

Assessments Friday Focus Webinar Series 2026-2027 Accessibility for AZELLA Assessments-Meeting Transcript

August 28, 2026



Klepk, Sabiha

Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for joining us today, and happy Friday to each of you. My name is Sabiha Klepk, and I am the Accessibility and Accommodation Specialist with the Alternate Assessment Team, but I work on all of our statewide assessments, including the AZELLA.

Kayci, if you'd like to go ahead and introduce yourself.



Reyer, Kayci

Hi, good afternoon, everybody. Thanks for having us. My name is Kayci Reyer. I am a project manager on ELPA 21's assessment design team. This is my 10th year in ESL education, and I'm very happy to be with you all this afternoon. I also want to introduce my colleague, Ledis Castillo. Ledis, are you able to come on mic?



Castillo, Ledis

Yes, thank you. Hi, everyone. I'm glad to be here. My name is Ledis Castillo. I'm an implementation project manager at ELPA 21, and I assist with the assessment design team. And I've worked in the education field now for at least maybe 20 years now. I'm glad to be here.



Klepk, Sabiha

Thank you. Just a couple of reminders before we get started. If you do have any questions, feel free to put them in the chat. And just to protect student confidentiality, if you have any individual questions, we just ask that you reach out to our AZELLA Inbox so we can assist you in the best way possible.

Here's an overview of what we'll be going over today. We'll be touching on compliance, when an additional accommodations request is not needed, as well as when they are, and some examples of requests that are not approvable.

So, very important, as I'm sure you are all aware, we need to adhere to the AZELLA placement test compliance timelines. If you have a student who needs to have an AZELLA placement test administered and they do not have an IEP or 504

plan, you cannot wait for that IEP or 504 plan to be in place before testing the student because we want to meet those deadlines. However, if you do have a concern, if your team anticipates that the student would qualify for an IEP or 504 plan, we encourage you to reach out to us so we can discuss the individual student situation and provide any support and recommendations for the student so they can have the best administration possible to meet their needs.

We request that all of the additional accommodations requests for AZELLA placement be submitted early and within the first week of the student's attendance within the testing timeline. So that allows our ADE AZELLA team the time to review the request and respond. There are sometimes where we will also need additional information, so it allows for that as well. And we will provide an updated compliance timeline for testing the students, receiving results, and notifying parents of the results.

For summative testing, just as a reminder, the reassessment window is 7 weeks and students must be tested within this window. There is not additional time for testing that extends beyond the test window. We ask that all additional accommodations requests for the summative reassessment be submitted by Friday, December 10th. If you have a student who transfers after December 10th, we ask that their request be submitted within two calendar weeks of their next school enrollment.

And there are some cases where you may have a transfer student and the previous school or district had applied for an accommodations request that was approved. That approval does carry over with the student. But of course, you're more than welcome to reach out to us and confirm that that has already been approved or reviewed for the student.

For students who transfer after the school year has started and you're aware they have a SPED need, but they don't have a 504 or IEP plan yet, this is when we encourage you to reach out to our AZELLA team and verify that the previous district has already submitted a request.

Accommodations cannot change the construct of the test. So we just want to make sure that when we receive a request, they are considered not approvable if

an accommodations request would alter either the item or question or what is being measured because we need to maintain the validity and reliability of the test. So some examples of constructs that would alter the test, the use of artificial intelligence, AI, is prohibited for AZELLA and is not an allowable accommodation; the translation of the test into another language; the use of dictionaries, thesauruses, word lists, or glossaries.

And some things to keep in mind that instructional accommodations may not always be appropriate for assessment, again, because of those testing constructs. Some example of that is using a scribe on the writing tests, because that would alter the construct that is being measured.

