

Accessibility and Accommodations Manual for the 2023–24 MCAS

**Including Participation Requirements for Students with Disabilities and English Learners**

Updated January 2024 (Updated policy on bilingual word-to-word dictionaries)

|  |
| --- |
| DESE logo Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary EducationThis document was prepared by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary EducationJeffrey C. Riley Commissioner The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, an affirmative action employer, is committed to ensuring that all of its programs and facilities are accessible to all members of the public. We do not discriminate on the basis of age, color, disability, national origin, race, religion, sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.  Inquiries regarding the Department’s compliance with Title IX and other civil rights laws may be directed to the Human Resources Director, 135 Santilli Highway, Everett, MA 02149. Phone: 781-338-6105.© 2024 Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary EducationPermission is hereby granted to copy any or all parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes. Please credit the “Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.”Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education135 Santilli Highway, Everett, MA 02149Phone 781-338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Relay 800-439-2370www.doe.mass.eduState Seal of Massachusetts |

#

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Purpose of this Manual 2

I. Overview of MCAS Accessibility and Accommodations 3

A. Introduction 3

B. Important Updates 3

C. Accessibility Features and Accommodations 4

II. Accessibility Features for All Students 5

A. Universal Accessibility Features (UFs) 5

B. Designated Accessibility Features (DFs) 6

III. MCAS Participation Requirements for Students with Disabilities 8

A. Background 8

B. Definition of a Student with a Disability 8

Students Diagnosed with Concussions 8

C. Definition of Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities 9

D. Students with Complex and Significant Disabilities Who May Require a Grade-Level or Competency Portfolio 9

IV. MCAS Accommodations for Students with Disabilities 10

A. Background 10

B. Understanding Accommodations for Students with Disabilities 10

Purpose of Test Accommodations 10

Eligibility for Test Accommodations 10

General Requirements for Test Accommodations 10

Nondisclosure Acknowledgment Forms 11

C. Selecting Accommodations for Students with Disabilities 11

Unique Accommodations Requests 12

Identifying Accommodations on the SR/PNP 12

Updating IEPs and 504 Plans 13

If a Student Refuses an Accommodation 13

D. Descriptions of MCAS Accommodations 13

Special Access Accommodations for Students with Disabilities 21

V. MCAS Participation Requirements for English Learners (ELs) 25

A. Foreign Exchange Students 25

VI. MCAS Accessibility and Accommodations for English Learners 26

A. Selecting Accessibility Features and Accommodations for EL Students 26

Decision-Making Procedures 26

Involving Students in Selecting and Using Accommodations 27

B. Accommodations for Students Who Are English Learners (ELs) 27

Appendix A: Decision-Making Tool for MCAS Participation by Students with Disabilities 30

Appendix B: Procedures for Scribing and Transcribing Student Responses 31

Guidelines for Administering the Human Scribe Accommodation (A10.1, EL4.1, SA3.1) 31

Additional Guidance on Scribing for ELA (SA3.1) 31

Guidelines for Transcribing Student Responses 32

Appendix C: Procedures for Providing the Human Read-Aloud 33

Procedures for Standard Oral Presentation 33

General Procedures 34

Appendix D: Guidelines for Using Assistive Technology as an MCAS Test Accommodation 35

Group 1: Web Extensions for Speech-to-Text and Word Prediction 35

Group 2: Assistive Technology Confirmed as Compatible with TestNav 36

Group 3: Assistive Technology Not Compatible and Requires a Separate Computer 36

Checking the Compatibility and Proper Operation of AT Prior to MCAS Testing 37

Accessing Co:Writer Universal and Read&Write Web Extensions in the TestNav Desktop App 38

Appendix E: MCAS and ACCESS for ELLs Accessibility Features and Accommodations at a Glance 40

Appendix F: Updated Policy on Bilingual Word-to-Word Dictionaries/Glossaries for ELs during MCAS Testing 44

#

# Purpose of this Manual

The purpose of this manual is to provide the accessibility and accommodations policies that apply to the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). Although the accessibility features and accommodations described here are also listed in Appendix C of the MCAS *Principal’s Administration Manual* (PAM), this manual provides valuable planning information for educators working with students with disabilities and with English learners (ELs).

**Intended Audience and Recommended Use**

Classroom teachers, special educators, 504 plan coordinators, IEP team chairs, and school administrators should familiarize themselves with the MCAS accessibility and accommodations policies in this manual in order to understand the use of supports for student participation in MCAS.

This manual provides guidance and information about the following topics:

* MCAS participation requirements for students with disabilities, ELs, and ELs with disabilities
* which students with disabilities should be considered for the MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt) based on alternate academic achievement standards
* the availability, selection, and use of
	+ *universal accessibility features*, which provide tools and supports for *all* students
	+ *designated accessibility features* intended for *all* students, but which must be authorized by the principal
	+ *test accommodations* for students with disabilities and students who are ELs

Use this manual in conjunction with the [*Guide to the Student Registration/Personal Needs Profile (SR/PNP) Process*](http://mcas.pearsonsupport.com/manuals/) to accurately assign accessibility features and accommodations to students in PearsonAccess Next. For form-dependent accommodations (text-to-speech, ASL, screen reader, Spanish/English, and compatible assistive technology forms) and web extensions, see also the new [Appendix A: PearsonAccess Next Guidance for Form-Dependent Accommodations in the Guide to the SR/PNP Process](http://mcas.pearsonsupport.com/manuals/).

Schools may wish to consult with the Department throughout the year as they plan for the use of test accommodations and other supports for students who need them; please contact the Department’s Office of Student Assessment Services at mcas@doe.mass.edu or 781-338-3625.

# I. Overview of MCAS Accessibility and Accommodations

## Introduction

State and federal law require that all students educated with Massachusetts public funds, including students with disabilities and students identified as English learners (ELs), participate in MCAS assessments scheduled for their grade levels.

The assessment options indicated on the following pages are based upon (a) accommodations research; (b) generally accepted practices and procedures currently in use for statewide assessments; (c) previous versions of MCAS accommodations policies; and (d) the recommendations of Massachusetts stakeholders who were members of the MCAS Accessibility and Accommodations Workgroup.

The application of universal design principles to the MCAS assessments, in conjunction with the accessibility and accommodations policies described in this manual, is intended to reduce stigmas associated with accessibility differences and remove barriers to participation in the MCAS assessments for *all* students, not just students with disabilities and English learners. Many accessibility features are embedded into the computer-based testing platform, and others can be readily applied to paper-based testing for students who are unable to take tests on a computer. Universal design gives local administrators autonomy in determining appropriate testing conditions within their schools.

To ensure that students receive all accessibility features and/or accommodations to which they are entitled, the Department recommends that test coordinators develop a table or spreadsheet prior to test administration that lists where, when, and with whom students will be testing, and which accessibility features and accommodations each student will need.

The following are not listed as accessibility features or accommodations in this manual because they must be provided to *all* students on MCAS tests, including students with disabilities and ELs:

* untimed test sessions until the end of the school day, as needed
* scratch paper (blank, lined, or graph paper)
* assistance as needed from a test administrator in using the computer-based testing platform (see the *Test Administrator’s Manual for Computer-Based Testing* for more information)

Furthermore, all students should have the opportunity to review the [MCAS tutorial and practice tests](http://mcas.pearsonsupport.com/student/) prior to test administration to become familiar with how to access the computer-based tests.

## Important Updates

The following are updates related to accessibility features and accommodations for 2023–24:

* Beginning with the 2023–24 school year, computer-based testing is the default format for all MCAS tests (with a paper-based edition available for students with disabilities and ELs who are unable to participate in computer-based tests). Legacy Chemistry and Technology/Engineering tests and the accommodated Kurzweil test format are no longer available and should not be listed in students’ Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).
* Color contrast and answer masking are now automatically available for all students to turn on and off at will during test administration, except for those students using the screen reader edition. There is no longer a need to select these Universal Accessibility Features (UFs) in the SR/PNP.
* As in the past, students can magnify material on their computer-based test by using the zoom in/out tool (i.e., the “Ctrl +” and “Ctrl –” key commands). However, the magnifier tool formerly embedded in TestNav has been removed.
* To provide greater clarity about which students are eligible for the MCAS-Alt, an updated definition for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities is provided in Part III of this manual.

Please note the following updates to this document for this school year:

* In Table 4, the text-to-speech accommodation for Mathematics and STE (not ELA) is now numbered as A4.
* To address questions about assistive technology, this manual now includes [Appendix D, Guidelines for Using Assistive Technology as an MCAS Accommodation](#_Appendix_C:_Guidelines).
* New to the manual this year is [Appendix E, MCAS and ACCESS for ELLs Accessibility Features and Accommodations at a Glance](#_Appendix_D:_Crosswalk). This appendix presents accessibility features and accommodations at a glance for the purpose of assigning them correctly for English learners participating in ACCESS and MCAS and adding them to the SR/PNP (for MCAS). Accessibility features and accommodations that need to be indicated in the SR/PNP are also indicated in the tables on the following pages.
* Forms that previously were included as appendices to this document are now included only as links to the Department’s website.

## Accessibility Features and Accommodations

Accessibility features and accommodations for MCAS tests are listed in the following categories:

* **Universal Accessibility Features**(UFs): Tools and supports that are available to *all* students, either on the computer-based tests or their paper-based equivalents; some may need to be requested prior to testing via SR/PNP.
* **Designated Accessibility Features**(DFs): Flexible test administration procedures that may be used with *any* student at the discretion of the principal or test coordinator
* **Accommodations** (As): Specific supports available only to students with disabilities and ELs as detailed in a student’s IEP or 504 plan
* **Special Access Accommodations** (SAs): May be provided to students who meet certain guidelines and criteria described in this document
* **English Learner Accommodations** (EAs): Accommodations available to ELs who do not have disabilities, as described in the PAM

# II. Accessibility Features for All Students

## Universal Accessibility Features (UFs)

Universal Accessibility Features are tools and supports available to *all* students on the MCAS tests and are either built into the MCAS computer-based test platform or provided by a test administrator on the computer- or paper-based test. UF2 and UF6 will automatically be available to all students in TestNav and will no longer need to be requested via the SR/PNP prior to testing.

