Requirements for the Participation of Students with Disabilities in MCAS

Including Test Accommodations and Alternate Assessment

A Guide for Educators and Parents/Guardians
August 2013

Dear Colleagues, Parents, and Guardians:

I am pleased to present the 2013–2014 update of Requirements for the Participation of Students with Disabilities in MCAS. The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines for the participation of students with disabilities in statewide tests and to familiarize educators and parents/guardians with available test accommodations. Please refer to this manual during IEP and 504 team meetings throughout the school year for assistance in making assessment decisions.

The appropriate use of accommodations provides students with disabilities greater access to classroom instruction and assessments. Decisions about appropriate test accommodations must be made carefully, based on the requirements outlined in this manual. Staff must be trained annually on the use and selection of accommodations, especially nonstandard accommodations. Nonstandard accommodations, such as a test administrator reading aloud the English Language Arts Reading Comprehension test, are intended for use by a very small number of students with disabilities who meet certain criteria. The Department plans to continue to work with schools and districts to support the appropriate use of test accommodations and provide data on the use of nonstandard accommodations to districts on an annual basis.

IEP and 504 teams must obtain approval from the Department to use test accommodations that are not listed in this document before including them in a student’s IEP or 504 plan. Also be aware that test accommodations may not be provided to non-disabled students.

Please familiarize yourself with the policies and guidelines provided in this publication and contact Student Assessment Services at 781-338-3625 with any questions or suggestions.

Sincerely,

Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Commissioner's Foreword.................................................................................................................. i

I. Overview of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) ......................... 1
   A. Background ...................................................................................................................................... 1
   B. Definition of a Student with a Disability ......................................................................................... 1
   C. Meeting the High School Competency Determination (CD) Requirements ................................. 1

II. Participation of Students with Disabilities in MCAS .................................................................... 2
   A. Background ...................................................................................................................................... 2
   B. Determining How Students with Disabilities Will Participate in MCAS ......................................... 2
   C. MCAS Participation Guidelines ......................................................................................................... 3
   D. Complex and Significant Disabilities for Which a Student May Require an Alternate Assessment ................................................................................................................................. 5
   E. MCAS Participation Guidelines for IEP/504 Team Decision Making ............................................. 6

III. MCAS Test Accommodations ....................................................................................................... 7
   A. Definition and Purpose of Test Accommodations ........................................................................... 7
   B. Eligibility for Test Accommodations ............................................................................................... 7
   C. General Requirements for Use of Test Accommodations .............................................................. 7
   D. Process for Selecting MCAS Test Accommodations ....................................................................... 9
   E. Definition of Standard Accommodations ......................................................................................... 9
   F. Definition of Nonstandard Accommodations .................................................................................. 9
   G. Decision Tree for Use in Making Accommodations Decisions ..................................................... 11
   H. Untimed Test Sessions ...................................................................................................................... 11
   I. Use of Dictionaries on MCAS Tests .................................................................................................... 12
   J. Determining School Resources and Other Testing Needs .............................................................. 12
   K. List of Standard Accommodations .................................................................................................. 13
   L. Requirements for the Use of Nonstandard Accommodations ...................................................... 19

IV. MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt) ...................................................................................... 24
   A. Overview ......................................................................................................................................... 24
   B. Participation Guidelines .................................................................................................................... 24
   C. Obtaining Portfolio Binders and Submission Materials ................................................................... 24
   D. Submitting MCAS-Alt Portfolios ..................................................................................................... 25

V. Reporting MCAS Results for Students with Disabilities ............................................................... 25

VI. Preparing Students with Disabilities for MCAS Testing ............................................................. 26
   A. Role of Educators ............................................................................................................................... 26
   B. Role of Parents/Guardians ............................................................................................................... 26
   C. Available Resources ......................................................................................................................... 27

APPENDIX A ......................................................................................................................................... 28
   • Procedures for Using Test Accommodations 16 and 26: ................................................................. 28
   • Reading MCAS Tests Aloud to a Small Group of Students (2–5) .................................................... 28
   • Procedures for Using Test Accommodations 17 and 27: ................................................................. 28
   • Signing MCAS Tests to a Small Group of Deaf Students (2–5) ......................................................... 28

APPENDIX B: Accommodation 20 Cover Sheet ............................................................................. 29
APPENDIX C: Student Accommodation Refusal Sample Form ....................................................... 30
I. Overview of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS)

A. Background

The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) is the Commonwealth’s statewide assessment program for students educated with public funds. MCAS tests measure the performance of students, schools, and districts on the academic learning standards in the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks, fulfilling the requirements of the Education Reform Law of 1993 and the federal No Child Left Behind law.

All students, including students with disabilities, are required to participate in all MCAS tests scheduled for their grade. Students with significant disabilities who are unable to take the standard MCAS tests, even with accommodations, must take the MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt).

B. Definition of a Student with a Disability

For the purposes of MCAS, a student with a disability is defined as having an approved Individualized Education Program (IEP) provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 and Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 71B, or a plan provided under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

C. Meeting the High School Competency Determination (CD) Requirements

In order to graduate from high school, all students who are educated with Massachusetts public funds, including students with disabilities, are required to meet the CD standard in English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, and Science and Technology/Engineering (STE), as well as meet all local graduation requirements.

To earn a CD, students must either earn a scaled score of at least 240 on the grade 10 MCAS ELA and Mathematics tests, or earn a scaled score between 220 and 238 on these tests and fulfill the requirements of an Educational Proficiency Plan (EPP). Additional information on the EPP is available on the Department’s website at www.doe.mass.edu/ccr/epp/. In addition, students must earn a scaled score of at least 220 on one of the high school MCAS (STE) tests: biology, chemistry, introductory physics, or technology/engineering. Information on the CD graduation requirements is available at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/graduation.html. Students who fail one or more of the required tests will be offered multiple opportunities to take test(s) again, plus the opportunity to file an MCAS Performance Appeal if certain eligibility requirements are met. For additional information on MCAS Performance Appeals, visit www.doe.mass.edu/mcasappeals/.

A small number of students with disabilities are able to meet the CD requirement in one or more of the required subject areas through participation in MCAS-Alt. In order to earn a CD through participation in MCAS-Alt, a student must submit a portfolio that

1. demonstrates knowledge and skills at grade-level expectations for a student in grade 10;
2. demonstrates evidence of the student’s thinking and problem-solving skills; and
3. demonstrates accurate and independent performance on the work samples that address all required learning standards and strands in the subject being assessed, as described on pages 22–29 of the 2014 Educator’s Manual for MCAS-Alt, available at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html.
II. Participation of Students with Disabilities in MCAS

A. Background

The Massachusetts Education Reform Law of 1993 mandates that all students with disabilities who are educated with Massachusetts public funds participate in MCAS testing for their grade, including:

- students enrolled in public schools
- students enrolled in charter schools
- students enrolled in innovation schools, including virtual schools
- students enrolled in educational collaboratives
- students enrolled in approved and unapproved private special education schools and programs within and outside Massachusetts
- students receiving educational services in institutional settings
- students in the custody of the Department of Children and Families (DCF)
- students in the custody of the Department of Youth Services (DYS)

Students with disabilities must participate in grade-level tests that correspond with the grade in which they are reported to the Department’s Student Information Management System (SIMS).

B. Determining How Students with Disabilities Will Participate in MCAS

During its annual meeting, a student’s IEP or 504 team must determine how the student will participate in MCAS for each subject scheduled for assessment. This information, including any accommodations that a student will use, must be documented in the student’s approved IEP or his or her 504 plan. Guidelines for making participation decisions for individual students appear in Sections B, C, and D in this chapter.

