

Guidance for text-to-speech use on NSCAS General Science* (text-to-speech for NSCAS ELA & Mathematics is only available to specific EL students and students with an IEP or 5041 Plan. Additional information is available in the *NSCAS Summative & Alternate Accessibility Manual*):

*Please note: The Nebraska Department of Education is piloting greater access to text-to-speech for a wider variety of students during the NSCAS Science Field Test. Results of this pilot will be used to inform decisions about the NSCAS Science Operational Test in 2021 as well as policy for NSCAS ELA and NSCAS Math.

Text-to-speech for the 2020 NSCAS Science Field Test is a designated support. A relatively small number of students will require additional features for their particular needs (for example, changing the background or font color). Providing too many tools might distract some students. Therefore, some designated features will be selected prior to test administration based on the individual needs and preferences of the student. Students should practice using these features and understand when and how to use them. Students can decide whether to use a preselected support without any consequence to the student, school or district.

Individualizing access needs on the test for each student provides increased opportunities to accurately demonstrate knowledge and skills.

Please note: A student already assigned access to text-to-speech for one or both NSCAS ELA & Mathematics due to the student's IEP, 504, or EL plan should also have access to text-to-speech on NSCAS Science.

Text-to-speech is an embedded designated support as it is available as part of the technology platform. **Embedded supports will need to be turned on for each student that needs the support.** Decisions should be made on an individual student basis based on the specific needs of the child as opposed to group decisions for a class or grade. No single indicator determines if a student should have text-to-speech; rather, educators should consider an entire body of evidence when making the decision for each student.

Considerations

- NDE, NWEA, and our Nebraska educator test developers attempt to write NSCAS Science and mathematics questions two reading grade levels below the grade level tested. For instance, questions for the 8th grade NSCAS Science are written at the 6th grade reading level. Some content standard specific language may increase the reading difficulty of questions.
- Text-to-speech is only available in English.
- Besides students that have access to text-to-speech due to determinations on an IEP, 504, or EL Plans, a small percentage of students may benefit from access to text-to-speech. When educators gather to determine if additional 5th and 8th grade students would benefit from text-to-speech on the NSCAS Science Field Test, consider the following questions:
 - Does the student receive intervention supports in the area of reading?
 - Does the student regularly use text-to-speech supports to access text during regular classroom activities?
 - Does the student use text-to-speech supports on other assessments?
 - Is there a reliable record of assessment data that indicates the student is reading below grade level?

If the answer to any of these questions is affirmative, educator teams should consider enabling access to text-to-speech tool on the NSCAS Science Field Test.

Educator's determination for each student should be in the best interests of each student and not based on logistical convenience for adults or the school. Any student that has text-to-speech enabled will need **headphones** for the NSCAS Science Administration.