|  |
| --- |
| Table 1. Universal Accessibility Features Available to All Students |
| **Feature #** | **Computer-Based Testing** | **Paper-Based Testing** |
| UF1 | **Highlighter tool**Four highlighter colors are offered: blue, pink, green, and orange. | **Highlighter**Colored pencils and yellow highlighters may be used, but students must use a #2 pencil only to answer all test questions. |
| UF2 | Color settings for text and background**Color contrast**Studentscan select a color combination for text and background.  |  | **Colored overlays or tinted lens(es)**  |
| UF3 | **Zoom in/out tool**Zoom in/out tool enlarges or reduces the entire screen when the student presses Ctrl + or Ctrl -  | **Magnification tool**/**device** orlow-vision aid  |
| UF4*(SR/PNP)* | **Enlarged cursor/mouse pointer tool**The student can select an enlarged and colored cursor.Examples of enlarged cursors Note:Pointers are not shown in actual size. Pointer size will differ according to the size of the computer screen. | **Enlarged pencil/modified writing instrument** |
| **Table 1. (*continued*)** |
| **Feature #** | **Computer-Based Testing** | **Paper-Based Testing** |
| UF5 | **Line reader tool** Masks text so only part of the text can be viewed at one time | **Tracking device**, such as a straight edge or similar tool |
| UF6 | **Answer masking** Student selects which answer choices will be shown on the screen | **Mask text or answer(s)** using a blank card or cutout  |
| UF7 | **Answer eliminator**Marks an “X” through each answer option the student believes is incorrect | **Use a pencil to eliminate answer choices** in test booklet (Note: The student should take care not to eliminate answer bubble options, as stray marks will lead to an incorrect score.) |
| UF8 | **Item flag/bookmark** | **Use a blank place marker** to mark a question for later review (Note: Sticky notes are *not* allowed.) |
| UF9 | **Audio aid** (e.g., amplification device)(Note: Smartphones may not be used.) | **Audio aid** (e.g., amplification device) (Note: Smartphones may not be used.)  |
| UF10 | **Notepad** for notes or calculations | **Scratch paper** is required for all students |
| UF11 | **Test administrator** **reads aloud** **selected words** (or **signs selected words**, in the case of a student who is Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing) for *Mathematics and STE only*, as requested by the student.The student may point to a **word or phrase** and request the word to be read aloud or signed. Test administrator quietly reads aloud or signs the selected word(s) or phrase; test administrator may not explain or define words. Students using this feature may be tested alongside other students in groups of any size. |
| UF12 | **Test administrator redirects the student’s attention to the test** without coaching or assisting the student to answer any questions (e.g., test administrator reminds student to stay focused; it is not permissible to say, “Add more to your response” or “Make sure to answer all questions.”) |
| UF13 | **Test administrator repeats or clarifies *general test administration directions* from the appropriate Test Administrator’s Manual scripts** to the student, as needed.  |

## Designated Accessibility Features (DFs)

Most students will be tested in their regular classroomsaccording tothe guidelines and schedule intended for all students. However, principals have the flexibility to test *any* student, including those without identified disabilities and non-ELs, using the designated accessibility features described in Table 2, as long as all requirements for testing conditions, test security, and staffing are met.

It is advisable, although not required, to include designated accessibility features in the IEP or 504 plan of a student with a disability who requires them.

| Table 2. Designated Accessibility Features Available to Any Student |
| --- |
| **Feature #** | Accessibility Feature |
| DF1 | **Small group test administration** (May include up to a total of 10 students.) |
| DF2 | **Individual (one-to-one) test administration** (Student must be tested in a separate setting.) |
| DF3 | **Frequent brief supervised breaks** |
| DF4 | **Separate or alternate test location** |
| DF5 | **Seating in a specified area** of the testing room, including the use of a study carrel |
| DF6 | **Adaptive or specialized furniture** (e.g., seating, desk, or lighting) |
| DF7 | **Noise buffer,** such as noise-canceling earmuffs/headphones or white noise (**Note:** music or other recordings may *not* be played, unless granted as a *unique accommodation* by DESE.) |
| DF8 | **Familiar test administrator** |
| DF9 | **Student reads test aloud to self**: Student must be tested in a separate setting, unless a low-volume device (e.g., a Whisperphone) is used. |
| DF10 | **Specific time of day** |
| DF11 | **Stop Testing policy**: The student should be given the opportunity to attempt each test session. If the student does not appear to be responding to test questions after a period of 15-20 minutes, the test administrator may ask if the student is finished. If so, the test administrator may collect the student’s test materials and the student may either sit quietly or be excused from the test setting.  |

# III. MCAS Participation Requirements for Students with Disabilities

## Background

This section provides guidelines for IEP team members and educators who develop 504 plans to determine how each student with a disability will participate in MCAS.

State and federal education laws mandate that *all* students with disabilities who are educated with Massachusetts public funds participate in annual statewide assessments. See the Department’s website for details on [student participation requirements](https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation.html?section=gr3-8and10).

Students with disabilities are required to participate in all MCAS assessments scheduled for students in their grade. Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who are unable to take the standard tests, even with accommodations, may instead take the MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt), which is the state assessment based on alternate achievement standards. Schools can use the table below as well as the decision-making tool in [Appendix A](#_Appendix_A:_Decision-Making) to assist in determining how students will participate in MCAS.

|  |
| --- |
| **Table 3. MCAS Participation for Students with Disabilities** |
| **Option 1** | The student participates in standard MCAS testing under routine testing conditions. |
| **Option 2**  | The student participates in standard MCAS testing using necessary accessibility features and accommodations to demonstrate knowledge and skills (see [section IV](#_IV.__MCAS)). |
| **Option 3** | The student meets the definition of “students with the most significant cognitive disabilities” (see section D) and participates in the MCAS-Alt.  |

## Definition of a Student with a Disability

For the purpose of MCAS participation, a student with a disability is defined as a student with an approved IEP provided under the Individuals with Disabilities EducationImprovement Act of 2004 and the Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71B, or a plan provided under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (i.e., a 504 plan).

Only a student’s IEP team or 504 plan coordinator can make decisions about which test accommodations are appropriate for the student and whether the student should take the standard or alternate assessment. Assessment decisions for students with disabilities are made on an annual basis in each subject area for each student and must be listed in the student’s IEP or 504 plan. The principal is responsible for ensuring that each student is assessed using the test format and accommodations listed in the student’s IEP or 504 plan.

### Students Diagnosed with Concussions

The Department has issued [guidelines](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/accessibility/concussions.html) and MCAS testing policies for students who are returning to school after being diagnosed with a concussion. Please refer to this information before making decisions about MCAS testing for a student who has had a concussion.

## Definition of Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities

Massachusetts defines “students with the most significant cognitive disabilities” as students who meet **all** of the following criteria:

* have cognitive disabilities evidenced by significant delays in attaining age-level academic achievement standards, even with systematic, extensive individually designed instruction, related services, and modifications
* have cognitive disabilities that significantly impact their educational performance and ability to apply learning from one setting to another
* require extensive, direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains on the challenging state academic content standards for the grade in which the student is enrolled
* perform significantly below average in general cognitive functioning and adaptive behavior. **“Significantly below average” is defined as a student functioning two or more standard deviations below the mean on commonly accepted norm-referenced assessments in both cognitive functioning and adaptive behavior** *(e.g., two or more adaptive skill areas such as daily living skills, communication, self-care, social skills, and academic skills).*

Massachusetts’s definition of “students with the most significant cognitive disabilities” applies to a small number of students with disabilities **for purposes of their participation in statewide alternate assessments** (i.e., MCAS-Alt). IEP teams must consider DESE’s guidance when determining whether a student satisfies this definition and is therefore eligible to participate in an alternate assessment.

In accordance with federal regulations, “the identification of a student as having a particular disability as defined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or as an English learner does **not** determine whether a student is a student with the most significant cognitive disabilities.” 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(d)(1)(i) (emphasis added). Moreover, “a student with the most significant cognitive disabilities is **not** identified solely on the basis of the student’s previous low academic achievement, or the student’s previous need for accommodations to participate in general State or districtwide assessments.” 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(d)(1)(ii) (emphasis added).

## Students with Complex and Significant Disabilities Who May Require a Grade-Level or Competency Portfolio

When the nature and complexity of a student’s disability present significant challenges to standardized computer- or paper-based testing, even with the use of accommodations, and the **student is working at or close to grade-level expectations**, the student’s IEP team or 504 plan coordinator may determine that the student should participate in MCAS by completing the grade-level (grades 3-8) or competency (high school) portfolio in one or more subjects. More information on grade-level and competency portfolios is available in the [MCAS Grade-Level and Competency Portfolio Manual](https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/cd-reqs/default.html)*.*

Below are circumstances for which a grade-level or competency portfolio may be appropriate:

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

# IV. MCAS Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

## A. Background

The information in this section is intended to guide decision-making regarding the selection of accommodations for MCAS testing. As required by [34 CFR 300.160](https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/b/300.160), the state provides districts with these guidelines for the provision of appropriate accommodations on the MCAS tests.

## B. Understanding Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

### Purpose of Test Accommodations

A test accommodation is a change in the way a test is administered or the way in which a student responds to test questions. Test accommodations are intended to accomplish the following:

* offset the effects of the student’s disability and remove barriers to participation in the assessment
* provide the necessary conditions for a student to demonstrate knowledge and skills effectively on statewide assessments
* provide the opportunity to report test results for students who require accommodations
* provide test results that are comparable to those of students who did not receive accommodations
* yield results that do not affect the validity or reliability of the interpretation of scores for their intended purposes

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

### Eligibility for Test Accommodations

**ELIGIBLE: students with identified disabilities who are served by an IEP or 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 which MCAS accommodation(s) a student will receive, and the IEP must be approved by the parent/guardian (or student over age 18) before an accommodation may be used by the student. Similarly, a student’s 504 plan must already be in place or under development. 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 the accommodation may be provided. It is also advisable (though not required) to list any *designated accessibility features* (DFs—see Table 2) in students’ IEPs and 504 plans to ensure these will be provided. IEP teams and 504 plan coordinators should be trained annually on these guidelines.

**NOT ELIGIBLE: students without identified disabilities who are not served by an IEP or 504 plan**

A student who does not have a documented disability and is not served by either an IEP or 504 planis not eligibleto receive accommodations on MCAS tests, regardless of whether the student already receives support or accommodations during classroom instruction.

### General Requirements for Test Accommodations

Accommodations are 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:

* The student **has a disability** that is documented in an IEP or 504 plan and **requires** **the use of** **one or more accommodations** to participate in MCAS testing.
* The accommodation is listed in this manual (or prior written approval has been obtained from the Department for a unique accommodation); the **accommodation is** **listed** inthe student’s IEP under “State- and District-Wide Assessment” and the **IEP** **has been signed** by the student’s parent/guardian prior to the date of test administration; or the accommodation is listed as an MCAS accommodation in a **504 plan** developed for the student.
* 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, and the student is **comfortable and familiar** with its use. Use of an accommodation during routine instruction does not *necessarily* qualify a student to receive the same accommodation during MCAS testing; for example, the student must meet additional criteria to receive a **special access accommodation** on an MCAS test.
* If a **special access accommodation** will be provided, the student meets all of the criteria to receive the accommodation, as shown in Table 6.

Accommodationsmay **not** do any of the following:

* alter, explain, simplify, paraphrase, or eliminate any test question, reading passage, writing prompt, or multiple-choice answer option
* provide verbal or nonverbal clues or suggestions that hint at or give away the correct response to the student
* contradict test administration requirements or result in a violation of test security, such as in these examples:
	+ Test questions may not be modified, reordered, or reformatted in any way for any student.
	+ Paper-based tests may not be photocopied, photographed, scanned, altered, or duplicated.
	+ Screen shots of computer-based tests may not be taken or reproduced.
	+ English-language dictionaries are **not** permitted for any student on MCAS tests.

If the above conditions have been met and the accommodation is listed in the IEP or 504 plan, the accommodation(s) **must be provided** to the student during MCAS testing. If an accommodation is provided that does not meet the conditions stated above or that is not listed in a student’s plan, the student’s test score **may be** **invalidated**.