English Language Learner (ELL) Students with Disabilities

ELL students with disabilities must participate in all MCAS assessments for students in their grade, regardless of the number of years they have been enrolled in U.S. schools, with one exception: ELL students who first enrolled in a U.S. school after March 1, 2013, are not required to take the MCAS ELA tests in spring 2014, although schools have the option of assessing first-year ELL students on ELA tests.

ELL students with disabilities are entitled to receive test accommodations or to participate in the MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt), as determined by their IEP or 504 teams. Additional information on the participation of ELL students with disabilities in MCAS and in the ACCESS for ELLs English proficiency tests can be found in the Department publication entitled Requirements for the Participation of English Language Learners in ACCESS for ELLs and MCAS, available on the Department’s website at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation/?section=ell.

Students Diagnosed with Concussions

The Department has issued guidelines, including MCAS testing policies, for students who are returning to school after being diagnosed with concussions. These guidelines are available on the Department’s website at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation/?section=sped. Please refer to this information before making decisions about MCAS testing for a student who has had a concussion.
C. MCAS Participation Guidelines

This section provides guidelines that IEP and 504 teams should use at annual team meetings to determine how each student with a disability will participate in MCAS.

The student’s IEP or 504 team should begin by asking these questions and considering options 1, 2, and 3 in the chart that follows:

- Can the student take the standard MCAS test under routine conditions?
- Can the student take the standard MCAS test with accommodations? If so, which accommodations are necessary in order for the student to participate?
- Does the student require an alternate assessment? (Alternate assessments are intended for a very small number of students with significant disabilities who are unable to take standard MCAS tests, even with accommodations.)

The student’s IEP or 504 team must make a separate decision for each subject scheduled for testing. A student may take the standard test in one subject and the alternate assessment in another. These decisions may be revised each time the team convenes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of Student’s Instructional Program and Local Assessment</th>
<th>Recommended Participation in MCAS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>OPTION 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>If the student is</strong></td>
<td><strong>Then</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) generally able to demonstrate knowledge and skills on a paper-and-pencil test, either with or without test accommodations, <strong>and</strong> is</td>
<td>the student should take the <strong>standard MCAS test</strong>, either with or without accommodations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) working on learning standards <strong>at or near grade-level expectations</strong>, <strong>or</strong> is</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) working on learning standards that have been modified and are <strong>somewhat below grade-level expectations</strong> due to the nature of the student's disability,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of Student’s Instructional Program and Local Assessment</th>
<th>Recommended Participation in MCAS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>OPTION 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>If the student is</strong></td>
<td><strong>Then</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) generally <strong>unable</strong> to demonstrate knowledge and skills on a paper-and-pencil test, even with accommodations, <strong>and</strong> is</td>
<td>the student should take the <strong>MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt)</strong> in this subject.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) working on learning standards that have been <strong>substantially modified</strong> due to the nature and severity of his or her disability, <strong>and</strong> is</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) receiving <strong>intensive, individualized instruction</strong> in order to acquire, generalize, and demonstrate knowledge and skills,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics of Student’s Instructional Program and Local Assessment</td>
<td>Recommended Participation in MCAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OPTION 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| *If the student is*  
  a) working on learning standards **at or near grade-level expectations**  
  and **is**  
  b) **sometimes able** to take a paper-and-pencil test, either without or with one or more test accommodation(s)  
  but  
  c) has a **complex and significant disability** that does not allow the student to fully demonstrate knowledge and skills on a test of this format and duration,  

(Examples of complex and significant disabilities for which the student may require an alternate assessment are provided on the following page.) | *Then*  
the student should take the **standard MCAS test**, if possible, with necessary accommodations.  

*However,*  
the team may recommend the **MCAS-Alt** when the severity and complexity of the disability prevent the student from fully demonstrating knowledge and skills on the standard test, even with the use of accommodations. In this case, the MCAS-Alt grade-level portfolio should be compiled and submitted. |
D. Complex and Significant Disabilities for Which a Student May Require an Alternate Assessment

While the majority of students who take alternate assessments have significant cognitive disabilities, participation in the MCAS-Alt is not limited to these students. When the nature and complexity of a student’s disability present significant barriers or challenges to standardized testing, even with the use of accommodations, and even when the student may be working at or near grade-level expectations, the student’s IEP or 504 team may determine that the student should participate in MCAS-Alt in one or more subjects.

In addition to the criteria outlined in options 2 and 3 on the preceding page, the following examples of unique circumstances are provided to expand the team’s understanding of the appropriate use of alternate assessments. An alternate assessment may be administered, for example, in each of the following situations:

- A student with a severe emotional, behavioral, or other disability is unable to maintain sufficient concentration to participate in standard testing, even with test accommodations.
- A student with a severe health-related disability, neurological disorder, or other complex disability cannot meet the demands of a prolonged test administration.
- A student with a significant motor, communication, or other disability requires more time than is reasonable or available for testing, even with the allowance of extended time (i.e., the student cannot complete one full test session in a school day).

High school students who participate in the MCAS-Alt may use this assessment to satisfy the CD requirement if they can demonstrate in their portfolio a level of achievement comparable to that of a student who has met the CD requirements by taking the standard grade 10 test or retest in that subject. Students who meet these requirements on the MCAS-Alt will be eligible to earn a CD. More information is available in the 2014 Educator’s Manual for MCAS-Alt available at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html.
E. MCAS Participation Guidelines for IEP/504 Team Decision Making

This decision tree may be used by IEP and 504 teams to make decisions annually regarding appropriate student participation in MCAS for each content area being assessed.

1. Does the student have a current IEP or 504 plan?
   - No → Student is ineligible to receive test accommodations or take the MCAS-Alt. Student must take the MCAS test without accommodations.
   - Yes → Is the student generally able to demonstrate knowledge and skills on a paper-and-pencil test, either with or without test accommodations?

2. Yes → Is the student working on standards at or near grade-level expectations?
   - Yes → Does the student have a complex and significant disability that prevents the student from fully demonstrating knowledge and skills on a test like the MCAS?
      - Yes → The student should take the standard MCAS test, either without accommodations OR with accommodations, if all conditions and criteria are met.
      - No → The student should be considered for the MCAS-Alt grade-level or competency portfolio in one or more subjects.
   - No → The student should be considered for the MCAS-Alt in one or more subjects.

3. No → Is the student generally able to demonstrate knowledge and skills on a paper-and-pencil test, either with or without test accommodations?
   - No → The student should be considered for the MCAS-Alt in one or more subjects.

---

1. An explanation and examples of complex and significant disabilities can be found on page 5 of this manual.
2. Refer to Chapter III of this manual for eligibility and requirements regarding test accommodations.
3. See the Educator’s Manual for MCAS-Alt available at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html)
III. MCAS Test Accommodations

Please use the information in this chapter as a general guide for IEP and 504 team decision making. Only a student's IEP or 504 team can make decisions regarding test accommodations. The principal is responsible for ensuring that each student is provided with all test accommodations listed in his or her IEP or 504 plan.

A. Definition and Purpose of Test Accommodations

A test accommodation is a change in the way a test is administered or in the way a student responds to test questions. Similar to instructional accommodations, test accommodations are intended to offset the effects of the disability and to provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and skills on statewide assessments.

See Section C for guidelines on allowable accommodations.

Reliance on test accommodations should never replace appropriate and rigorous instruction based on grade-level standards in the subject being tested.

