special accommodation requested.  
 Child's Teacher                       Special Education Team Member  
 Child's Parent/Guardian             Student  
 Psychologist                             Child's Doctor  
 School Counselor                       EL Specialist  
 District Test Coordinator             School Test Coordinator  
 Principal                                  Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Does the child currently receive the requested special accommodation during regular class instruction?  
 Yes    No    Unsure
- If Yes, provide a detailed description of how the special accommodation is currently being implemented/applied during classroom instruction.

### Non-Standard Accommodation Request Supplemental Questions

- Select the type of services the child is already receiving.  
 IEP    504 Plan    EL (LIEP)    Unsure    N/A
- If yes, is the accommodation being requested outlined within the child's IEP, 504 Plan, or EL Plan?  
 Yes    No    Unsure

### Requestor's Signature

Designee Role: \_\_\_\_\_

Designee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Debbie Critchfield, Superintendent of Public Instruction**  
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Figure 6. Screenshot of the Special Accommodations Request Form page 2.

## APPENDIX B: LEGISLATIVE MANDATES

Idaho students in kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) must participate in the State Board of Education approved comprehensive assessment program, which is state-funded (08.02.03.111.04). Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are mandated to establish procedures and provide necessary supports or accommodations to ensure all students can effectively engage in each state assessment within the Idaho Comprehensive Assessment Program.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ([IDEA](#)) requires states to have policies and create guidelines on how to select, assign, and implement test accommodations for students who qualify for an individualized education program (IEP) ([34 CFR § 300.320](#)). [Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#) also requires states have policies and create guidelines on how to select, assign, and implement test accommodations for students who qualify for a 504 Plan. The primary aim of providing a test accommodation is to ensure equal opportunities for individuals with disabilities to demonstrate and apply their knowledge. Appropriate identification, selection, and implementation of an accommodation is an important consideration as LEAs prepare and administer Idaho's Comprehensive Assessment Program.