In the event a test accommodation is provided that was *not* listed in the student’s IEP or 504 plan, or if a student was *not* provided a test accommodation listed in the plan, the school should immediately contact the Department at 781-338-3625 or by email at mcas@doe.mass.edu.

### Nondisclosure Acknowledgment Forms

Test administrators for students using certain accommodations must sign an [MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment](https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/forms/) prior to testing. The form can be downloaded from the DESE website and is required for the administration of the following accommodations:

**A2, A3.1, A3.2, A3.3, A5, A6.1, A8, A10.1, A10.2, A11, A12, A13, A14, A15, SA1.2, SA2, SA3.1, SA3.2, SA6, EL3.2, EL4.1, EL4.2**

## Selecting Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Accommodations are intended to offset the effects of a disability to allow a student to participate effectively in MCAS testing. When selecting testing accommodations, educators should do the following:

* Determine the learning challenges the student is experiencing.
	+ Look at the student’s classroom performance, not just the nature or type of disability.
* Brainstorm the use of various accommodations and universal and designated accessibility features with IEP team members and other adults familiar with the student.
	+ What supports were used successfully with students who have similar learning profiles?
* Try out the accessibility features and accommodation(s) in different instructional and assessment settings and make adjustments as needed.
	+ Be sure the student is comfortable using the accessibility feature or accommodation and becomes familiar with its use.
	+ Encourage the student to become familiar with the basic functionality of the computer-based testing platform prior to testing through taking online [practice tests](http://mcas.pearsonsupport.com/student/) and viewing the [student tutorial](http://mcas.pearsonsupport.com/tutorial/) prior to test administration.
* Evaluate whether the accessibility feature or accommodation addresses the student’s need.
	+ If not, revise the plan to provide accommodation(s) and supports accordingly.
* If the accessibility feature or accommodation addresses the challenge,
	+ determine whether the accessibility feature or accommodation is allowed for MCAS testing in that specific subject area, since some accommodations are available for ELA only (see Tables 1, 2, 4–6); and
	+ develop or amend the IEP or 504 plan accordingly, listing each accommodation (required) or accessibility feature (optional) for the specific MCAS test(s).

### Unique Accommodations Requests

If a student with a disability or an English learner requires an accommodation that is not listed in Tables 1, 2, 4-6, or 8, the school may request approval from the Department to use a unique accommodation.

Unique accommodations may **not** do any of the following:

* fundamentally change the test or the construct being measured by the test
* assist the student in obtaining the answers to test questions
* violate test security requirements

The school may request approval (via email) for the use of a unique accommodation by submitting the request to mcas@doe.mass.edu at least two weeks prior to testing. If approved by the Department, the IEP or 504 plan of the student must be amended.

### Identifying Accommodations on the SR/PNP

Accommodations listed with the *(SR/PNP)* designation in the tables below **must be identified in the Student Registration/Personal Needs Profileprior to the start of testing**.

**The following form-dependent accommodations must be assigned correctly before testing. If not assigned correctly, a student’s test will need to be stopped and a new test will need to be set up, and the student may need to retake a portion of the test.** These accommodations are listed with the  symbol below. More information about these accommodations is available in Appendix A of the [Guide to the SR/PNP Process](http://mcas.pearsonsupport.com/manuals/).

**Form-dependent accommodations for CBT:**

* + Text-to-speech
	+ Screen reader
	+ ASL video edition of the grade 10 Mathematics test and June high school Science tests
	+ Spanish/English edition of the grade 10 Mathematics test/retest and high school Science tests
	+ Compatible assistive technology
	+ Human read-aloud
	+ Human signer

**Form-dependent accommodations for PBT:**

* + Large-print
	+ Braille

**Instructions for completing the SR/PNP are available in the *Guide to the SR/PNP Process,* which is available at** [**mcas.pearsonsupport.com/manuals/**](http://mcas.pearsonsupport.com/manuals/) **(click on the “PearsonAccess Next” drop-down).**

### Updating IEPs and 504 Plans

IEP and 504 teams must reconvene at least annually, so that plans reflect the most current needs of each student. The teams should decide which, if any, accommodations and accessibility features the student needs for MCAS testing and whether the student requires a paper-based rather than a computer-based test, and, if so, in which subjects. The principal is responsible for ensuring that students are provided with the test accommodations listed in their IEPs or 504 plans during testing.

For ELs with disabilities, accommodation decisions should be made by the student’s language-based team—an informal team of adults familiar with the EL student—and documented in writing using the [sample Documentation of Accommodations for an EL Student (or similar) form](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/forms/) provided on the DESE website.

### If a Student Refuses an Accommodation

If a student refuses to use an accommodation listed in their plan during testing, the school should document in writing that the student was offered an accommodation but refused it, and they should keep the documentation on file. The student should be told that the accommodation will remain available during testing if they need it. The student should *not* be asked to sign an agreement acknowledging that they have refused an accommodation, nor should they be asked to waive their right to receive an accommodation that is listed in their IEP or 504 plan. An optional [sample Student Accommodation Refusal form](https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/forms/) is available in on the DESE website.

If the IEP team agrees that the listed accommodation is no longer needed by the student, the accommodation should be removed from the plan at the next scheduled meeting (or should be listed in the plan “as requested by the student”). Written approval must be obtained from the parent/guardian (or student over 18 years of age) for new or amended IEPs before a change in accommodations can go into effect.

Similarly, 504 plans must reflect only those accommodations that are required by the student as determined by educators familiar with the student. Consent by a parent/guardian is *not* required for a new or amended 504 plan, although the parent/guardian must be notified of any changes.

## Descriptions of MCAS Accommodations

Tables 4­­–6 and 8 list the MCAS accommodations available to students with disabilities on the computer-based test, and where applicable, the comparable accommodation on the paper-basedtest. MCAS accommodations are grouped into the following categories:

* **Test Presentation:** changes to the format in which the test is presented to the student (Table 4)
* **Response:** changes to the procedures, supports, or devices used to facilitate a student’s response to test questions (Table 5)
* **Special Access:** accommodations intended for a small number of students with significant delays in reading, writing, or performing calculations to offset the effects of a disability that would otherwise severely limit or prevent their participation in the assessment, and that may affect the interpretation of the test results (Table 6)
* **EL Accommodations:** available to ELs with and without disabilities (Table 8)

| Table 4. Test Presentation Accommodations for Students with Disabilities |
| --- |
| # | **Computer-Based Test** | **Paper-Based Test** |
| A1*(SR/PNP)* | **Paper-based edition** of the MCAS test may be administered as an accommodation to a student who is unable to use a computer or take the computer-based test due to a disability. (**Note:** This must be listed as an accommodation in the student’s IEP or 504 plan.) | N/A |
| A2*(SR/PNP)* | N/A(See UF3 and UF4 in Table 1 for information on screen magnification and alternate cursor/mouse.) | **Large print** (approximately 18-point font size on 11x17-inch paper):* Large-print special instructions will accompany the large-print test.
* The student may write answers directly in the **standard-size test & answer booklet or in the large-print booklet**. If students write answers in the large-print booklet, all responses **must be transcribed** verbatim, either by the student at the time of testing or by a test administrator anytime during the testing window, into the student’s standard booklet, so that the student will receive credit.
* IEPs and 504 plans should indicate whether students will record their responses in the standard-size booklet directly or whether the test administrator will need to transcribe the student’s work into the standard booklet.
* Warning with solid fill See Appendix A of the [Guide to the SR/PNP Process](http://mcas.pearsonsupport.com/manuals/) for important information about assigning this accommodation.
* Test administrators for students using accommodation A2 must sign an [nondisclosure agreement](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/forms) before administering this accommodation.
 |

|  |
| --- |
| **Table 4. (*continued*)** |
| **#** | **Computer-Based Test** | **Paper-Based Test** |
| A3.1*(SR/PNP)* A3.2*(SR/PNP)*A3.3*(SR/PNP)* | A3.1– **Screen reader**: ONLY for a student who is **blind** and uses the assistive technology program JAWS or NVDA* A separate hard-copy Braille edition test with the appropriate Braille graphics will automatically be sent for this accommodation.
* All responses must be entered onscreen, either by the student or test administrator.

Warning with solid fill See Appendix A of the [Guide to the SR/PNP Process](http://mcas.pearsonsupport.com/manuals/) for important information about assigning this accommodation. Test administrators for students using accommodation A3.1 must sign an [MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/forms) before administering this accommodation. | A3.2– **Braille edition** (hard copy):* All answers must be either **scribed** or **transcribed** verbatim into the student’s standard booklet and returned according to instructions in the PAM so the student will receive credit.
* Braille special instructions will accompany the Braille test.

Warning with solid fill See Appendix A of the [Guide to the SR/PNP Process](http://mcas.pearsonsupport.com/manuals/) for important information about assigning this accommodation.Test administrators for students using accommodation A3.2 must sign an [MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/forms) before administering this accommodation. |
| A3.3– **Assistive Technology:** Students who are not blind but use JAWS, NVDA, and ZoomText may use this form to allow their assistive technology program to integrate with the computer-based test. A separate hard-copy Braille edition test will not be automatically sent; schools that need one should call the MCAS Service Center to request one.Warning with solid fillSee Appendix A of the [Guide to the SR/PNP Process](http://mcas.pearsonsupport.com/manuals/) for important information about assigning this accommodation.Test administrators for students using accommodation 3.3 must sign an [MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/forms) before administering this accommodation. |
| Note for A3.1, A3.2, and A3.3**Previewing Braille test content by test administrators**: Under secure conditions supervised by the principal, Braille test administrators may review Braille test materials up to four days prior to testing once they are received by the school for the purpose of preparing to orient the student. Test materials may not be removed from the school.  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Table 4. (*continued*)** |
| **#** | **Computer-Based Test** | **Paper-Based Test** |
| A4*(SR/PNP)*(Note new number) | **Text-to-speech (TTS):** computer reads text aloud for **Mathematics and STE (*not* ELA)*** For students who require that text be read aloud, IEP teams should consider **whether TTS is preferable to a human reader (or vice versa)** and list this in each student’s IEP or 504 plan (e.g., “text-to-speech is preferable, but human reader is acceptable”).
* TTS may be used either with headphones or without headphones in a separate setting.
* Students should view the tutorial and take an online TTS practice test prior to testing.
* Note: TTS for ELAis a [**special access accommodation**](#_9._Special_Access)(SA1.1). See Table 6 for guidelines and criteria to receive this accommodation.

Warning with solid fillSee Appendix A of the [Guide to the SR/PNP Process](http://mcas.pearsonsupport.com/manuals/) for important information about assigning this accommodation.  |
| A5*(SR/PNP)* | **Human read-aloud**for **Mathematics and STE (*not* ELA)*** For students who require text read aloud, IEP teams should consider **whether TTS is preferable to a human reader (or vice versa)** and list this in each student’s IEP or 504 plan (e.g., “text-to-speech is preferable, but human reader is acceptable”).
* A human reader may read aloud the student’s test. Note that for computer-based testing, test administrators will need their own device next to the student to sign in to their own version of the test using a proctor testing ticket. No responses should be entered into the test using a proctor testing ticket, as the responses will not be saved. (Students will sign in and respond using their student testing tickets.)
* Note: Reading aloud the ELA tests is a [**special access accommodation**](#_Special_Access_Accommodations)(SA1). See Table 6 for guidelines and criteria to receive this accommodation.