B. Eligibility for Test Accommodations

**ELIGIBLE: students with disabilities served by an approved IEP or a 504 plan**
The right of a student with a disability to receive allowable accommodations on MCAS tests is protected by both federal and state laws. The student’s IEP or 504 plan must specify precisely which MCAS accommodation(s) he or she will receive. The IEP must be signed by the parent/guardian before an accommodation may be given. A student’s 504 plan must be in place; however, in cases where a 504 plan is under development, the school personnel responsible for writing the plan must have already met and agreed upon the necessary MCAS accommodation(s) before a student may be provided the accommodation(s).

**NOT ELIGIBLE: students without documented disabilities and students with documented disabilities not served by an IEP or 504 plan**
A student who does not have a documented disability and is not served by an IEP or 504 plan is not eligible to receive accommodations on MCAS tests, regardless of whether the student already receives instructional support or accommodations.

C. General Requirements for Use of Test Accommodations

The use of accommodations is based on the individual needs of a student with a disability and may only be provided when all of the following conditions have been met:

1) The student **has a disability** (non-disabled students may **not** use test accommodations) that is **documented** in an IEP or 504 plan.

   **AND**

2) The **accommodation is clearly described** on the “State- and District-wide Assessment” page of the student’s IEP, and the IEP has been signed by the student’s parent(s)/guardian(s) prior to the date of test administration; or is listed as an MCAS accommodation in a 504 plan developed for the student.

   **AND**

3) The student **uses the accommodation routinely** (with rare exceptions) during classroom instruction.
and assessment in the subject, both before and after the MCAS test is administered. However, use of an accommodation during instruction does not necessarily qualify a student to receive the same accommodation during MCAS testing; for example, the student must meet additional eligibility requirements to receive a nonstandard accommodation on an MCAS test.

AND

4) The student requires the accommodation in order to participate in MCAS testing.

AND

5) The accommodation is listed as an approved accommodation in Sections K or L of this chapter (or, prior to testing, the district or school has consulted with the Department and received approval to use an accommodation not included in this document).

AND

6) If a nonstandard accommodation will be provided, the student meets all of the eligibility criteria for that accommodation listed in Section L of this chapter.

IEP teams must reconvene annually to determine which accommodations are needed and to document any changes to accommodations. If an IEP or 504 team believes that a test accommodation listed in a student’s IEP or 504 plan should be removed because it is no longer necessary and appropriate for the student, the team must amend the plan accordingly prior to testing. In the case of an IEP, the amended plan must be signed by the student’s parent(s)/guardian(s) before any changes can be implemented.

It is acceptable for teams to list an accommodation in the plan with the notation “as requested by the student,” signifying that the student may require the accommodation only periodically during testing; for example, a student who tires easily may need a scribe only during the latter part of a test session.

Accommodations may not

- alter, explain, simplify, paraphrase, or eliminate any test question, reading passage, writing prompt, or multiple-choice answer option;
- provide verbal or other clues or suggestions that hint at or give away the correct response to the student; or
- contradict test administration requirements or result in the violation of test security; e.g.,
  - test items may not be modified, reordered, or reformatted in any way for any student;
  - tests may not be photocopied, enlarged, altered, or duplicated;
  - English language dictionaries are not allowed for any student on any test except the ELA Composition test.

If the above conditions have been met and the IEP or 504 team determines an accommodation is necessary, the accommodation(s) must be listed on the State or District-wide Assessment page of an approved IEP, or as a designated accommodation for MCAS testing in the 504 plan, and must be provided to the student during MCAS testing. If an accommodation is provided that does not meet the conditions stated above, the student’s test score may be invalidated.

If a student refuses an accommodation listed in his or her plan, the accommodation must be offered and remain available to the student during testing. The school may want to document in writing that the student refused the accommodation and keep this documentation on file at the school. An optional sample form to document a student’s refusal can be found in Appendix C. Students should never be asked to sign an agreement waiving their right to receive an accommodation.
In the event a student was provided a test accommodation that was not listed in his or her IEP or 504 plan, or if a student was not provided a test accommodation listed in his or her plan, the school should immediately contact the Department at 781-338-3625. If a student was provided an accommodation that was not in his or her IEP or 504 plan, all or part of the student’s score may be invalidated.

D. Process for Selecting Appropriate MCAS Test Accommodations

Assessment accommodations are intended to provide access to MCAS tests. When selecting each testing accommodation, educators should consider the following:

- “What learning challenges is the student experiencing?”
  - Look at the student’s classroom performance, not just the type of disability.
- “Does the accommodation address the problem?”
  - Try various accommodations in different assessment settings and evaluate whether the accommodation addresses the student’s need; if not, revise accommodation(s) as needed.
  - Determine whether the accommodation is allowed for MCAS testing in the subject (see decision tree on page 11).
  - Develop or amend the IEP or 504 plan accordingly, listing accommodations separately for each MCAS assessment.

E. Definition of Standard Accommodations

For the purposes of MCAS, a standard accommodation is defined as a change in the routine conditions under which students take MCAS tests that does not alter what the test is intended to measure. Standard accommodations are grouped into the following four categories:

- changes in timing or scheduling of the test; for example, administering the test in short intervals or at a specific time of day
- changes in test setting; for example, administering the test in a small group or a separate setting
- changes in test presentation; for example, using a large-print or Braille edition of the test
- changes in how the student responds to test questions; for example, dictating responses to a scribe

A list of standard test accommodations can be found in Section K of this chapter.

F. Definition of Nonstandard Accommodations

For MCAS, a nonstandard accommodation is defined as an accommodation that

- changes the way an MCAS test is presented;
  OR
- changes the way a student responds to test questions;
  AND
- alters a portion of what the test is intended to measure.

A list of nonstandard accommodations and the conditions under which they may be used appears in Section L of this chapter.
Nonstandard accommodations are intended for use by a very small number of students who would not otherwise be able to access the test. Teams must exercise caution, therefore, in considering whether a student requires a nonstandard accommodation, and must carefully review the criteria described for each nonstandard accommodation on the list. Test results for a student who took the test using nonstandard accommodation(s) must be interpreted with caution by parents and schools.

The Department will continue to review the rates of nonstandard accommodations use among districts. Districts must ensure that IEP and 504 teams are applying appropriate criteria for use of nonstandard accommodations by carefully reviewing all eligibility requirements for the nonstandard accommodations listed in Section L and revising the IEPs and 504 plans of students with disabilities accordingly.

Please call the Student Assessment office at 781-338-3625 with any questions about accommodations.
G. Decision Tree for Use in Making Accommodations Decisions

This decision tree may be used by IEP and 504 teams to help make decisions about the use of accommodations for individual students.

Does the student have an approved IEP or a 504 plan?

Yes

Has the student’s IEP team (which includes the student’s parent or guardian) or 504 team determined that the student requires the accommodation to take the MCAS test, based on:
- the student’s learning profile
- accommodations needed and used successfully by the student during classroom instruction
- previous testing experience
- the best judgment of the team

No

The student may not receive standard or nonstandard MCAS accommodations.

Does the accommodation appear on the Department’s list of nonstandard accommodations (26-31)?

No

The student may not receive the accommodation without prior written approval from the Department.

Yes

The student may not receive the nonstandard MCAS accommodation.

Does the student have a specific disability that severely limits or prevents him or her from decoding, calculating, writing, or spelling, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student the skill? The student must be virtually unable to perform the skill without the nonstandard accommodation and not simply performing the skill below grade level.

No

The accommodation is included in the IEP or 504 plan (parent must approve the IEP), and the student must be provided with the standard MCAS accommodation.

