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The South Dakota Department of Education is requiring documentation for print on demand and text-to-speech, read aloud, and/or text-to-speech accommodation requests for the ELA reading passages in order to turn on that feature in Tide for use on the Smarter Balanced assessment.

The position of the department is that students in grades 3-5 are still learning how to read and it is important this accommodation is used only for the **limited situations** in which students cannot access print. Examples when accommodations should not be used include situations where students are still acquiring reading skills or reading at a slow pace.

A copy of the Guidelines for Choosing Text-to-Speech or Read Aloud for Smarter Balanced ELA Summative and Interim Assessment Reading Passages for Students with Disabilities in Grades 3-5 can be found in the [SD Accommodations Manual](#) and the [SD Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidance document](#).

Please fill out the appropriate form(s) verifying for each student that print on demand, text-to-speech, and/ or the read aloud accommodation requests and send to the department for authorization. The document needs to contain original signatures. The forms can be found at <http://doe.sd.gov/Assessment/>

In designing the *Smarter Balanced* assessments, states agreed on the claims that the assessments were to address.

The reading claim, Claim #1, is:

Students can read closely and analytically to comprehend a range of increasingly complex literary and informational texts.

For students in grades 3-5, the Smarter Balanced ELA reading claim integrates the ability to read and the ability to understand what was read. Providing ELA reading passages via text-to-speech or a human reader to students who do not meet specific criteria means that these combined skills are not being assessed, and no conclusions can be reached about the student's skills in these areas.

All students should have the opportunity to learn to read independently and demonstrate their ability to read.

If you have any further questions and to submit documentation, please contact Beth Schiltz at 605-773-4257 or Beth.Schiltz@state.sd.us