Review [Appendix C: Procedures for Providing the Human Read-Aloud Accommodation](#_Appendix_C:_Procedures). Warning with solid fillSee Appendix A of the [Guide to the SR/PNP Process](http://mcas.pearsonsupport.com/manuals/) for important information about assigning this accommodation.Test administrators for students using accommodation A5 must sign an [MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/forms) before administering this accommodation. |
| A6.1*(SR/PNP)* | **Human signer** for the **Mathematics, STE tests, and ELA test questions** (but ***not*** ELA reading passages): * The test must be signed exactly as it appears. The signer may not provide assistance to the student regarding the meaning of words, intent of any test question, or how to respond to any test questions. The signer may finger-spell key words in addition to providing the sign for a term. The signer may sign emphasis only when indicated by bold or italicized text.
* The test must be administered in a **separate setting**, either **individually** or to a **small group of 2–5 students**, all of whom are receiving the human signer accommodation.
* If preferred, selected words, phrases, or sections of the **Mathematics and STE tests** may be signed to the student, as requested, rather than signing the entire test.
* **Signing the ELA reading passages** is a special access accommodation (SA2). See Table 6 for guidelines and criteria to receive this accommodation.

**Previewing test content by human signers**: Under secure conditions supervised by the principal, interpreters may review test materials up to four days prior to testing once they become available, either online or shipped to the school, for the purpose of preparing to sign the test. Test materials may not be removed from the school nor accessed online outside of the school.  |
| **Table 4. (*continued*)** |
| **#** | **Computer-Based Test** | **Paper-Based Test** |
|  | Warning with solid fillSee Appendix A of the [Guide to the SR/PNP Process](http://mcas.pearsonsupport.com/manuals/) for important information about assigning this accommodation.Test administrators and interpreters for students using accommodation A6.1 must sign an [MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/forms) before administering this accommodation. |
| A6.2*(SR/PNP)* | **ASL video** editions of the computer-based spring 2024 MCAS grade 10 Mathematics and June high school Science tests (**not** **available** for February high school Science or the retests in November and March):* An embedded ASL video is built into these computer-based tests.
* Students may turn on, turn off, pause, and control the signing speed of the ASL video. The size of the ASL video may be adjusted (using the CTRL+ or - keys) and it may be moved around on the computer screen.
* Students should view the tutorial and take **online ASL practice tests** prior to testing to become familiar with the features of the ASL video player. For students who are unable to use the ASL video, but have this accommodation listed in their plans, a human signer may be substituted.

Warning with solid fillSee Appendix A of the [Guide to the SR/PNP Process](http://mcas.pearsonsupport.com/manuals/) for important information about assigning this accommodation. | N/A (See A6.1 for Human Signer) |
| A7 | **Human signer for test directions** **only** (from the appropriate Test Administrator’s Manual scripts) for a student who is Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing |
| A8 | **Track test items** by assisting the student to move from one test question to the nextTest administrators for students using accommodation A8 must sign an [MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/forms) before administering this accommodation. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Table 5. Response Accommodations for Students with Disabilities** |
| # | **Computer-Based Test** | **Paper-Based Test** |
| A9*(SR/PNP)* | **Use of approved graphic organizers, checklists, or supplemental reference sheets**: **Only the approved ELA organizers and supplemental mathematics reference sheets** [made available by the Department](https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/accessibility/organizers/) may be used as accommodations on ELA and Mathematics. These have been developed for use on MCAS tests based on the most current versions of the curriculum framework standards measured by the tests, the MCAS test design, expectations for how student essays and text-based responses will be scored, and educator input. Exception: ELA graphic organizers *without* text (e.g., paper with only lines, arrows and dots) may be used without Department approval by students who have this accommodation listed in their IEP or 504 plans. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Table 5. (*continued*)** |
| **#** | **Computer-Based Test** | **Paper-Based Test** |
|  | * For STE, students may use a [sample reference sheet](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/accessibility/organizers/) or schools may submit a customized reference sheet for Department approval, as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **MCAS Test Administration** | **Reference Sheet Submission Deadline** |
| February High School Science | **January 5, 2024** |
| Spring Grades 5 and 8 STE | **March 8, 2024** |
| June High School Science | **April 26, 2024** |

* Individualized reference sheets approved prior to the 2021–22 school year **must be resubmitted for approval** for use on the 2024 STE tests.
* All science reference sheets submitted for approval must be accompanied by a completed [cover sheet](https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/accessibility/organizers/).
 |
| A10.1*(SR/PNP)* | **Scribe responses (A10.1)for Mathematics and STE (*not* ELA)**A **human scribe** will record the student’s responses verbatim (i.e., as dictated or signed by the student) *at the time of testing*, either onscreen (computer-based test) or in the student’s booklet (paper-based test)*.* The student must be tested in a separate setting. (See [Appendix B](#_Appendix_B:_Procedures) for specific guidance on providing the scribe accommodation.)For students unable to use their hand to respond to test questions due to a **recent injury or recovery from surgery**, the scribe accommodation may be provided if either of the following criteria are met: * this accommodation is listed in an approved plan (Department approval is not required); or
* a 504 plan is under development, and the 504 plan coordinator is responsible for writing and agreeing upon the need for the scribe accommodation before providing it to the student.

Scribing responses for ELA is a **special access accommodation** (SA3.1). See Table 6 for guidelines and criteria to receive this accommodation.Test administrators for students using accommodation A10.1 must sign an [MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/forms) before administering this accommodation. |
| A10.2*(SR/PNP)* | **Speech-to-text (A10.2) for Mathematics and STE (*not* ELA).** Students may use a voice recognition program (other than a smartphone) that generates responses by converting speech into text. * Students using the speech-to-text accommodation for computer-based tests will be able to use an **embedded speech-to-text web extension** that functions within TestNav. The Web Extension assistive technology (AT) SR/PNP designation must be selected in PAN for this embedded tool.
* **The web extension for speech-to-text does not function on Mathematics or Introductory Physics computer-based tests,** as it is incompatible with the Equation Editor answer box used for constructed responses. Refer to [Appendix D](#_Appendix_D:_Guidelines) for a step-by-step guide to accessing and using this feature.
 |
| **Table 5. (*continued*)** |
| **#** | **Computer-Based Test** | **Paper-Based Test** |
|  | * For Mathematics tests and the Introductory Physics test, students may need to use their own AT speech-to-text device (separate from their testing device). If students use their own AT devices, all assessment content must be deleted from these devices after the test for security purposes.
* Speech-to-text technology requires that the student go back through all generated text to correct errors in transcription, including use of writing conventions; thus, prior experience with this accommodation is essential.
* Students who use speech-to-text will need headphones/Whisperphones unless they are tested individually in a separate setting.

**Note:** Speech-to-text for ELA is a **special access accommodation** (SA3.2). See Table 6 for guidelines and criteria to receive this accommodation.Warning with solid fillSee Appendix A of the [Guide to the SR/PNP Process](http://mcas.pearsonsupport.com/manuals/) for important information about assigning this accommodation. Test administrators for students using accommodation A10.2 must sign an [MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/forms) before administering this accommodation. |
| A11 | **Responses recorded by student on special paper:*** Responses **must be transcribed** into the student’s computer-based test or test & answer booklet by a test administrator *anytime during the testing window*.
* **Students who transcribe** their own responses must do so *during the test session* and must finish on the day in which the test session began.

See [Appendix B](#_Appendix_B:_Procedures) for guidelines on transcribing student responses.Test administrators for students using accommodation A11 must sign an [MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/forms) before administering this accommodation. |
| A12*(SR/PNP)* | N/A | **Typed responses:** * Responses must be printed out, one per page, and inserted in the student’s test & answer booklet with all required header information typed on each page (see the [PAM](https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/admin.html)).
* Schools should not also transcribe students’ responses into their test & answer booklet.
* After being printed, responses must be deleted from the device.
* Test administrators for students using accommodation A12 must sign an [MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/forms) before administering this accommodation.
 |
| A13 | **Student records responses** on a device (other than a smartphone) for the purpose of playing back and transcribing the recorded segment(s). Student may use text-to-speech software or an audio recording device to listen to their draft response. Responses must be deleted from the device once they have been transcribed into the student’s test. Test administrators for students using accommodation A13 must sign an [MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/forms) before administering this accommodation.  |
| **Table 5. (*continued*)** |
| **#** | **Computer-Based Test** | **Paper-Based Test** |
| A14 | **Responses signed onto video (for a student who is Deaf or Hard-of Hearing)**, then transcribed by the student onscreen or into the test & answer booklet during playback. The video must be deleted after transcription.Test administrators for students using accommodation A14 must sign an [MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/forms) before administering this accommodation. |
| A15 | **Monitor placement of responses** in the appropriate area onscreen or in the test & answer booklet by the test administratorTest administrators for students using accommodation A15 must sign an [MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/forms) before administering this accommodation. |
| A16 | **Refreshable Braille Display/Braille note-taker** (specific external device used in conjunction with screen reader for student who is blind or has a vision impairment) A hard-copy edition of the Braille test must also be ordered and the screen reader test must be selected. | **Braille note-taker** (specific external device used in conjunction with hard-copy Braille test)Braille notes should be placed in the school’s return shipment. |
| A17 | **Braille writer** (specific external device used in conjunction with screen reader and hard-copy Braille test) A hard-copy edition of the Braille test must also be ordered and the screen reader test must be selected. | **Braille writer** (specific external device used in conjunction with the hard-copy Braille test). A printout of each response may be generated and inserted in the student’s test & answer booklet, with all required information on each page (also see the [PAM](https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/admin.html)). |

### Special Access Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Special access accommodations are intended for use by a *very small number of students with significant delays in reading, writing, or performing calculations*  who would not otherwise be able to access the test because a disability severely limits or prevents them from performing the skill in question. Teams must exercise caution when considering whether a student requires a special access accommodation, since these accommodations alter part of what the test is designed to measure. Teams must carefully review the guidelines and criteria described for each special access accommodation listed in Table 6.

Test results for students who take the test using special access accommodations should be interpreted with caution. Parents/guardians and schools should not infer that the student has expertise in the skill being accommodated. A notation will designate the results of students who use a specialaccess accommodation.

The Department continues to review each district’s rate of use of special access accommodations.

Although test accommodations should generally be consistent with accommodations used for instruction, the use of a special access accommodation during instruction does not automatically qualify a student to receive the same accommodation on an MCAS test, unless the student meets the guidelines and criteria described on the following pages.