Yes

The accommodation is included in the IEP or 504 plan (parent must approve the IEP), and the student must be provided with the nonstandard MCAS accommodation.
H. Untimed Test Sessions

All MCAS test administrations are untimed. Since any student may be given additional time beyond the scheduled test administration session, additional time is not considered an MCAS accommodation. However, no single test session may extend beyond the end of the regular school day, and any single test session must be completed on the same day in which it begins. Students taking the ELA Composition test must complete two sessions (Session A and B) in one day.

To ensure equivalent testing conditions in schools across the state and that all students are afforded an equal opportunity to benefit from untimed tests, it is particularly important for all testing to occur during regular school days. If testing must occur on an “early release” day, arrangements must be made for staff to stay with students who have not finished their work until the time at which school would end on a regular school day.

I. Use of Dictionaries on MCAS Tests

The use of English language dictionaries is prohibited for all MCAS tests except for the ELA Composition. Students who are reported as English language learners (ELL), or who have been reported as ELL at anytime in the past, may use authorized word-to-word bilingual dictionaries on all MCAS tests. A list of authorized word-to-word dictionaries is available at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/lep_bilingual_dictionary.pdf.

J. Determining School Resources and Other Testing Needs

Prior to MCAS testing, designated staff (e.g., special educator or special education supervisor) should provide information to the principal or MCAS coordinator regarding each student who will require test accommodations, including the specific accommodation(s), resources, and/or space required for each student. Special test editions, including Braille, large-print, American Sign Language DVD, and Kurzweil 3000 CD, must be ordered online by the principal or designee during the MCAS Enrollment Verification period.
K. List of Standard Accommodations

This section contains a list of standard test accommodations for students with disabilities. Specific information regarding test administration for students using accommodations, including instructions for administering accommodations and for returning accommodation materials after test administration, is available in the Principal’s Administration Manual.

Note: If your district uses customized IEP software with predetermined dropdown menus for MCAS accommodations, please ensure that the menus match the descriptions below.

Changes in Timing or Scheduling of the Test

1. **Frequent Breaks:** The test is administered in short periods with frequent breaks.

2. **Time of Day:** The test is administered at a time of day that takes into account the student’s medical or learning needs. The IEP or 504 plan must specify time of day. Consideration should be given to the requirement that each test session must be completed on the same school day in which it begins.

Changes in Test Setting

3. **Small Group:** The test is administered in a small group setting (no more than 10 students).
   
   Note: If students will also have the test read aloud or signed, no more than 5 students may be in the small group. If this accommodation will be provided outside the student’s classroom, the student’s IEP or 504 plan must also include accommodation 4 (separate setting).

4. **Separate Setting:** The test is administered in a room other than the one used by the rest of the class.

5. **Individual:** The test is administered to the student individually. If this accommodation will be provided outside the student’s classroom, the student’s IEP or 504 plan must also include accommodation 4 (separate setting).

6. **Specified Area:** The test is administered with the student seated at the front or in another specified area of the room, in a study carrel, or in an enclosed area (the student’s IEP or 504 plan must specify location and any specialized equipment needed).

Changes in Test Presentation

7. **Familiar Test Administrator:** The test is administered by a test administrator familiar to the student.

8. **Noise Buffers:** The student wears noise buffers after test administration instructions have been read (music may not be played on headphones worn during MCAS testing).

9. **Magnification or Overlays:** The student uses magnifying equipment, enlargement devices, colored visual overlays, or specially tinted lenses (the student’s IEP or 504 plan must specify which).

10. **Test Directions:** The test administrator clarifies general administration instructions. No portion of the test itself (including items, reading selections, or introduction to reading selections) may be read or signed unless the student’s IEP or 504 plan also includes the read-aloud accommodation for the specific MCAS test being administered.
11. **Large Print:** The student uses a large-print (18-point font) edition of the test. All responses must be transcribed verbatim from the large-print answer booklet to the student's standard answer booklet. Responses may not be typed unless the student also has accommodation 23 (typed responses).

12. **Braille:** The student uses a Braille edition of the test. All answers must be either scribed or transcribed verbatim into the student's answer booklet; responses may not be typed unless the student also has accommodation 23 (typed responses).

   **Note:** Under secure conditions supervised by the principal, the Braille test administrator may review Braille test materials up to four days prior to test administration. Test materials may not be removed from the school.

13. **Place Marker:** The student uses a place marker.

14. **Track Test Items:** The test administrator assists the student in tracking test items (e.g., moving from one test question to the next) or by redirecting the student’s attention to the test.

15. **Amplification:** The student uses sound amplification equipment.

16. **Test Administrator Reads Aloud the ELA Composition, Mathematics, and/or Science and Technology/Engineering test(s) to the Student** (Note: Reading aloud the ELA Reading Comprehension test is nonstandard accommodation 26.)

   - Test session(s) must be read word for word, exactly as written. The test administrator may not provide assistance to the student regarding the meanings of words, intent of any test item, or responses to test items. The test administrator should read with emphasis only when indicated by bold or italicized text. The test can be read aloud in one of the following ways, which **must be specified** in the IEP or 504 plan:
     - The test administrator reads the entire test session word-for-word exactly as written.
     - **OR**
     - The test administrator reads selected words, phrases, and/or sentences as directed by the student. The student points to the word, phrase, or sentence that he or she needs read aloud.
   - The test must be administered in a **separate setting** (accommodation 4), either **individually** (accommodation 5) or to a **small group** (2–5 students) (accommodation 3). For reading aloud to a small group, follow the procedures outlined in Appendix A of this document. **Note:** Reading aloud the ELA Composition test may occur in groups of up to 10 students.
   - No portion of the ELA Reading Comprehension test may be read aloud unless accommodation 26 is listed in the student’s IEP or 504 plan.

17. **Test Administrator Signs the ELA Composition, Mathematics, and/or Science and Technology/Engineering test(s) to a Student who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing** (Note: Signing the ELA Reading Comprehension test is nonstandard accommodation 27.)

   - The test session(s) must be signed exactly as written, except in cases when doing so would reveal an answer to a test question. When use of a sign would visually define the concept being tested (e.g., using the sign for parallel lines that demonstrates this concept visually), the term or concept must be finger-spelled. Interpreters may not provide assistance to the student regarding the
meanings of words, intent of any test question, or responses to test items.

- The test must be administered in a separate setting (accommodation 4), either individually (accommodation 5) or to a small group (2–5 students) (accommodation 3). For signing the test to a small group, follow the procedures outlined in Appendix A.

Notes:
- Under secure conditions supervised by the principal, interpreters may review test materials up to four days prior to test administration. Test materials may not be removed from the school.
- American Sign Language DVDs of the grade 10 Mathematics test are available.
- Signing the ELA Composition test may occur in groups of up to 10 students.

18. Use of an Electronic Text Reader for the ELA Composition, Mathematics, and/or Science and Technology/Engineering test(s) (Note: Use of an electronic text reader for the ELA Reading Comprehension test is nonstandard accommodation 28.)

All MCAS tests are available on a CD in the Kurzweil 3000 read-only format. Responses to all test questions must be submitted in the student’s standard answer booklet. Responses cannot be typed directly into the Kurzweil test. However, responses may be typed into a word-processing program if the student has accommodation 23 (typed responses).

19. Test Administrator Scribes the ELA Reading Comprehension, Mathematics, and/or Science and Technology/Engineering Test(s); or Student Uses a Speech-to-Text Conversion Device (Note: Use of a scribe or speech-to-text conversion for the ELA Composition test is nonstandard accommodation 29.):

The student dictates or signs responses to a scribe or uses a speech-to-text conversion device to record responses.

