

## Summary of Results from Survey on Exam Adjudication

In April 2010, SET BC conducted a survey to gather information on the types of exam accommodations currently being used in school districts across British Columbia and to determine what impact the Provincial Exam Adjudication Changes for the 2010-2011 school year will have. This report summarizes the results from the survey.

### Response to Survey

Over 400 survey responses were submitted from public and independent schools across the province. Surveys were submitted from all but four school districts.

### Question 1: Adaptations currently being used by students

427 people provided feedback on the different adaptations currently used by their students in both school-based and Provincial exams.

<b>Adaptations</b>	<b>School Exams</b>	<b>Provincial Exams</b>	<b>Total Responses</b>
Extra time	422	339	425
Reader	375	308	385
Scribe	375	304	386
Word Processing Software	349	247	355
Spellchecker	344	240	353
Word Recognition (text-to-speech) (e.g. Kurzweil)	240	122	251
Text Reader (Ministry built-in voice files)	85	108	133
Voice to Text (e.g. Dragon Naturally Speaking, MacSpeech)	105	51	108
Braille	44	39	47
Large Print	149	100	154
Alternative Format (online or digital/scanned copy)	137	83	149
Rate Enhancement (word prediction/word completion)	57	16	57
Graphic Organizer	187	43	188

59 people described additional adaptations not listed in the survey, including: extra time, supervised breaks, separate settings, and reduced number of questions. One school mentioned that they are using an iPod touch with Dragon Dictate as an adaptation, while another is using a SMARTboard.

**Question 2: In the absence of a reader and scribe, would the majority of your students be able to type their open-ended responses on a computer?**

418 people responded to this question – over half felt their students would be able to type their exam responses.

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	56.1%	231
No	43.9%	181

258 of the respondents also described limitations that would prevent a student from using a computer to complete exams:

- written output difficulties would transfer to computer as well.
- slow typing speed/poor keyboarding skills
- lack of technology (i.e. computers)
- non-readers
- visual and fine motor difficulties
- fatigue

**Question 3: What technological adaptations (text and voice recognition programs) do you anticipate will need to be in place for your students?**

370 respondents responded to this question. Most respondents overwhelmingly identified Kurzweil 3000 and voice-to-text software as required technology. A few mentioned WordQ/SpeakQ noting the need for quality headphones and scanners as well. Many people also mentioned that they are using outdated technology and that new computers would be necessary to write e-Exams in order to avoid technological glitches.

**Question 4: What will the school and/or district need to do to prepare for this change?**

When asked what the school and/or district would need to prepare for this change, the majority of the 367 respondents replied that training on software for both students and staff was a concern. A large number of people again mentioned the need for better, faster and more computers. Software was also a major concern, especially the number of copies that will be required and the money to purchase the software.

## Questions 5: Other comments on exam adaptations?

Survey respondents had the option of adding additional comments at the end of the survey. 228 people took advantage of this section – many expressed frustration with the decision to withdraw readers and scribes. Others provided feedback on what they feel they need as a district to be prepared. The most common concerns, ranked from highest to lowest, included:

1. Money: Respondents felt they did not have the money available to buy the software/hardware to implement these changes. They are looking for funding from the Ministry of Education to help pay for the cost of these changes.
2. Time: There is an overwhelming concern that these changes were brought on too quickly without enough consultation or warning. Respondents feel these changes should be phased in slowly over time allowing people to adjust to the change.
3. Training of students: A large number of people raised the concern that students will need to be trained on the technology and that there isn't enough time, money, or resources to adequately train the students to successfully use the technology.
4. Training of staff: Similar to the concern regarding training for students, respondents feel that many of the staff aren't adequately trained on the technology themselves. Many also felt that there needs to be more time/money provided so that the staff can get trained.
5. Lack of equipment (software/hardware): A number of people felt that their current equipment was outdated and not sufficient to accommodate completion of e-Exams. They also raised the concern that many districts don't have or can't afford the technology that will replace the reader/scribe.
6. On-site troubleshooting: Many raised the concern that a "techie" would need to oversee the students taking e-Exams in case of glitches. Most felt they weren't qualified to troubleshoot problems that may arise.
7. Technology not there yet: A number of respondents felt that the voice-to-text software wasn't adequate enough to meet the needs of all students who needed scribes. They felt the technology is not capable of adapting to the individual speech patterns of many of the students requiring accommodations.
8. Quiet space: Many people raised the concern that not enough quiet spaces would be available for those students who would be using voice-to-text software. They felt that you couldn't have more than one user in the same area if both were using voice-to-text as the same time.
9. List of acceptable applications: A few people raised the notion that they don't want to buy any technology until the Ministry of Education publishes a list of "allowable" accommodations. These individuals would like to purchase the technology and get

started with training but they feel they don't want to waste their money on the wrong applications.

Despite the large number of concerns expressed, some were more positive about the impending changes. A number of respondents did comment that they have already used the e-Exams with great success and they felt that most people will adapt to the changes.

### **Plans for Sharing Survey Results**

The results of the survey have been shared with the Ministry of Education which is currently finalizing plans for the exam adjudication changes. For more information on the exam adjudication changes, please consult the Ministry of Education site:

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/exams/adjudication/> .