IEP and 504 teams should make consistent, appropriate, and defensible decisions regarding the use of special access accommodations for each student based on locally administered diagnostic assessments. Teams should amend the IEPs and 504 plans of students who have been previously designated for special access accommodations, but who do not meet the criteria listed in Table 6.

|  |
| --- |
| **Table 6. Special Access Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**  |
| # | **Computer- and Paper-Based Tests** |
| SA1.1*(SR/PNP)*andSA1.2*(SR/PNP)* | **Text-to-speech** (SA1.1)**or human read-aloud** (SA1.2) **for ELA (*not* Math or STE)**, including oral presentation of test questions, response options, and passages* Text-to-speech may be used either with or without headphones. If headphones are used, the student may be tested in a typical-sized group. If headphones are not used, the student must be tested individually.
* A human reader may either read aloud from the **computer-based** **test** (logged in to a nearby computer or sitting next to the student) or from the **paper-based test**. A human reader may read aloud to a group of up to five students.

This accommodation is intended for a very small number of students with disabilities that **severely limit or prevent them from reading**, as documented in locally administered diagnostic evaluations. To receive the text-to-speech or human read-aloud accommodation for ELA tests, the student must meet **all** of the following criteria:* be **virtually unable to read**, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so(i.e., the student is at the beginning stages of learning to read, and not simply reading below grade level), as determined by locally administered diagnostic evaluations (reading below the second grade-level)
* receive **ongoing intervention** to learn the skill of reading
* use this accommodation routinely (except during instruction in learning to read)

The human read aloud (SA1.2) may also be provided to a student who is blind or has a visual impairment and uses a screen reader and/or is unable to use Braille on the tests and retests listed above. If the student will use a screen reader and if the screen reader accommodation is indicated, a separate hard copy Braille test edition will be sent to the school to allow the student to access the appropriate Braille graphics (see accommodation A3.1). |
| **Table 6. (*continued*)** |
| **#** | **Computer- and Paper-Based Tests** |
|  | Warning with solid fillSee Appendix A of the [Guide to the SR/PNP Process](http://mcas.pearsonsupport.com/manuals/) for important information about assigning this accommodation.Test administrators for students using special accommodation SA1.2 must sign an [MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/forms) before administering this accommodation. |
| SA2*(SR/PNP)* | **Human signer for ELA (*not* Math or STE)**, including reading passages, questions, and answer options:This accommodation is intended for students who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing and who are **severely limited or prevented from reading**, as documented in locally administered diagnostic evaluations. The student must meet **all** the following criteria:* be **virtually unable to read** (i.e., decode text), even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so(i.e., the student is at the very beginning stages of learning to read, and not simply reading below grade level), due to a documented disability and/or history of early and prolonged lack of exposure to and use of language
* use this accommodation routinely, except during reading instruction
* receive ongoing intervention to learn the skill

The student must be tested in a group of no more than five students, unless approval is obtained from the Department to increase the group size in rare circumstances.Warning with solid fillSee Appendix A of the [Guide to the SR/PNP Process](http://mcas.pearsonsupport.com/manuals/) for important information about assigning this accommodation. Test administrators for students using accommodation SA2 must sign an [MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/forms) before administering this accommodation. |
| SA3.1*(SR/PNP)*  | **Scribe responses for ELA (*not* Math or STE)**:**A human scribe** (SA3.1) will record the student’s responses verbatim (i.e., as dictated by the student) *at the time of testing*, either onscreen (computer-based test) or in the student’s test & answer booklet (paper-based test)*.* This accommodation is intended for students who have the following:* documented significant motor or processing difficulties
* a recent injury (such as a broken hand or arm) that makes it difficult to produce responses.

For many of these students, dictating to a scribe is the only way to demonstrate their composition skills. Students will dictate their responses to a human, who will then record the students’ responses verbatim. Students should be allowed to develop planning notes via the scribe and to view the scribed material. The student must be tested in a separate setting.See [Appendix B](#_Appendix_B:_Procedures) for specific guidance on providing the scribe accommodation.Test administrators for students using accommodation SA3.1 must sign an [MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/forms) before administering this accommodation. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Table 6. (*continued*)** |
| **#** | **Computer- and Paper-Based Tests** |
| SA3.2*(SR/PNP)* | **Speech-to-text (SA3.2) for ELA (*not* Math or STE)**:Students use a speech recognition program that converts voice to written text. * Students taking the computer-based test will be able to use an embedded speech-to-text web extension that functions within TestNav. This embedded assistive technology will allow students to dictate their responses directly into the computer-based test without using a separate adjacent (external) device. Refer to[Appendix D](#_APPENDIX_C)for a step-by-step guide on accessing and using this feature.
	+ The Web Extension AT SR/PNP designation must be selected in PearsonAccess Nextfor this embedded tool.
	+ If students use their own AT devices, all assessment content must be deleted from these devices after the test for security purposes.
* Speech-to-text technology requires that the student go back through all generated text to correct errors in transcription, including use of writing conventions; thus, prior experience with this accommodation is essential.
* Students who use speech-to-text will need headphones/Whisperphones, unless they are teste individually in a separate setting.

This accommodation is intended for students who have documented significant motor or processing difficulties, or who have had a recent injury (such as a broken hand or arm) that makes it difficult to produce responses and need to dictate their responses into a voice/speech-to-text device. For many of these students, dictating is the only way to demonstrate their composition skills. Students should be allowed to develop planning notes and to view the dictated material. Warning with solid fillSee Appendix A of the [Guide to the SR/PNP Process](http://mcas.pearsonsupport.com/manuals/) for important information about assigning this accommodation. Test administrators for students using accommodation SA3.2 must sign an [MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/forms) before administering this accommodation. |
| SA4*(SR/PNP)* | **Calculation device or other mathematics tool** (including addition/subtraction or multiplication/division tables; or manipulatives) on a *noncalculator session* for Mathematics: Students taking the computer-based test will be able to use an embedded calculator (or a handheld calculator). This accommodation is intended for a small number of students with documented disabilities that **severely limit or prevent them from performing basic calculations** without a calculation device or other mathematics tool, as documented in locally administered diagnostic evaluations, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so.The student must meet **all** of the following criteria:* be **virtually unable to calculate** (i.e., unable to perform single-digit addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division without a calculation device or other mathematics tool)
* use the calculation device or tool during routine instruction in mathematics; and
* receive ongoing intervention to learn the skill.

The student’s IEP or 504 plan must specify which calculation device or tool will be used (e.g., calculator or multiplication table). |
| **Table 6. (*continued*)** |
| **#** | **Computer- and Paper-Based Tests** |
|  | Manipulatives and other mathematics tools (excluding calculators and arithmetic tables) must be approved by the Department prior to their use on MCAS tests. Please contact Student Assessment Services at 781-338-3625 or mcas@doe.mass.edu to request approval.Students using handheld calculators to fulfill SA4 should be tested in their own group to minimize confusion during test administration. |
| SA5*(SR/PNP)* | **Spell-checker for ELA**,including an external spell-checking device for the paper-based test; or in conjunction with the typed response accommodation for the paper-based test:This accommodation is intended for a small number of students with disabilities that **severely limit or** **prevent them from spelling correctly**, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so. The student must meet **all** of the following criteria: * be **unable** **to spell simple words** (i.e., at the beginning stages of learning how to spell), as documented by locally administered diagnostic evaluations
* produce understandable written work only when provided this accommodation, which the student uses during routine instruction
* receive ongoing intervention to learn the skill

The student may *not* use grammar check or access the internet during the test. |
| SA6*(SR/PNP)* | **Word prediction for ELA**, which provide a choice of frequently used words after the student types the first few letters of a word:Students using the word prediction special access accommodation for the computer-based ELA test will be able to use an embedded word prediction web extension that functions within TestNav. This embedded assistive technology will allow students to use word prediction assistive technology within TestNav without using a separate, adjacent (external) device. Refer to[Appendix D](#_APPENDIX_C)for a step-by-step guide on accessing and using this feature.For paper-based tests, a word prediction application must be used at a separate external computer station, and a test administrator or the student must transcribe the selected word(s) into the student’s test & answer booklet. (See [Appendix B](#_Appendix_B:_Procedures) for information and guidelines on transcribing student responses.) This accommodation is intended for a small number of students who meet **both** of the following criteria:* have a disability that **severely** **limits or** **prevents them from recalling and processing language** in order to generate written responses
* can access written expression only through the use of word prediction software, application, or device during routine instruction in order to generate written responses

During testing, internet access must be turned off/restricted; and functions that *automatically* select words for the student must be turned off.Warning with solid fillSee Appendix A of the [Guide to the SR/PNP Process](http://mcas.pearsonsupport.com/manuals/) for important information about assigning this accommodation.Test administrators for students using accommodation SA6 must sign an [MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/forms) before administering this accommodation. |

# V. MCAS Participation Requirements for English Learners (ELs)

ELs in grades 3–8 must participate in allMCAS tests scheduled for their grade, regardless of the language program or services they are receiving or the amount of time they have been in the United States, with one exception: Spring 2024 ELA testing is *optional* forELs who enrolled in U.S. schools **after March 1, 2023,** and who were not reported in the March 2023 SIMS report. If a first-year EL participates in ELA testing, results are reported for diagnostic purposes only.

Grade 10 EL students must participate in ELA testing, with the same exceptions for first-year ELs as noted above. Grade 10 ELs must also participate in the grade 10 Mathematics test. EL students in high school must participate in one of the high school Science tests by the end of grade 10.

In addition, all EL students are required to participate in the ACCESS for ELLs tests to comply with federal and state laws.

|  |
| --- |
| **Table 7. EL Participation Requirements for Spring 2024 MCAS Tests** |
|  | **Subject Area Test** |
| **ELA** | **Mathematics** | **STE** |
| **First-Year EL Students**1 | *Optional2* | Required | Required |
| **All Other Students** | Required | Required | Required |

1 Results for first-year EL students are **not** included in MCAS school and district summary results.

2 Optional, provided that the student has participated in ACCESS for ELLs testing.

Questions regarding the **identification screening, placement, and reclassification of EL students** should be directed to the Office of Language Acquisition at el@doe.mass.edu. For additional details, refer to OLA’s Guidance on English Learner Education Services and Programming document on the Department’s website at [doe.mass.edu/ele/guidance/default.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/guidance/default.html).

## Foreign Exchange Students

Foreign exchange students who are coded in SIMS as #11 under “Reason for Enrollment” in grades 3-8 and 10, regardless of whether they are determined to be English learners, are required to participate in the MCAS tests specified for the grade in which they are reported. These students are also required to participate in ACCESS for ELLs testing if they are reported in SIMS as English learners.

# VI. MCAS Accessibility and Accommodations for English Learners

In addition to the accessibility features listed elsewhere in this manual, several accommodations are also available to ELs, as described in Table 8. Table 8 describes the relative suitability of each accommodation for students who are at beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels of English proficiency.

## A. Selecting Accessibility Features and Accommodations for EL Students

Identifying which universal and designated accessibility features (Tables 1 and 2) and accommodations (Tables 4, 5, and 6) are appropriate for an EL should be done by a group of educators familiar with the student.

The decision-making team may include any of the following:

* the student
* the student’s English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) educator
* a school administrator (principal/assistant principal)
* a general educator (subject area teacher)
* a special educator (if appropriate)
* a parent or guardian

Decision-making teams are encouraged to determine appropriate accessibility features and accommodations for EL students as early as possible in the school year to ensure that the student becomes familiar with them prior to MCAS test administration. Accessibility features and accommodations are intended to remove barriers and allow EL students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills more effectively.