- The test must be administered individually (accommodation 5) in a separate setting (accommodation 4).
- The scribe must record the student's responses exactly as dictated into the student’s answer booklet and may not edit or alter the student’s responses in any way. Scribes may assume correct spelling and punctuation.
- The scribe must provide the student with an opportunity to review and edit what has been scribed.
- When a student uses an electronic speech-to-text conversion device, the test administrator must follow the instructions for submitting typed responses described in the Principal’s Administration Manual.
- Scribes may not type student responses. The typed response accommodation is intended for student use only. The only exception is if the student cannot read the scribe’s writing in order to review/edit the response; in that case, the scribe may type the response.
20. **Organizer, Checklist, Reference Sheet, or Abacus:** The student uses a graphic organizer or checklist; an individualized mathematics or science and technology/engineering reference sheet; or an abacus on the Mathematics tests to answer open-response items or respond to a writing prompt.

a) **General instructions for submitting materials to the Department for approval**

- All reference sheets, customized graphic organizers, and checklists submitted for approval must be accompanied by a completed **Accommodation 20 Cover Sheet**, posted at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation/?section=sped](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation/?section=sped) and available in Appendix B of this manual.

- Materials for students in grades 3–8 approved by the Department during the 2012–13 school year do not require additional approval for use on 2013–14 MCAS tests. **High school** graphic organizers and checklists as well as STE reference sheets approved in that timeframe also do not require additional approval this year. However, any materials approved **prior** to the 2012–13 school year must be resubmitted for review and approval. **All** previously approved **high school** mathematics reference sheets, regardless of when they were last approved, must be resubmitted for review for use on 2013–14 MCAS tests.

Submission deadlines are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Administration Date</th>
<th>Content Area MCAS Test</th>
<th>Materials Submission Deadline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 2013</td>
<td>ELA and Mathematics (Retest)</td>
<td>October 4, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2014</td>
<td>High School Biology</td>
<td>January 10, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2014</td>
<td>ELA and Mathematics (Retest)</td>
<td>February 7, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March–April 2014</td>
<td>ELA (grades 3–8, 10)</td>
<td>February 7, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2014</td>
<td>Mathematics (grades 3–8, 10) STE (grades 5 and 8)</td>
<td>April 4, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2014</td>
<td>High School STE</td>
<td>May 2, 2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Reference sheets, checklists, and/or graphic organizers submitted after these deadlines may not be reviewed in time for testing.

- Do not submit multiple copies of identical graphic organizers or reference sheets.

- Submit all materials to the Department by email (in MS Word or PDF formats only) to [mcas@doe.mass.edu](mailto:mcas@doe.mass.edu) or fax to 781-338-3630.

- Notice of approval will be sent to the school approximately ten (10) business days from the time the materials are received at the Department.

b) **English language arts (ELA) materials:** A student generates a draft ELA open-response or composition using a graphic organizer, or uses a checklist to check the steps in the writing process and/or recall reading comprehension strategies.

Pre-approved sample ELA graphic organizers are posted at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation/?section=sped](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation/?section=sped) for use on ELA open-response questions and ELA compositions by students who have accommodation 20 listed in their IEP or 504 plan.

Pre-approved sample organizers are intended to clarify the difference between, and assist students to prepare, ELA open responses (on the ELA Reading Comprehension tests) and ELA compositions (on the ELA Composition tests).
The following options are available to schools that wish to use ELA graphic organizers or checklists with eligible students who have this accommodation listed in an IEP or 504 plan:

- Use a posted, pre-approved sample ELA graphic organizer or checklist, which is strongly encouraged and does not require submission to the Department for approval prior to MCAS testing;
- Adapt a pre-approved sample ELA graphic organizer, which must be submitted to the Department for approval prior to MCAS testing only if text has been added;
- Create a graphic organizer, which must be submitted to the Department for approval prior to MCAS testing, if it contains text.

Notes on ELA materials:
- The student may use no more than two different pre-approved graphic organizers per test.
- Generic graphic organizers without text do not require submission to the Department for approval.
- Graphic organizers and checklists may not include:
  - definitions (of words or terms);
  - specific examples (e.g., examples of adjectives or synonyms);
  - sentence starters or lists of key words;
  - guiding questions (e.g., “Who are the main characters?” or “Where does the story take place?”).

Mathematics and science and technology/engineering (STE) materials:
A student uses an individualized reference sheet or checklist to provide memory prompts, mnemonic devices, formulas, word banks, and/or generic steps in solving a problem. Students may use approved graphic organizers for open-response questions; graph paper used as a graphic organizer does not need to be approved by the Department. (Note: The use of calculators, arithmetic tables, and manipulatives on the non-calculator test sessions of the mathematics tests is nonstandard accommodation 30.)

All high school reference sheets or checklists for use on 2013-2014 MCAS tests must be submitted to the Department for review, regardless of when they were last approved.

Approval guidelines and sample materials for mathematics and science and technology/engineering reference sheets are posted to [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation/?section=sped](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation/?section=sped).

The checklist or reference sheet must be:
- developed in response to the individual student’s learning needs;
- no more than 3 pages in length;
- specific to the student’s grade.

d) Abacus: A student who is visually impaired may use an abacus during all sessions of the Mathematics test, if this accommodation is listed in the IEP or 504 plan.

21. Student Signs or Reads Test Aloud: The student may:
- read the test aloud to him- or herself;
- read the test and record answers on a recording device (including video for a student who is deaf or hard of hearing) and then write responses to test items while playing back the recorded segment(s);
- type responses and then use text-to-speech software to play back and review the typed responses (student must also have accommodation 23 on his or her IEP or 504 plan); or
- sign test items/responses onto video and then write answers while playing back the video (for a student who is deaf or hard of hearing).
Notes:
- The test must be administered individually (accommodation 5) in a separate setting (accommodation 4).
- Any video and audio CDs, DVDs, and tapes must be returned with other nonscorable materials. Any electronic files must be deleted. No copies may be retained.
- Text-to-speech software may not be used to listen to test items or passages.

22. Monitor Placement of Responses: The test administrator monitors placement of student responses in the student’s answer booklet.

23. Typed Responses: The student uses a word processing program or an Alpha-Smart (or similar electronic keyboard) to type the ELA Composition, or answers to open-response or short-answer questions on any MCAS test.

Notes:
- The test administrator is responsible for ensuring that a student using this accommodation does not access the Internet or other files on the computer during testing.
- When typing responses, students may only use the spell- or grammar-checking functions if they have nonstandard accommodation 31 listed in their IEP or 504 plan. Test administrators are responsible for ensuring that students do not use spell- or grammar-checking functions except in cases where the student receives accommodation 31. Any auto-correct functions must be turned off during testing.
- The test administrator must follow the instructions for submitting typed responses described in the Test Administrator’s Manual and the Principal’s Administration Manual.

24. Answers Recorded in Test Booklet: The student records answers directly in the test booklet or uses special paper for drafts or computation (e.g., lined or graph paper). Answers are then transcribed verbatim into the student’s standard answer booklet.

Note: If the student transcribes his or her own responses, the transcription must be done during the test session and completed on the day in which the test session began. The student may type responses only if the student has accommodation 23 (typed responses) listed in his or her IEP or 504 plan. A test administrator may transcribe responses at any time during the testing window.

25. Other Standard Accommodation: The student uses another standard accommodation during routine instruction that the IEP or 504 team identifies as being necessary for the student to participate in MCAS tests.