With AZELLA, there are accommodations where no formal requests are needed, and these are some of those conditions, that we consider universal test administration conditions. They may be considered an accommodation as far as IEP or 504 plan, but they're actually available to every student, even if they don't have an IEP or 504 plan. So this could include individual administration, having a familiar test administrator, maybe if they have a special pencil grip, things like that they need. And these do not require an accommodations request. And although they may not require an additional accommodations request, it is best practice, of course, to still include that in the student's IEP or 504 plan.

Some great things about our testing platform, we also have some built-in visual assistance tools, including color contrast, answer masking, as well as a line reader and a magnifier. So it is important to note, some of these tools need to be activated in or selected and tied to the student prior to entering into the testing environment.

For students who need hearing aids or amplification or hearing assistive technology, those are considered universal test administration conditions and would not require a request. However, if your student's hearing assistive technology does require a Bluetooth connection, we ask that you send us an email with the student's SSID and stating that their hearing assistive technology does require that Bluetooth connection, so we can help assist you in that and making sure that it will work smoothly within that testing environment.

So also we have our AZELLA practice tests available. Very important to get your students on as often as possible. So this is where they can practice using those visual tools such as the color contrast and the line masking and help themselves get familiar with it. There's no name or SSID required. You just need to click on "Continue as Guest" and follow the prompts right here. And that is an excellent tool to use just to familiarize the students with their testing experience and how to navigate that online environment.

So, AZELLA has specific accommodations for students with disabilities that are available only to those who have a current IEP or 504 plan. And these accommodations, as previously stated, must be included in the instructional accommodations section, as well as the Assessment Accommodations section, so including the district assessment section and state assessment section. And these are important to review prior to submitting an additional accommodations request, because it may be the case that the additional accommodation that your student needs is already included with these allowable accommodations for students with disability. So that way we hope to save you some time and not need to submit an additional accommodations request unless it's necessary.

So some examples of those pre-approved accommodations for students with a current IEP or 504 plan that don't require submission include frequent breaks; allowing a scribe to help the student bubble in answers if they're taking a paper version of the test; or helping them to click after the student has indicated their selected choice, you may select that choice for them; and allowing the test administrator to read the extended writing prompts aloud as many times as requested for the student. If you are using that accommodation, we do highly recommend a one-on-one administration just so as not to disturb other students who are testing.

So a request for additional accommodations for AZELLA are ones that have not been addressed either through the universal test administration conditions or the pre-approved accommodations for students with disabilities. When you are submitting this request, we have you submit through our secure form. And again, the IEP or 504 plan should include the instructional accommodations and assessment

accommodations as well as the PLAAFP and any other information that you think may be pertinent in the review of this request.

And just as a reminder, when you submit a request, it does not constitute an approval. These are all reviewed by ADE and must be approved prior to administering the AZELLA. So, it's very important if you submit a request not to administer the test to the student until you have received a response from us regarding your request for that student.

So the 2026-27 school year additional accommodations request form for the AZELLA is up and has been available since July. The link is included on the DTC webpage. And just as a reminder, it's important to be prepared when completing the form. You'll need the student's IEP or 504 plan, those sections previously mentioned. And so including the instructional accommodations, the assessment accommodations, as well as the PLAAFP for students on IEP. And as a reminder, it is a secure submission. So let's just touch on these here.

It is a secure submission, so you don't need to redact the information. The requests are reviewed by a very small number of us on the team, and we maintain that confidentiality and are always very...So, you know, we follow all procedures and security protocols with those documents.

If your student is on an IEP or 504 plan and the only additional accommodation request they need is to have the ability to have the AZELLA be administered over more than five days, there is a separate request form. The great news is that you can include up to 15 students on this submission but you may not include multiple schools. So 15 students per submission, but they must be attending the same school. And this request will cover both the administrations, whether that student needs the placement dynamic screener and the spring reassessment summative.