Because a student’s level of English language proficiency is transitional, and the student’s linguistic needs will differ from one year to the next, universal and designated accessibility features and accommodations should be examined and revised annually as the EL student makes progress toward attaining English proficiency.

### Decision-Making Procedures

When selecting accessibility features and accommodations for EL students, classroom teachers should do the following:

* Examine the range of supports allowed on MCAS tests, and evaluate which supports may help the EL student access the curriculum and take assessments more effectively.
	+ *Has a particular accessibility feature and/or accommodation been used successfully in the past to assist students in similar situations and at similar English proficiency levels?*
* Try out the selected supports during routine instruction to determine whether they meet the student’s needs.
	+ *Does the feature and/or accommodation help the student overcome the barriers posed by developing English language proficiency?*
	+ *Is the student comfortable using the feature or accommodation?*
* Observe the student using the accessibility feature or accommodation in the classroom (or if possible, across different classrooms and school settings), and inform members of the decision-making team which accessibility features or accommodations seem appropriate and effective.
* Based on the classroom trial, select the appropriate features and/or accommodations for use on the MCAS tests.
* Document which accessibility features or accommodations were chosen, listing them either on the [sample form](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/forms/) or a similar locally developed form, and maintain this information in the student’s file.

### Involving Students in Selecting and Using Accommodations

The more EL that students are involved in the accommodations selection process, the more likely they are to accept and use them. As students’ English proficiency increases, and especially as students reach adolescence and the desire to be more independent increases, students can help determine when the support is no longer useful. Students are likely to increase their self-advocacy abilities over time and ensure that they receive the selected supports during testing. Teachers and other adults should play a role in assisting students to advocate on their own behalf regarding accessibility features and accommodations.

## Accommodations for Students Who Are English Learners (ELs)

In addition to the universal features and designated features (Tables 1 and 2) available to all students, the accommodations listed in Tables 8 and 9 are available to all ELs, with and without disabilities, on MCAS tests.

Note that *some* EL accommodations must be designatedin the SR/PNP prior to the start of testing. These accommodations are noted with a special *(SR/PNP)* designation in Table 8. The names of accommodations and the process for their selection in the SR/PNP are identical to accommodations for students with disabilities, although the EL accommodations have unique codes (e.g., EL1).

|  |
| --- |
| **Table 8. Accommodations for ELs** |
| EL1*(SR/PNP)* | **Paper-based edition**: ELs in their first year of schooling in the U.S. or ELs with little or no familiarity with technology may take the MCAS paper-based test as an accommodation. * ELs should have the opportunity to take computer-based practice tests prior to selecting the paper-based test.
* Administering the ELA test to a first-year EL is *optional.*
 |
| EL2 | [**Approved Bilingual Word-to-Word Dictionary and Glossary**](https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/accessibility/ell-bilingual.docx) (English/Native language) * This accommodation is available to students who are currently or were ever reported as EL.
* Paper bilingual word-to-word dictionaries and glossaries are permitted during MCAS testing. Schools should make sure that EL students are familiar with, and comfortable using, paper editions.
* **New for 2024**: schools that currently use e-book versions, such as from wordtoword.com, in regular instruction and classroom assessments may use them during MCAS testing. See [Appendix F: Updated Policy on Bilingual Word-to-Word Dictionaries/Glossaries for ELs during MCAS Testing](#_Appendix_F:_Updated).
 |
| EL3.1*(SR/PNP)*andEL3.2*(SR/PNP)* | **Text-to-speech (TTS)** (EL3.1) computer reads text aloud for **Mathematics and STE (*not* ELA)**:* A student using the TTS-enabled English-only edition of the computer-based test with **headphones** may be tested in a typical-size group.

**Human read-aloud** (EL 3.2) for  **Mathematics and STE (*not* ELA)**:* The test must be administered in a separate setting either **individually** or to a **group of 2–5 students** all of whom are receiving the human reader accommodation.

Review [Appendix C: Procedures for Providing the Human Read-Aloud](#_Appendix_B).Warning with solid fillSee Appendix A of the [Guide to the SR/PNP Process](http://mcas.pearsonsupport.com/manuals/) for important information about assigning this accommodation. Test administrators for students using accommodation EL3.2 must sign an [MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/forms) before administering this accommodation. |
| **Table 8. (*continued*)** |
| EL4.1*(SR/PNP)*andEL4.2*(SR/PNP)* | **Scribe or speech-to-text** for Mathematics and/or STE test responses **(*not* ELA)**, consisting either of:* a **human scribe** (EL4.1), who records student’s responses verbatim *at the time of testing*. See [Appendix A](#_Appendix_A:_Decision-Making) for specific guidance on providing the scribe accommodation; or
* a **speech-to-text** (EL4.2) program that converts voice to written text, use of a test administrator to generate responses to test questions.

Students using the speech-to-text accommodation for the grade 5 and 8 STE tests and for high school Biology will be able to use an embedded speech-to-text “web extension” that functions within TestNav. The embedded web extension **is not available on the ELA tests, nor does it** **function on the Mathematics or the Introductory Physics computer-based tests** due to incompatibility with the Equation Editor answer box used for open responses on those tests. Refer to[Appendix D](#_APPENDIX_C) for a step-by-step guide to accessing and using this feature.Warning with solid fillSee Appendix A of the [Guide to the SR/PNP Process](http://mcas.pearsonsupport.com/manuals/) for important information about assigning this accommodation.Test administrators for students using accommodation EL4.1 or EL4.2 must sign an [MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/forms) before administering these accommodations. |
| EL5 | **Test administrator reads aloud/repeats/clarifies** **general administration directions in English** (from the appropriate Test Administrator’s Manual scripts) |
| EL6 | **Test administrator reads aloud/repeats/clarifies** **general administration directions** (from the appropriate Test Administrator’s Manual scripts) **in student’s native language**, if a native language speaker is available |
| EL7*(SR/PNP)* | **Spanish/English** edition of the grade 10 Mathematics test/retest and **high school Biology** and **Introductory Physics** tests:* Spanish/English tests are available in computer- and paper-based formats. The computer-based tests consist of stacked text, Spanish text above English text; paper-based tests consist of Spanish and English on facing pages (side-by-side).
* These tests are intended for Spanish-speaking ELs who have been in the U.S. less than 3 years.
* Students may respond either in Spanish or English. (Note that for all other MCAS tests, students may respond only in English.)

**Warning with solid fill**See Appendix A of the [Guide to the SR/PNP Process](http://mcas.pearsonsupport.com/manuals/) for important information about assigning this accommodation. |

Table 9 provides guidance regarding the suitability of EL accommodations based on the English language proficiency (ELP) level of the student.

|  |
| --- |
| **Table 9. Selecting Accommodations for English Learners** |
|  | **Level of Proficiency** |
| **#** | **Accommodation** | **Beginning** | **Intermediate** | **Advanced** |
| EL1 | **Paper-based editions** for ELs with low levels of English proficiency and/or no familiarity with technology who are in their first calendar year of enrollment in a U.S. school |  |  |  |
| EL2 | Approved **bilingual word-to-word dictionary** and glossary (English/Native Language) |  |  |  |
| EL3.1andEL3.2 | **Text-to-speech** (EL3.1) for the computer-based Mathematics or STE tests (in English *only*);OR**Human read-aloud** (EL3.2) for Mathematics and STE  |  |  |  |
| EL4.1andEL4.2 | **Human scribe** (EL4.1) for Mathematics, grades 5 and 8 STE, high school Biology, and high school Introductory Physics responses**Speech-to-text** (EL4.2) for Mathematics, grades 5 and 8 STE, high school Biology, and high school Introductory Physics responses. (The embedded speech-to text is not available for Mathematics or Introductory Physics.) |  |  |  |
| EL5 | Test administrator reads aloud/repeats/clarifies general administration **directions in English** |  |  |  |
| EL6 | Test administrator reads aloud/repeats/clarifies general administration **directions in student’s native language**  |  |  |  |
| EL7 | **Spanish/English** edition of the grade 10 Math test/retest and high school Science tests  |  |  |  |
| **KEY:*** **Highly recommended** for use by English learners at this ELP level
* **Recommended** for use by English learners at this ELP level
*  **May not be appropriate** for English learners at this ELP level
 |

# Appendix A: Decision-Making Tool for MCAS Participation by Students with Disabilities

Use the definition and the questions below to guide discussions of how students will participate in MCAS testing.

Massachusetts defines “students with the most significant cognitive disabilities” as those who meet **all** of the following criteria:

* have cognitive disabilities evidenced by significant delays in attaining age-level academic achievement standards, even with systematic, extensive individually designed instruction, related services, and modifications
* have cognitive disabilities that significantly impact their educational performance and ability to apply learning from one setting to another
* require extensive, direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains on the challenging State academic content standards for the grade in which the student is enrolled
* perform significantly below average in general cognitive functioning and adaptive behavior.
Note: “Significantly below average”is defined as a student functioning two or more standard deviations below the mean on commonly accepted norm-referenced assessments in both cognitive functioning and adaptive behavior (e.g., two or more adaptive skill areas such as daily living skills, communication, self-care, social skills, and academic skills).



# Appendix B: Procedures for Scribing and Transcribing Student Responses

The human scribe (A10.1, EL4.1, SA3.1) and speech-to-text (A10.2, EL4.2, SA3.2) accommodations allow students to respond orally either to a test administrator who will type the responses directly onscreen (or write in the student’s test & answer booklet) or into a speech recognition device that converts spoken words into text. Students who receive one of these accommodations may respond to test questions through one of the following:

* verbal dictation to a human scribe
* a speech-to-text device or other augmentative/assistive communication device (e.g., picture/word board)
* signing (e.g., American Sign Language, signed English, Cued Speech)
* gesturing or pointing
* eye-gazing

### Guidelines for Administering the Human Scribe Accommodation (A10.1, EL4.1, SA3.1)

* A scribe may administer this accommodation only to **one student at a time** during a test session.The student must be tested in a separate setting.
* If scribing responses into a paper-based booklet, the scribe must produce legible text. For computer-based tests, the scribe will type directly into the student’s computer-based test.
* The scribe must transcribe the student’s responses verbatim and may not prompt, correct, or question the student regarding the content of the responses. The scribe may request that the student restate (or sign) words, phrases, or sentences, as needed. The scribe may not edit or alter the student’s dictated response in any way.
* A student using a scribe must be given the same opportunities as other students to plan and draft a written response. The scribe may write an outline, plan, or draft as directed by the student, and must record the draft response or outline exactly as dictated.

### Additional Guidance on Scribing for ELA (SA3.1)

* The scribe will spell all words correctly.
* The scribe will assume all sentences begin with a capital and end with a period. Other than that, at the beginning of a sentence the scribe should request clarification from the student about the use of capitalization and punctuation. The scribe must also allow the student to review and edit what the scribe has written.
* The scribe will orally confirm spelling of homonyms and commonly confused homophones, e.g., *than* and *then*; *to*, *two*, and *too*; *there*, *their*, and *they’re*.
* After the student has finished dictating their response(s), the scribe must do the following:
	+ ask the student to review the draft and make any necessary edits, including capitalization, punctuation, and paragraph breaks
	+ either allow the student to make edits independently or have the student direct the scribe to make the edits
	+ not assist the student in making decisions during the editing process
* The scribe will make the student’s requested changes, even if incorrect.
* The student will confirm the correctness of the response.