The accommodation must meet the criteria described in the General Requirements for Use of Test Accommodations in Section C of this chapter. Each year the accommodation is required, the principal or designee must request written permission from the Department at least two weeks prior to test administration when a standard accommodation not on the preceding list to a student during MCAS testing. The student’s IEP or 504 plan team must reconvene in order to document any changes to accommodations listed in the plan. If the student is on an IEP, the plan must be signed by the parent before the accommodation may be used. Call 781-338-3625, email mcas@doe.mass.edu, or fax requests to 781-338-3630.
L. Requirements for the Use of Nonstandard Accommodations

IEP and 504 teams may allow the use of one or more of the following nonstandard MCAS test accommodations **only when all of the criteria are met**, as described next to each nonstandard accommodation. The accommodation can only be provided to a student with a disability on an MCAS test when it is documented on the State or District-Wide Assessment page in an approved IEP or listed in the student’s 504 plan specifically as an MCAS accommodation. Please also review section F for additional information. **Use of an accommodation during instruction does not necessarily qualify a student to receive the same accommodation on an MCAS test.**

The Department will continue to review the number of students with disabilities who receive nonstandard accommodations in each district. IEP and 504 teams are encouraged to make consistent, defensible, and appropriate decisions for each student, and to amend the IEPs and 504 plans of students who do not meet the criteria listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Accommodation</th>
<th>Criteria Required for Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td><strong>Test Administrator Reads Aloud the ELA Reading Comprehension Test</strong></td>
<td>1. The student has a specific disability that severely limits or prevents him or her from decoding text, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so. The student must be a <strong>virtual non-reader</strong> (i.e., at the beginning stages of learning to decode), not simply reading below grade level. <strong>AND</strong> 2. The student has access to printed materials <strong>only</strong> through a reader and/or is provided with spoken text on audiotape, CD, video, or other electronic format <strong>during routine instruction</strong>, except while the student is actually being taught to decode.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:**
Reading aloud the ELA Composition writing prompt, the Mathematics test, and/or the Science and Technology/Engineering test is standard accommodation 16. The decision to use nonstandard accommodation 26 must be made separately from the decision to use standard accommodation 16.

**Special Instructions:**
- All passages and test items must be read word for word, exactly as written. The test administrator may **not** provide assistance to the student regarding the meanings of words, intent of any test item, or responses to test items. The test administrator should read with emphasis only when indicated by bold or italicized text.
- If the test is read aloud, it must be administered in a **separate setting** (accommodation 4), either **individually** (accommodation 5) or to a **small group (2–5 students)** (accommodation 3). When reading aloud to a small group of students, follow the procedures outlined in Appendix A.
**27. Test Administrator Signs the ELA Reading Comprehension Test for a Student Who Is Deaf or Hard of Hearing**

**Note:**
Signing the ELA Composition writing prompt, the Mathematics test, and/or the Science and Technology/Engineering test is standard accommodation 17. The decision to use accommodation 27 must be made separately from the decision to use standard accommodation 17.

1. The student has a specific disability that **severely limits or prevents him or her from decoding text**, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so. The student must be a virtual non-reader (i.e., at the beginning stages of learning to decode), not simply reading below grade level. **AND**

2. The student has access to printed materials **only** through a sign language interpreter or is provided with signed text on video or other electronic format **during routine instruction**, except while the student is actually being taught to decode.

**Special Instructions:**
- All passages and test items must be signed exactly as written, except in cases when doing so would reveal an answer to a test question. When use of a sign would visually define the concept being tested, the term or concept must be **finger-spelled**. Interpreters may not provide assistance to the student regarding the meanings of words, intent of any test question, or responses to test items.
- If the test is signed, it must be administered in a separate setting (accommodation 4), either individually (accommodation 5) or to a small group (2–5 students) (accommodation 3). When signing a test to a small group of students, follow the procedures outlined in Appendix A.
- Under secure conditions supervised by the principal, sign interpreters may review test materials up to four days prior to test administration. Test materials may not be removed from the school.

**28. Electronic Text Reader for the ELA Reading Comprehension Test:**
The student uses an electronic text reader (i.e., Kurzweil 3000) for the ELA Reading Comprehension test.

**Note:**
Using an electronic text reader for the ELA Composition writing prompt, the Mathematics test, and/or the Science and Technology/Engineering test is standard accommodation 18. The decision to use accommodation 28 must be made separately from the decision to use standard accommodation 18.

1. The student has a specific disability that **severely limits or prevents him or her from decoding text**, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so. The student must be a virtual non-reader (i.e., at the beginning stages of learning to decode), not simply reading below grade level. **AND**

2. The student has access to printed materials **only** through an electronic text reader and is provided this accommodation **during routine instruction**, except while the student is actually being taught to decode.

*Continued...*
### Special Instructions:

Kurzweil edition MCAS tests are **read only**. Answers to all test questions must be submitted in the student’s standard answer booklet. Responses cannot be typed directly into the Kurzweil test. If the student has accommodation 23 (typed responses), answers may be typed into a word processing program.

### 29. Scribe the ELA Composition:

The student dictates the ELA Composition to a scribe or uses a speech-to-text conversion device to record the ELA Composition.

**Note:**

The Department encourages IEP teams to consider alternatives to the use of a scribe for students who are deaf and taking the ELA Composition test. One such alternative is accommodation 21, which would permit a deaf student to sign his or her draft composition onto video and then transcribe the signed composition into written English while viewing the video.

### Special Instructions:

- The test must be administered individually (accommodation 5) in a separate setting (accommodation 4).

- Clarification on the role of a scribe for the ELA Composition:
  
  o **During session A**, the scribe must write exactly what the student dictates in the student’s test booklet. The scribe may not edit or alter the student’s dictation in any way. When scribing the draft composition, the scribe may assume that each sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a period. All other capitalization, punctuation, and paragraph breaks are the responsibility of the student.
  
  o **After the student has finished dictating his or her draft composition**, the scribe must ask the student to do the following:
    
    - Spell key words. Key words include proper nouns, multi-syllable words, and other words pertinent to the composition.
    
    - Review the draft composition and make any necessary edits, including edits to capital letters, punctuation, and paragraph breaks. The student may make edits independently or may direct the scribe to make the edits. The scribe must not assist the student in making decisions during the editing process.
  
  o **During session B**, the scribe copies the final draft, including the student’s edits, into the student’s answer booklet.
  
  o **Scribes may not type student responses**; only students with accommodation 23 may submit typed responses. The only exception is if the student cannot read the scribe’s writing in order to review/edit the response; in that case, the scribe may type the response.

