

**Evaluating Software for Use on State Assessments
Provided by Toni Wheeler from OSPI**

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction Assessment Offices are often asked whether or not specific software programs are allowed on state assessments. The OSPI does not approve or disapprove specific software programs as a whole. The OPSI requests that district evaluate all **features** within a software application for the following:

- Adherence to established tool, support, and accommodation guidelines for each specific assessment.
- Whether or not each specific feature in the software violates what the assessment is designed to measure.
- Whether or not each specific feature gives an unfair advantage to the user.
- Whether or not the settings of the software feature provide more support than the embedded tools, supports, or accommodation provided in the testing platform.

Example: A district wants to utilize “Software X” for use on state assessments. In addition to a word prediction feature, “Software X” also has a number of other features. Each specific feature must be evaluated using already provided guidance from the assessment’s Accommodation Guidelines and the assessment targets or item blueprints of the assessment.

Feature	Description	Guidance
Fact Mapper	<i>Graphic organizer. Includes image library. Image library can be browsed. Has brainstorming function. Can provide document outline or tree view. Can upload own images.</i>	<i>Disable- provides an advantage to the user.</i>
Homophone and Confusable	<i>Helps student choose correct word for easily confused or words that are homophones through alternatives, descriptions, and context sentences.</i>	<i>Disable- violates test construct.</i>
PDF Read Aloud	<i>Text-to-Speech for PDF documents.</i>	<i>Disable- not applicable</i>
Picture Dictionary	<i>Online tool, user highlights word and an image is provided.</i>	<i>Allowable Math Only- district must ensure interoperability with TDS.</i>
Pronunciation Tutor	<i>Shows how words are pronounced and displays syllables.</i>	<i>Allowable- district must ensure interoperability with TDS.</i>
Screen Masking	<i>Allows text to be masked or can function as a line reading tool.</i>	<i>Allowable- district must ensure interoperability with TDS.</i>
Screenshot Reader	<i>Allows user to select images and graphics so the alternate text description can be read through text-to-speech.</i>	<i>Allowable- district must ensure interoperability with TDS.</i>

Speak as I Type	<i>Text-to-speech as the student types. Can be set to speak on each letter, speak on each word, or speak on each sentence.</i>	<i>Allowable- district must ensure interoperability with TDS.</i>
Speech Input	<i>Speech-to-text which converts spoken words into text. Microphone and speech recognition training required.</i>	<i>Allowable- district must ensure interoperability with TDS.</i>
Speech Maker	<i>Turns text into an audio file that can be edited and saved.</i>	<i>Disable- violates test security.</i>
Spell Checker	<i>Provides list of possible suggestions-can be read back. Dictionary definition and example sentence.</i>	<i>Disable- provides an advantage to the user.</i>
Study Skill	<i>Highlighted text can be pulled into a word document.</i>	<i>Allowable- district must ensure interoperability with TDS. Test Administrator must ensure "pull into word document" functionality is not utilized due to test security.</i>
Talking Calculator	<i>Standard and scientific calculators that have text-to-speech functionality. Can copy from document, insert into calculator, calculation will appear in document. Also can do conversions.</i>	<i>Allowable with restrictions: Standard calculator allowed in grade 6 math and grade 5 science for calculator-allowed sections only. Scientific calculator allowed in grades 7 and 8 math (ok in HS math too, but not recommended) and grade 8 and HS science for calculator-allowed sections only. District must ensure interoperability with TDS. Test Administrator must ensure conversion feature is not utilized as it violates test construct.</i>
Talking Dictionary	<i>Embedded dictionary. Basic, advanced, and web dictionaries. Provides definitions and associated words.</i>	<i>Allowable Math Only- district must ensure interoperability with TDS.</i>
Text-to-Speech	<i>Read aloud of text. Speech is adaptable- read by word,</i>	<i>Allowable- district must ensure interoperability with TDS</i>

	<p>sentence, or paragraph. Adjustable voice settings.</p>	
Word Prediction	<p>Learns students own writing to generate words for use. Words can be looked up in dictionary. Identifies words easily confused with other words. Impacts grammar. Words also come with context indicators (most likely to be correct, medium, least likely to be correct). Can set to speak the word when clicked. Can set panel to automatically speak list of predicted words. Prediction settings: display words alphabetically, follow the cursor during typing, auto height adjust, predict one word ahead, has word learning setting; can set phonetic spelling replacements, can set context tab from various word banks (these can be removed), edit list-individual words can be added to the word prediction list, can set word bank lists by copying and pasting from document. Can download further topic word banks.</p>	<p>Allowable- following Smarter Balanced Guidance.</p> <p>Word prediction allows students to begin writing a word and choose from a list of words that have been predicted from word frequency and syntax rules. Word prediction is delivered via a non-embedded software program. The program must use only single word prediction. Functionality such as phrase prediction, predict ahead, or next word must be deactivated. The program must have settings that allow only a basic dictionary. Expanded dictionaries, such as topic dictionaries and word banks, must be deactivated. Phonetic spelling functionality may be used, as well as speech output built into the program which reads back the information the student has written. If further supports are needed for speech output, see Text-to-Speech or Read Aloud policies. Students who use word prediction in conjunction with speech output will need headphones unless tested individually in a separate setting. Students may use their own assistive technology devices.</p>
Word Wizard	<p>Thesaurus to find associated words. Advanced functions allows user to search different criteria related to the target word: opposite, different kinds of "target word", A "target word" is part of these things; parts of a "target word"; related words. Definitions provided for words.</p>	<p>Disable- violates test construct.</p>