### Guidelines for Transcribing Student Responses

Circumstances may occur during test administration that may require a test administrator to transcribe a student’s responses onscreen or in their test & answer booklet. These situations may include the following:

* Answers were recorded in the wrong section or an incorrectly assigned computer-based test or test & answer booklet.
* A student took the test using a special test format requiring that answers be transcribed; e.g., Braille or large-print. (Braille responses must be transcribed by persons fluent in Braille.)
* A student used speech-to-text software, or augmentative communication, or an assistive technology device that is not compatible with TestNav and printed responses for transcription by a test administrator.
* A student recorded answers on blank paper, instead of in the computer-based test or test & answer booklet, as an accommodation.
* The test & answer booklet or document became unusable (e.g., torn, wrinkled, or contaminated).

Transcribing responses by a test administrator may occur at any time until the end of the testing window under secure conditions supervised by the principal (or designee). In cases where a student’s responses must be transcribed *after* test administration is completed but before the end of the testing window, the following conditions apply:

* At least two persons must be present during any transcription of a student’s responses. At least one of the individuals must be an authorized test administrator; the other may be a principal or designee.
* The student’s response must be transcribed verbatim into the booklet or computer-based test.
* The student’s original printed responses must either be securely shredded or placed in the school’s return shipment.

# Appendix C: Procedures for Providing the Human Read-Aloud

### Procedures for Standard Oral Presentation

Human readers who provide the read-aloud accommodation (A5, SA1.1, EL3.2) to a student on the MCAS tests must follow these procedures to ensure a standard oral presentation of the assessments:

* Readers must be trained locally to administer each assessment, as indicated in the appropriate Test Administrator’s Manual.
* Readers must read verbatim (word-for-word) only the text onscreen or in the test & answer booklet without changing, emphasizing, or adding words. Readers may not clarify anything (except for test directions), provide additional information, assist, or influence the student’s selection of a response in any way.
* Readers must speak in a clear and consistent voice throughout the test administration, using correct pronunciation and without vocal inflections that may provide clues to, or mislead, a student. Readers should review the appropriate practice test prior to the start of testing, in order to become familiar with the words, terms, symbols, signs, and/or graphics that will be read aloud to the student.
* Readers should emphasize only the words printed in boldface, italics, or capital letters and inform the student that the words are printed that way. No other emphasis or vocal inflection is permitted.
* Readers may repeat passages, test questions, and response options, as requested, according to the needs of the student. Readers should not rush through the test and should ask the student if they are ready to move to the next question.
* Readers may not attempt to solve mathematics problems or determine the correct answers to test questions while reading, as this may result in pauses or changes in inflection that might mislead the student.
* Readers must attempt to maintain a neutral facial expression, neither smiling nor frowning during the test, which may be interpreted by the student as approval or disapproval of the student’s answers.
* Readers must be familiar with the student’s IEP or 504 plan and should know in advance which accommodations are required by the student, and for which tests the student is designated to receive a Human Reader.
* Readers must be aware of whether a student requires additional tools, devices, or adaptive equipment that has been approved for use during the test, such as a magnifier, closed circuit television (CCTV), abacus, brailler, slate and stylus.
* When reading a word that is pronounced like another word with a different spelling, the reader may spell the word after pronouncing it, if there is any doubt about which word is intended.
* Readers must spell any words requested by the student.
* When reading passages, readers must be aware of punctuation marks. Readers may read the passage or selected lines a second time, with all punctuation marks indicated.
* When test questions refer to a particular line or lines of a passage, readers should reread the lines before reading the question-and-answer choices. For example, the reader should say, “Question X refers to the following lines…,” then read the lines to the student, followed by Question X and the response options.
* When reading selected response questions, readers must give equal stress to each response option and read all of them before waiting for a response.
* If the student’s responses are also being scribed, and the student designates a response choice by letter only (“D,” for example), the reader must ask the student if they would like the response to be reread before the answer is recorded in the answer booklet.
* If the student chooses an answer before the reader has read all the answer choices, the reader must ask if the student wants the other response options to be read.
* After the reader finishes reading a test question and all response options, the reader must pause and allow the student to pause before responding. If the pause has been lengthy, say: “Do you want me to read the question or any part of it again?”

### General Procedures

* Human readers may read the test aloud to a group of no more than 5 students, provided that each student has the Human Reader accommodation/accessibility feature listed in an IEP, 504 plan, or EL accommodation.
* Should students request not to have a human reader, they should continue to test without the accommodation. The human read-aloud accommodation should remain available until a revised IEP or 504 plan is developed.
* All students in the group must be taking the same test form, since test questions will differ on each form of the test.

•  See Appendix A of the [Guide to the SR/PNP Process](http://mcas.pearsonsupport.com/manuals/) for important information about assigning this accommodation.

# Appendix D: Guidelines for Using Assistive Technology as an MCAS Test Accommodation

These guidelines will assist schools in determining how specific assistive technology (AT) programs may be used by students with disabilities for computer-based MCAS testing.

Assistive Technology is categorized into the following three groups for the purpose of MCAS testing:

1. **Embedded web extensions:** Assistive Technology programs that are embedded as web extensionsin the TestNav computer-based testing platform ***to access speech-to-text and word prediction applications****.*
2. **Compatible assistive technology:** Assistive Technology, such as Screen Readers and Dragon Naturally Speaking, that are ***external*** (a school-owned program) but are compatible with TestNav.
3. **AT on a separate device:** Assistive Technology programs that are known to be incompatible with TestNav (i.e., cannot be used with TestNav) and therefore ***must be used on a separate device*** at an adjacent computer station during testing.

Either the Assistive Technology Form or the Assistive Technology Screen Reader Edition Form of the test must be pre-selected, as appropriate, in the SR/PNP, so the correct accommodated test edition can be made available to the student.
 See Appendix A of the [Guide to the SR/PNP Process](http://mcas.pearsonsupport.com/manuals/) for important information about assigning these accommodations.

### Group 1: Web Extensions for Speech-to-Text and Word Prediction

This group includes AT programs that are embedded within TestNav as web extensions, and is available for ELA, grades 5 and 8 STE, and high school Biology, as described in the table below.

|  |
| --- |
| **Group 1. Web Extensions for Speech-to-Text and Word Prediction** |
| **Web Extension** | **Expected User Experience** |
| **Co:Writer Universal:** **Word Prediction or Speech-to-Text tools****Read&Write: Word Prediction or Speech-to-Text tools** | After logging into the TestNav app, students should select the appropriate web extension.The web extensions are supported on Windows, Mac, iOS (iPad), and Chromebook operating systems. They are **not** currently supported on Androids. Android users should refer to Groups 2, 3, and 4 in this document for alternative AT options.The web extensions are available for all ELA tests and for grades 5 and 8 STE. They are **not** available for the Mathematics and high school Introductory Physics tests, due to conflicting requirements for using the Equation Editor box (students may instead need a scribe or an external speech-to-text or word prediction device). Word prediction and speech-to-text are standard accommodations for STE tests but are considered “special access” accommodations for ELA tests. Refer to the additional eligibility requirements for the use of “special access” accommodations noted in section IV of this manual.Web extensions must be designated in a student’s SR/PNP for the Co:Writer or Read&Write options to appear on their computer-based test.The student should attempt the [practice test](http://mcas.pearsonsupport.com/student/) prior to actual testing using this accommodation.  |

### Group 2: Assistive Technology Confirmed as Compatible with TestNav

This group includes AT used by the student that is known to be compatible with TestNav, and both can run on the same student testing device at the same time.

If any of the assistive technologies listed below are listed in the student’s IEP or 504 plan, and the student plans to use it during MCAS testing, then the appropriate assistive technology program(s) must be installed on the student’s device by the school.

|  |
| --- |
| **Group 2: Assistive Technology Confirmed as Compatible with TestNav** |
| **Assistive Technology** | **Expected user experience** |
| Jaws 2021, 2022 (screen reader) | Students should be able to use this AT during MCAS testing without any issues. |
| NVDA 2020.1, 2022.2.2 (screen reader) | Students can change user settings before testing but not once their test is loaded. |
| Dragon Professional 14 and 15 (Speech-to-text) | Students should be able to use this AT during MCAS testing without any issues. |
| ZoomText 2021, 2022 (screen magnification) | Student can use pre-set features during testing. Students cannot make adjustments during testing with the exception of magnification levels that can be increased using keyboard commands. |
| Fusion (Combination JAWS & ZoomText) 2020, 2022 | Students should be able to use the screen reader (JAWS) during MCAS testing without any issues.ZoomText 2020 pre-set features can be used during testing. Students cannot make adjustments during testing with the exception of magnification levels that can be increased using keyboard commands. |
| Hardware-based technology (special equipment used with the computer, such as an alternate keyboard or mouse) | Always have students use hardware-based device during an Infrastructure Trial prior to testing. |

### Group 3: Assistive Technology Not Compatible and Requires a Separate Computer

This group includes ATs that cannot be used on the same computer as the one used by the student to take the test (i.e., cannot interact directly with TestNav) and therefore must be accessed by the student using a separate external (i.e., stand-alone) computer. In this case, a test administrator must assist the student to transition between the external device used for the student’s AT and the computer used by the student for their test (either computer-based or paper-based). All responses generated using an external assistive technology device must be transcribed verbatim by a test administrator (or the student) onto the student’s computer-based test or into their paper-based booklet as described in [Section IV](#_IV.__MCAS).

Stand-alone AT programs are prohibited for MCAS testing if they provide coaching or assistance to the student or allow a student to access the internet.

**Contact the Department at** **mcas@doe.mass.edu** **for approval to use stand-alone AT devices or programs and for specific test administration instructions.**

Programs that have been tested and confirmed as unable to interact directly with TestNav and require a stand-alone external computer are listed on the following table. Do not select the Assistive Technology Form in the SR/PNP if the student will use stand-alone external AT, since a special form of the test is not required.

|  |
| --- |
| **Group 3: Expected User Experience for Assistive Technologies** |
| **Assistive Technology** | **Expected user experience** |
| Chrome and other web extensions | No web extensions other than the Co:Writer Universal and Read&Write described in Group 1 above will work with TestNav. |
| Other proprietary software not previously mentioned | It is not likely that any other proprietary software programs, applications, or extensions will work with TestNav. |

### Checking the Compatibility and Proper Operation of AT Prior to MCAS Testing

Schools should conduct an Infrastructure Trial using student devices to determine whether an AT application and/or hardware will operate concurrently with TestNav. Follow the steps below using the grade level and subject test available on the [PearsonAccess Next training site](https://trng-mcas.pearsonaccessnext.com/customer/index.action). See additional information about Infrastructure Trials in the [Infrastructure Trial Readiness Guide](http://mcas.pearsonsupport.com/manuals/).

