

**Analysis of Data on the Use of the Read Aloud and Audio
Accommodations on the Reading Standards of Learning (SOL)
Assessments for the Spring 2009 Administration**

The Commonwealth of Virginia permits the use of read aloud or audio accommodations on its reading assessments for certain students with disabilities. Prior to 2006-2007, Individualized Education Plan (IEP) teams and 504 management teams in local school divisions were permitted to determine if a student needed a read aloud or audio accommodation on the statewide reading assessments. However, in October 2006, school divisions were informed that only those students with a visual impairment, including blindness, and those students with a specific disability that severely limited or prevented them from decoding text at any level of difficulty, would be permitted to use the read aloud or audio accommodation on the reading test.

Data comparing the numbers of students with disabilities using the read aloud/audio accommodation on the reading assessment in 2006 prior to the implementation of the more restrictive policy and data from 2007 and 2008 after its implementation have previously been analyzed. Data from the spring 2009 administration were used to investigate the effect of the policy in its third year of implementation. Table 1 shows the number and percent of students using no accommodation, the read aloud/audio accommodation, and all other accommodations at each grade level. All other accommodations include such accommodations as environmental modifications, visual aids (magnifying glass, masks to maintain place), large test print, assistance with directions, and Braille test form.

**Table 1
Number and percent of students using each type of accommodations on the SOL
reading tests in spring 2009**

Accommodation		Grade Level						
		3	4	5	6	7	8	EOC
None	Number	81241	79968	80044	81063	82964	86315	75118
	Percent	93.34	93.37	93.26	95.90	97.20	96.89	97.68
All Other	Number	3671	3571	3621	1977	1164	1217	535
	Percent	4.22	4.17	4.22	2.34	1.36	1.37	0.70
Read Aloud/Audio	Number	2123	2106	2166	1492	1227	1555	1248
	Percent	2.44	2.46	2.52	1.77	1.44	1.75	1.62
Total number of students		87035	85645	85831	84532	85355	89087	76901

Table 1 indicates that just under 3 percent of students in grades 3 through 5 used the read aloud/audio accommodation on the reading tests and just under 5 percent used all other

accommodations. At grades 6 through 8 the percent is even lower, hovering around 1.5 to 1.8 percent for the read aloud/audio accommodation and 1.4 to 2.3 percent for all other accommodations, and at the high school End-of-Course (EOC) level only 1.6 percent of students used the read aloud/audio accommodation and less than 1 percent used all other accommodations.

In order to evaluate the trend the use of these accommodations on the reading assessment, Table 2 shows the number and percent of students who used the read aloud/audio accommodation from spring 2007 to spring 2009.

Table 2
Number and percent of students using the read aloud/audio accommodation from 2007 to 2009

Year	Grade Level						
	3	4	5	6	7	8	EOC
2007	2955 (3.39%)	2954 (3.45%)	3087 (3.56%)	2136 (2.43%)	1739 (1.95%)	1999 (2.16%)	1147 (1.49)
2008	2421 (2.83%)	2483 (2.89%)	2467 (2.92%)	1862 (2.18%)	1378 (1.59%)	1789 (1.98%)	1081 (1.38%)
2009	2123 (2.44%)	2106 (2.46%)	2166 (2.52%)	1492 (1.77%)	1227 (1.44%)	1555 (1.75%)	1248 (1.62%)

Both the number of students and the percent of the students who used the read aloud/audio accommodation decreased each year from 2007 to 2009 at all grade levels, except at the high school EOC level, which increased slightly in 2009.

Table 3 presents the average reading scale scores by grade level for students who used the read aloud/audio accommodation or all other accommodations.

Table 3
Average reading scale scores of students who received all other and read aloud/audio accommodations

Accommodation	Grade Level						
	3	4	5	6	7	8	EOC
All other	412.1	430.0	434.2	419.7	414.3	400.2	418.1
Read Aloud/Audio	415.3	427.3	428.2	407.4	407.6	381.5	408.9

The average reading scale score of students in grade 3 receiving the read aloud/audio accommodation is slightly higher than that of students receiving all other accommodations. At grades 4 through 8 and EOC the pattern is reversed with students

who received all other accommodations scoring slightly higher than those receiving a read aloud/audio accommodation. That the differences are small and not consistent across grade levels suggests that the read aloud/audio accommodation is not improving the performance of students who receive it over those who use other accommodations.

Table 4 shows the percent of students in each of the three major performance categories who received a read aloud/audio or any other accommodation.

Table 4
Percentage of students at each proficiency level who received all other and read aloud/audio accommodations

Grade	Accommodation	Proficiency Level		
		Below Prof	Proficient	Advanced
3	All other	40.75	47.92	11.33
	Read Aloud/Audio	38.39	51.34	10.27
4	All other	34.22	45.79	19.99
	Read Aloud/Audio	33.43	51.99	14.58
5	All other	28.22	59.71	12.07
	Read Aloud/Audio	28.49	63.90	7.62
6	All other	39.35	47.40	13.25
	Read Aloud/Audio	44.10	49.46	6.43
7	All other	41.92	43.38	14.69
	Read Aloud/Audio	41.56	51.18	7.25
8	All other	51.60	39.28	9.12
	Read Aloud/Audio	62.51	34.92	2.57
EOC	All other	35.89	57.20	6.92
	Read Aloud/Audio	47.20	44.87	7.93

In grades 3 through 5, the pattern of percents across the proficiency levels within grade is similar for the two types of accommodations. In grades 6 through 8 there is a tendency for a higher percent of students who received other accommodations to be in the advanced category than students who received the read aloud/audio accommodation. There is also a larger percent of students who received the read aloud/audio accommodation in the below proficient category at these grade levels. At the high school EOC level, a higher percent of students who received the read aloud/audio accommodation are in the below proficient category and a lower percent are in the proficient category than students who received all other accommodations.

The evidence presented above shows that a very small percent of students throughout the Commonwealth are using the read aloud/audio accommodation on the reading assessment. It also suggests that use of the read aloud/audio accommodation does not provide any clear advantage in performance over students who use all other accommodations on the reading assessments.

The Virginia Department of Education continues to monitor closely the use of the read aloud/audio accommodation by school divisions. Technical assistance is provided to those school divisions with larger than expected numbers of students receiving the read aloud/audio accommodation on the reading test to determine how the criteria for allowable use of this accommodation are being implemented.