---

**Continued...**
• When a student uses an electronic speech-to-text conversion device, the test administrator must follow the instructions for submitting typed responses described in the Principal’s Administration Manual.

| 30. Calculation Devices: | 1. The student has a specific disability that severely limits or prevents him or her from calculating mathematically. The student must be virtually unable to perform calculation (i.e., at the beginning stages of learning how to calculate) without the use of a calculator or arithmetic table, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so. AND
2. The student has access to mathematical calculation only through the use of a calculator, arithmetic table, or manipulatives, which the student uses during routine instruction, except while the student is actually being taught to calculate. |
---|---|
| The student uses a calculator, arithmetic table (including addition/subtraction and multiplication/division charts), or manipulatives (IEP or 504 plan must specify which) on the non-calculator session of the Mathematics test and/or the grades 5 and 8 Science and Technology/Engineering test. (Note: Calculators are allowed for all students on the high school STE tests.) | Note: Manipulatives must be approved by the Department prior to use on MCAS tests. Please contact Student Assessment Services at 781-338-3625 or mcas@doe.mass.edu. |

| 31. Spell- or Grammar-Checking Function on Word Processor, Spell-Checking Device, or Word Prediction Software for the ELA Composition: | 1. The student has a specific documented disability that severely limits or prevents him or her from spelling correctly, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so. The student must be virtually unable to spell simple words (i.e., at the beginning stages of learning how to spell); AND
2. The student can produce understandable written work only when provided this accommodation, which the student uses during routine instruction. |
---|---|
| The student uses a spell- or grammar-checking function, spell-checking device (including hand-held electronic spellers), or word prediction software (IEP or 504 plan must specify which function or device) for the ELA Composition. | For spell-checker:
1. The student has a specific documented disability that severely limits or prevents him or her from spelling correctly, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so. The student must be virtually unable to spell simple words (i.e., at the beginning stages of learning how to spell); AND
2. The student can produce understandable written work only when provided this accommodation, which the student uses during routine instruction. |

| New for 2013-14 | For word prediction:
1. The student has either a specific physical disability or a documented disability in recalling and processing language that severely limits or prevents him or her from writing or keyboarding written responses without the use of word prediction software; AND
2. The student has access to written expression only through the use of word prediction software during routine instruction. |

Continued...
### Special Instructions:

- When word prediction software is used, the “predict-ahead” and “predict online” software functions must be turned off.
- Students with accommodation 31 can use spell- or grammar-checking functions or devices on all MCAS tests, if required.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>32. <strong>Other Nonstandard Accommodation:</strong> The student uses another nonstandard accommodation during routine instruction that the IEP or 504 team identifies as being necessary for the student to participate in MCAS tests.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The accommodation must meet the General Requirements for Use of Test Accommodations in Section C of this chapter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each year the accommodation is required, the principal or designee must request written permission from the Department at least two weeks prior to test administration when a nonstandard accommodation not on the preceding list is being considered by the student’s IEP or 504 team for use during MCAS testing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student’s IEP or 504 team must reconvene in order to document any changes to accommodations listed in the plan. If the student is on an IEP, the plan must be signed by the parent before the accommodation may be used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please call 781-338-3625, email <a href="mailto:mcas@doe.mass.edu">mcas@doe.mass.edu</a>, or fax requests to 781-338-3630.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IV. MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt)

A. Overview

The MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt) is intended for the relatively small number of students with significant disabilities who are unable to participate in regular statewide assessments, even when accommodations are provided. The MCAS-Alt measures the student’s achievement of the academic learning standards in the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks.

For each student scheduled to participate in MCAS-Alt in one or more subjects, the student, the student’s teacher, and other adults who work with the student will develop a portfolio over the course of the school year. The student’s portfolio must include data and other evidence of the student’s performance in the subject being assessed.

To assist teachers in providing instruction in the general curriculum to students with significant disabilities, the Department has developed the Resource Guide to the 2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for Students with Disabilities. In addition, the 2014 Educator’s Manual for MCAS-Alt includes important forms and information on the requirements of the MCAS-Alt. To view and download copies of these documents or to order printed copies, visit the Department’s MCAS-Alt website at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html.

Teachers who are conducting alternate assessments are strongly encouraged to participate in an MCAS-Alt training session or to view the Department’s training presentations available at the website listed above. Training sessions are conducted annually in October, January, and March. Since requirements are updated annually, teachers who have not attended a recent training session or reviewed updated materials may place their students at a disadvantage. MCAS-Alt training specialists are available to assist teachers in conducting the MCAS-Alt. Please call Student Assessment Services at 781-338-3625 for additional information.

B. Participation Guidelines

After reviewing the participation guidelines in Chapter II, Section C, of this document, IEP and 504 teams must determine annually which students will take alternate assessments in each subject. A student may be designated to take the standard MCAS test in one subject and the alternate assessment in another. Since the MCAS-Alt portfolio includes data and samples of student work collected during the school year, it is advisable to start this process early in the school year. The Department will monitor the use of alternate assessments statewide to ensure that they are being conducted appropriately and that participation decisions are made in accordance with the law.

C. Obtaining Portfolio Binders and Submission Materials

In January, principals must order MCAS test materials using the online MCAS Enrollment Verification form. As part of this process, principals also indicate the number of students participating in MCAS-Alt. The Department uses this information to determine the number of three-ring portfolio binders, student information booklets, and pre-paid mailing materials to send principals in February 2014. Additional materials may be ordered by calling the MCAS Service Center at 800-737-5103.
D. Submitting MCAS-Alt Portfolios

Completed MCAS-Alt student portfolios must be submitted to the Department in three-ring binders provided to the school by the Department for that purpose (as described in Section C in this chapter) and postmarked no later than Friday, April 4, 2014.

Submitted MCAS-Alt portfolios will be returned to schools in fall 2014 and must be kept on file at the school in a secure location. Information about the secure storage and maintenance of returned MCAS-Alt portfolios is available in the 2014 Educator’s Manual for MCAS-Alt posted to www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html and in the Student Record Regulations posted to www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/advisory/cmr23qanda.html?section=summary.

V. Reporting MCAS Results for Students with Disabilities

MCAS results are reported to parents/guardians, schools, and districts according to four performance levels: Advanced, Proficient, Needs Improvement, and Warning (Failing for grade 10 ELA and mathematics and high school STE). Results for the MCAS-Alt typically are reported as Awareness, Emerging, Progressing, or Incomplete, which are within the Warning/Failing level. Each year a small number of students taking the MCAS-Alt earn scores of Needs Improvement or higher by demonstrating that they have mastered grade-level standards. A score of Needs Improvement or higher on the high school MCAS-Alt is necessary to meet the state’s graduation requirements.

Performance level results for students with disabilities—whether they take the standard tests with standard or nonstandard accommodations, or without accommodations, or participate through the MCAS-Alt—are included in MCAS reports along with the results of non-disabled students. Scaled score results for students who participated in testing with either standard or nonstandard accommodations are included in MCAS reports with the scores of students who participated in testing without accommodations. MCAS-Alt portfolios receive performance levels, but do not receive scaled scores.

In school and district reports, the results for students with disabilities are disaggregated and reported separately, and also include results for ELL students with disabilities.

Notations for Nonstandard Accommodations
Confidential reports of student results, including the Parent/Guardian Report and school and district rosters, will include a notation in cases where a nonstandard accommodation was used. In order to protect the confidentiality of students with disabilities, however, notations will not appear on reports that include the results of fewer than ten students per school for school reports and per district for district reports. Rates of use of nonstandard accommodations will also be reported at the school and district levels.

Students in Out-of-District Placements
Test results for students who attend out-of-district placements are reported to the school or collaborative where the student took the test(s) and are included with the scores of the student’s sending district, regardless of whether the student took standard MCAS test(s) or the MCAS-Alt. Out-of-district placements include approved and unapproved private special education schools, educational collaboratives, and other publicly funded special education placements outside the student’s home (i.e., sending) school district.
VI. Preparing Students with Disabilities for MCAS Testing

A. Role of Educators

Educators of students with disabilities are expected to implement an instructional program that has all of the following characteristics:

- The program is based on the learning standards in the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks.
- The program uses varied and individualized approaches to instruction that enable each student to demonstrate his or her knowledge and skills.
- The program provides students with disabilities access to all the necessary resources, materials, and opportunities to learn that are provided to students without disabilities.
- The program provides necessary and appropriate supports and instructional accommodations to ensure access to the general curriculum.