Just as a reminder, the AZELLA additional accommodations request form is not intended for a student whose IEP team has determined that the student is eligible for alternate assessments. And in this case, our alternate assessment for AZELLA is the Alt ELPA. So it's important that the alternate assessment DTC and the AZELLA DTCs, they work together. It is the responsibility of the Alt ELPA DTC to make sure (the

Alternate Assessment DTCs) to make sure that the student is registered and submitted for taking the Alt ELPA, but their communication should be a priority, and that way the Alternate Assessment DTC can also share the information with the parents, the results with the parents, and just keep those procedures in place.

We have several accommodated test forms. We have a special paper version, a large print, as well as braille for the placement and reassessment. But and we also have an American Sign Language form available for reassessment only at this time.

We are putting in things in place for placement, but if your student does need the support of American Sign Language for the dynamic screener for placement, we encourage you to reach out to our team and we will help support the student and the test administrator to accommodate the students' needs for placement.

Some additional accommodations that are available are domain exceptions. These are incredibly rare, but there are listening, there is a listening exception available as well as speaking. And in some cases, students need assistive technologies in order to gain access to the test. So these are other additional examples of requests that would need to be submitted to the AZELLA team through that request form.

Some examples of requests that are not approvable. Before we go into this, I do just want to emphasize that we review each request on an individual basis. That's why it's important when you're filling out that form, if you have other additional information about the student that may not be captured in the IEP or 504 plan, that you share it with us there. We understand that things happen. You get a new student, maybe you're pending some evaluations for them or just getting to know the student, but that's an important thing to share that additional information to give us the best picture of the student as possible.

So this is an example of what the response will look like when you, after you submit a request to our team. So we'll list the additional accommodations that you've requested, the decision that was made, and any other additional information needed there.

Some examples of requests that are not approvable. Sometimes the AZELLA Dynamic Screener placement test is requested for a student, but they have previously

completed a placement test. In that case, it's not needed. As previously mentioned, the student's SSID needs to be included in the documentation and should be visible. So just so we can make sure we're reviewing the correct information for the correct student and submitting documentation that's complete. If that is the case, if we receive incomplete documentation, we will reach out to you and ask you to submit that missing information so we can review the request.

And there are sometimes where we are reviewing AZELLA additional accommodations requests and upon reviewing the IEP, the IEP team had already determined that the student is eligible for Alt ELPA. In that case, they should be administered the Alt ELPA screener if they don't have a current placement record. And the Alt ELPA summative in the spring.

Just a quick overview. As I mentioned before, the listening and speaking exceptions are rare. These are generally only approved for students who don't have access to the listening or speaking domains. If a request is not approved, we will provide details and sometimes additional guidance or recommendations on how to support the student.

Something to consider, sometimes the student's access can be improved by just changing the testing environment. So sometimes...you know, the simplest way to help accommodate that student is...being able to administer the AZELLA in a one-on-one environment. Again, it's individual and each educator knows their student best, but just things that we consider and share when responding to the requests.

The familiar listener, it was previously known as human scoring. This is something that we'll just take on an individual basis and look at the entirety of the request.

That is all the information we have to share today. I believe Karen has been answering your questions as we've been going along, but if there are any additional questions, I'll just pause here and we will take some time to address those. So thank you everyone for attending.

If you don't have any questions, of course, you're welcome to stay on. But if you choose to log off, we hope you have a wonderful weekend.



Middlebrook, Candis

Sabiha, we have a question in the chat: We are struggling with identifying whether a student qualifies for an additional accommodation based on current levels. Who should we address our questions to?



Klepk, Sabiha

That is a great question. You know, if you're unsure, you can always reach out to us in the Inbox. And, of course, using the SSID only, share some background information and maybe which accommodations you are struggling to decide between.



Middlebrook, Candis

And a follow-up, just to clarify, should they reach out to the AZELLA Inbox?



Klepk, Sabiha

Yes, that's correct, the AZELLA Inbox.

In case anyone has any additional questions that come up, we will stay on for a few more minutes. But if you don't have any other questions, again, thank you for attending.

This concludes our webinar for the day. Thank you everyone for attending and have a wonderful day.