B. Role of Parents/Guardians

Parents and guardians of students with disabilities play a key role in preparing their child(ren) for MCAS. Some suggestions follow:

- Make sure your child attends school regularly.
- Review class assignments and make sure that adequate time is set aside for homework.
- Set aside time for your child to read.
- Meet regularly with your child’s teacher(s) to discuss how you can support your child’s education.
- Review your child’s MCAS or MCAS-Alt Parent/Guardian Report, and use it to identify your child’s strengths and areas of weakness.
- Inquire about the use of appropriate MCAS accommodations at IEP or 504 team meetings and whether the MCAS-Alt or the standard MCAS test is most appropriate for your child.
- Review released MCAS test questions with your son or daughter. Released test items are posted on the Department’s website at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testitems.html.
- Ask whether the school offers an MCAS support program that would benefit your child.
- If your child is participating in the MCAS-Alt, ask to view your child’s MCAS-Alt portfolio.
C. Available Resources

The following publications are available on the Department's website at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas. Many are also available in Massachusetts public libraries:

- *Resource Guide to the 2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for Students with Disabilities*

- *2014 Educator’s Manual for MCAS-Alt*

- release of spring test items (available for 2008–2013)

- release of retest items (available for 2008–2013)

- MCAS scoring guides and sample student work (available for 2007–2012)

- *Requirements for the Participation of English Language Learners in ACCESS for ELLs and MCAS*

In addition, released test items are available in the following specialized test formats to schools serving students with disabilities:

- release of test items in Braille, available for 1999–2012, by calling the Accessible Instructional Materials Library at 781-562-0461

APPENDIX A

Procedures for Using Test Accommodations 16 and 26: Reading MCAS Tests Aloud to a Small Group of Students (2–5)

The test administrator may read the test aloud to a small group of students, provided that each student has an IEP or 504 plan that includes either standard accommodation 16 (for the ELA Composition, Mathematics, and/or Science and Technology/Engineering tests) or nonstandard accommodation 26 (for the ELA Reading Comprehension test). In addition, these students must have the accommodation for small group testing (accommodation 3) and the accommodation for testing in a separate setting (accommodation 4) listed in their IEPs or 504 plans. The following procedures must be followed:

- **No more than five students** may be grouped together for reading tests aloud, since students typically proceed through the test at different rates (for the ELA Composition test, up to 10 students can be grouped together).

- The principal or designee must supervise the assignment of students to groups that will have test questions read aloud to them. Student test booklets may not be opened or reviewed by students or test administrators prior to testing.

- Students grouped together must have the **same test form number**, since all questions in a given test form are identical. Test form numbers appear in the upper right-hand corner of each student test booklet.

Procedures for Using Test Accommodations 17 and 27: Signing MCAS Tests to a Small Group of Deaf Students (2–5)

The test administrator may sign the test to a small group of students, provided that each student has an IEP or 504 plan that includes either standard accommodation 17 (for the ELA Composition, Mathematics, and/or Science and Technology/Engineering tests) or nonstandard accommodation 27 (for the ELA Reading Comprehension test). In addition, these students must have the accommodation for small group testing (accommodation 3) and the accommodation for testing in a separate setting (accommodation 4) listed in their IEPs or 504 plans. The following procedures must be followed:

- No more than five students may be grouped together for signing the tests, since students typically proceed through the test at different rates.

- Students grouped together must have the **same test form number**, since all questions in a given test form are identical. Test form numbers appear in the upper right-hand corner of each student test booklet.

- Student test booklets may not be opened or reviewed by students prior to testing.

- Under secure conditions supervised by the principal, sign interpreters may review test materials up to four days prior to test administration. Test materials must be reviewed in a secure location supervised by the principal and may not be removed from the school.

Ordering Test Booklets for Accommodations 16, 17, 26, and/or 27

The principal or designee may order packets of six (6) of the same test form online through the MCAS Enrollment Verification form. Each packet includes six test booklets (one each for a group of up to five students and one for the test administrator to read or sign from during testing).
APPENDIX B

Accommodation 20 Cover Sheet
Request for Permission to Use Customized Materials for Accommodation 20

Instructions: To request permission to use customized materials for accommodation 20 (i.e., customized graphic organizer, checklist, or reference sheet), complete this form and submit it to the Department’s Student Assessment Services Unit by email to mcas@doe.mass.edu or fax to 781-338-3630.

Please submit a separate cover sheet for each content area (English language arts, mathematics, or science and technology/engineering). See Requirements for the Participation of Students with Disabilities in MCAS for additional submission guidelines.

See below for a list of submission deadlines for each testing window. Materials submitted after the deadline may not be reviewed before the testing window begins.

Responses will be sent approximately ten school days after a request is received. Please contact the Student Assessment Services Unit at 781-338-3625 with any questions. Retain documentation on file for three years.

Contact Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of principal or designee:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School name:</td>
<td>District name:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone number:</td>
<td>Fax number:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email:</td>
<td>Is this a resubmittal? (Check one.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Accommodation 20 Customized Materials Being Submitted

**Place a check mark next to each material being submitted for approval.**

- [ ] Open response graphic organizer
- [ ] Checklist
- [ ] ELA Composition graphic organizer
- [ ] Mathematics or STE reference sheet

MCAS Test Administration

**Circle the grade and place a check mark next to each test administration the material will be used for.**

Grade: 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 high school

Test Administration (submission deadlines in parentheses):

- [ ] November retests (10/4/13)
- [ ] February Biology test (1/10/14)
- [ ] March retests (2/7/14)
- [ ] March–April ELA test (2/7/14)
- [ ] May gr. 3–10 Math test (4/4/14)
- [ ] May–June STE tests (4/4/14)

For Mathematics reference sheets, place a check mark in this box if the student also uses accommodation 30: [ ]

Principal or Designee Statement

The principal or designee of the school must sign below to acknowledge the following:

- I have reviewed the Department’s policy for administering accommodation 20.
- **For Mathematics and STE materials:** I have reviewed the approval guidelines and examples posted at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation/?section=sped](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation/?section=sped).
- **For ELA graphic organizers:** I have reviewed the pre-approved ELA graphic organizers posted at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation/?section=sped](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation/?section=sped). The reason one of the pre-approved ELA graphic organizers cannot be used is as follows: __________________________________________

Name: ____________________ Signature: ____________________ Position: ____________________ Date: __________

Approval/Denial of Request – For Department Use Only

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Database record number:</th>
<th>Date received:</th>
<th>Date of response:</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Fax</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Approved</td>
<td>[ ] Approved with Changes</td>
<td>[ ] Not Approved</td>
<td>Date Reviewed: ____________________</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**APPENDIX C**

**Sample Form**

**Student Accommodation Refusal**

If a student refuses an accommodation listed in his or her IEP or 504 plan, the school should document in writing that the student refused the accommodation, and the accommodation must be offered and remain available to the student during testing. This form can be completed and placed in the student's file, and a copy sent to the parent. IEP and 504 plan teams should consider this information when making future MCAS accommodations decisions for the student. This is not a required form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name: ____________________________________________________________________</th>
<th>Date: ____________________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade: ______________________</td>
<td>SASID: __________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Name: ____________________</td>
<td>_______________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District: _______________________</td>
<td>_______________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCAS Test: _____________________</td>
<td>_______________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test Administrator: ______________</td>
<td>_______________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation(s) refused: ______</td>
<td>_______________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason for refusal: ______________</td>
<td>_______________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments: ______________________________________________________________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Keep this form on file at the school.
Do not submit this form with your school’s test materials.