**Note:** In the Infrastructure Trial practice tests, the Screen Reader edition is only available for grade 3 Mathematics, and the Compatible Assistive Technology edition is only available for grade 3 ELA. Therefore, high schools preparing for the November retests will need to use the Spring 2023 MCAS Grades 3–8 administration in the PAN training site to check compatibility prior to testing, which will be available beginning in late September. Both accommodations will be available for all tests as described in this appendix during operational testing.

* **Step 1**: Download the TestNav app to the student’s computer from <https://download.testnav.com>.
* **Step 2**: Log in to the MCAS PearsonAccess Next Training Site at [http://trng-mcas.pearsonaccessnext.com](http://trng-mcas.pearsonaccessnext.com/).
	+ Select **Spring 2023 MCAS Gr. 3–8** from the drop-down in the top right-hand corner.
* **Step 3**: Create a student and assign a test.
	+ Click the **Setup** drop-down and select **Students**.
	+ Select **Generate Sample Students**, **Register Students**, and **Manage Student Tests** from the **Select Tasks** drop-down, and click **Start**.
	+ Select the **Generate Sample Students** tab. Create a sample student in grade 3, and click **Generate**.
	+ Select the **Register Students** tab at the top of the screen. Click the **Registered** checkbox; under **Student Grade**, choose **Grade 3** and click **Save**.
	+ Select the **Manage Student Test** tab and complete the information for all required fields. Under the test drop-down, select the following:
		- **Grade 3 ELA** to test the Compatible Assistive Technology edition
		- **Grade 3 Math** to test the Screen Reader edition
	+ Ensure that the **test format** is **online**; and add the **appropriate accommodations**. When finished, click **Create**. When you see the green “**Success**” notification, click **Exit Tasks** in the top right.
* **Step 4**: Create a PAN Session and add students.
	+ Click the **Testing** drop-down and select **Sessions**.
	+ Select **Create / Edit Sessions** from the **Select Tasks** drop-down and click **Start**.
	+ Complete all the required fields.
	+ In the **Students** box at the bottom, click in the box to select the student. Click **Create**. Once you see the green **“Success”** message, click **Exit Tasks** at the top right.
* **Step 5**: Start the test session and access student testing tickets.
	+ Select **Show Students in Sessions & Control Sessions** from the **Select Tasks** drop-down and select your **session name** on the left-hand side of the screen.
	+ Click **Prepare Session**, and then click **Start** when it appears.
	+ Select **Student Testing Tickets** from the **Resources** drop-down.
* **Step 6**: Log into the practice test from student’s device. Use the Student Testing Ticket to log into the practice test.

Practice using the AT to determine if it works as expected within the TestNav app.

### Accessing Co:Writer Universal and Read&Write Web Extensions in the TestNav Desktop App

* **Step 1**: The student’s SR/PNP must designate that the student will have access to web extensions for the specific test (e.g., Grade 5 ELA) in PearsonAccess Next.
* **Step 2**: After student logs in, the test administrator (or student) must select the appropriate web extension to be used during the assessment. (If the screen below does not appear, then web extensions were not properly designated in the student’s SR/PNP.)



* + Select one web extension; do not enable both. The web extensions have similar features, and the student should select the web extension they are most familiar with. Do not assign a web extension to a student on the day of the test if the student is unfamiliar with its use.
	+ Click **Install** next to the correct extension.
* **Step 3**: If selecting Read&Write for TestNav, no further action is necessary.

* **Step 4**: If selecting Co:Writer Universal, complete the following steps:
	+ The test administrator (or student) must toggle off Word Prediction or Speech-to-Text if the student is not approved for both features.
	+ Select **Next**.

The student does not need a license to use Co:Writer Universal during MCAS testing. If the student has an existing license for Co:Writer, they can log into their account and load their previously selected user settings for MCAS testing. If the student does not have a license or chooses not to load their settings, the test administrator (or student) can skip this step.


# Appendix E: MCAS and ACCESS for ELLs Accessibility Features and Accommodations at a Glance

The tables below present a crosswalk of all accessibility features and accommodations, for ease of assigning them and adding them to the SR/PNP (for MCAS), and for assigning them correctly for English learners participating in ACCESS tests.

|  |
| --- |
| **Accessibility Features for MCAS and ACCESS for ELLs** |
| **Feature Number**  | **Accessibility Feature** | **SR/PNP Column** | **Available for ACCESS for ELLS** |
| UF1 | Highlighter tool | N/A | Yes |
| UF2 | Color contrast | N/A | Yes |
| UF3 | Zoom in/out tool  | N/A | Yes |
| UF4 | Enlarged cursor/Mouse pointer tool | Column R | No |
| UF5 | Line reader tool  | N/A | Yes |
| UF6 | Answer masking  | N/A | No |
| UF7 | Answer eliminator | N/A | No |
| UF8 | Item flag/bookmark | N/A | No |
| UF9 | Audio aid | N/A | Yes |
| UF10 | Notepad | N/A | Yes |
| UF11 | Test administrator reads aloud (or signs) selected words  | N/A | Yes, only for Listening, Speaking, and Writing  |
| UF12 | Test administrator redirects student’s attention to the test | N/A | Yes |
| UF13 | Test administrator reads aloud, repeats, or clarifies *general test administration directions* | N/A | Yes |
| DF1 | Small group test administration (May include up to a total of 10 students.) | N/A | Yes |
| DF2 | Individual (one-to-one) test administration  | N/A | Yes |
| DF3 | Frequent brief supervised breaks | N/A | Yes |
| DF4 | Separate or alternate test location | N/A | Yes |
| DF5 | Seating in a specified area  | N/A | Yes |
| DF6 | Adaptive or specialized furniture  | N/A | Yes |
| DF7 | Noise buffer  | N/A | Yes |
| DF8 | Familiar test administrator | N/A | Yes |
| DF9 | Student reads test aloud to self  | N/A | Yes |
| DF10 | Specific time of day | N/A | Yes |
| DF11 | Stop Testing policy  | N/A | Yes |

|  |
| --- |
| **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities for MCAS and ACCESS for ELLs** |
| **Accommodation Number** | **Accommodation** | **SR/PNP Column**  | **Available for ACCESS for ELLS** |
| A1 | Paper-based test | Column K | Yes |
| A2 | Large-print *PBT only* | Column U | Yes |
| A3.1  | Screen reader | Column V | No |
| A3.2 | Braille edition | Column X | Yes |
| A3.3 | Screen reader | Column V | No |
| A4.1 | Text-to-Speech | Column AC | No |
| A5 | Human read aloud*Math and STE tests only* | Column Y | Yes, only for Listening, Speaking, and Writing  |
| A6.1 | Human signer*Math and STE tests only* | Column AA | No |
| A6.2 | ASL video *Grade 10 Math and June High School Science only* | Column AF | No |
| A7 | Human signer for test directions only | N/A | Yes |
| A8 | Track test items | N/A | No |
| A9 | Approved graphic organizer or supplemental reference sheet | Column AP | No |
| A10.1 | Scribe responses*Math and STE tests only* | Column AG | Yes, only for Listening, Speaking, and Writing  |
| A10.2 | Speech-to-text*Math and STE tests only* | Column AI* See Appendix A of the [Guide to the SR/PNP Process](http://mcas.pearsonsupport.com/manuals/)
 | Yes, only for Listening, Speaking, and Writing  |
| A11 | Responses recorded on special paper | N/A | Yes |
| A12 | Typed responses | Column AK |  |
| A13 | Student records responses on a recording device | N/A | No |
| A14 | Responses signed onto a video | N/A | No |
| A15 | Monitor placement of responses | N/A | Yes |
| A16 | Refreshable Braille display | N/A | Yes |
| A16 | Braille note-taker | N/A | Yes |
| A17 | Braille writer | N/A | Yes |

| **Special Access Accommodations for Students with Disabilities for MCAS and ACCESS for ELLs** |
| --- |
| **Accommodation Number** | **Special Access Accommodation** | **SR/PNP column**  | **Available for ACCESS for ELLS** |
| SA1.1 | Text-to-Speech for ELA tests | Column AC  | N/A  |
| SA1.2 | Human Reader for ELA tests | Column Z | Yes, for Listening, Speaking and Writing if in their IEP. If needed for the reading ACCESS domain, then the student is exempt.  |
| SA2 | Human Signer for ELA tests | Column AB | No |
| SA3.1 | Scribe for ELA tests | Column AH | Yes, only for Listening, Reading, and Writing |
| SA3.2 | Speech-to-Text for ELA tests | Column AJ (STT) * See Appendix A of the [Guide to the SR/PNP Process](http://mcas.pearsonsupport.com/manuals/)
 | N/A  |
| SA4 | Calculator for Mathematics tests | Column AL | N/A |
| SA5 | Spell Checker for ELA tests | Column AM | No |
| SA6 | Word Prediction for ELA, grades and 8 STE, and High School Biology | Column AN* See Appendix A of the [Guide to the SR/PNP Process](http://mcas.pearsonsupport.com/manuals/)
 | No |

|  |
| --- |
| **Accommodations for ELs for MCAS and ACCESS for ELLs** |
| **Accommodation Number** | **Accommodation** | **SR/PNP Column**  | **Available for ACCESS for ELLS** |
| EL1 | Paper-based test | Column K | Yes |
| EL2 | Word-to word dictionary and glossary | N/A | No |
| EL3.1 | Text-to-Speech | Column AC | No |
| EL3.2 | Human read aloud*Math and STE tests only* | Column Y | Yes, only for Listening, Speaking, and Writing  |
| EL4.1 | Scribe responses*Math and STE tests only* | Column AG | Yes, only for Listening, Speaking, and Writing  |
| EL4.2 | Speech-to-text*Math and STE tests only* | Column AI* See Appendix A of the [Guide to the SR/PNP Process](http://mcas.pearsonsupport.com/manuals/)
 | Yes, only for Listening, Speaking, and Writing  |
| EL5 | Test administrator reads aloud, repeats, or clarifies *general test administration directions* | N/A | Yes |
| EL6 | Test administrator reads aloud/repeats/clarifies general administration directions in student’s native language | N/A | Yes. Can read directions or clarify in native language. Cannot repeat. |
| EL7 | Spanish/English edition of the Grade 10 Mathematics test or retest and high school Science tests | Column AO | No |

# Appendix F: Updated Policy on Bilingual Word-to-Word Dictionaries/Glossaries for ELs during MCAS Testing

The information below updates policies in the fall 2023/winter 2024 and spring 2024 MCAS Principal’s Administration Manuals and the first edition of this document.

As in the past, students who are currently or were ever reported as EL may use printed copies of authorized bilingual word-to-word dictionaries and glossaries during MCAS testing. DESE is providing **new guidance on electronic dictionaries** for use during MCAS testing in 2024. Schools that currently use e-book versions as described below in regular instruction and classroom assessments may use them during MCAS testing beginning in 2024. Note that smartphones, including electronic dictionaries on smartphones, continue to be prohibited.

Schools that have access to additional iPads or Android tablets for MCAS testing may use e-book bilingual word-to-word dictionaries from wordtoword.com. These bilingual dictionary e-books can be accessed through an iPad app or Android app. Note that these apps are free to use and provide a sign-in to a school account; however, schools must first purchase each bilingual dictionary e-book from the website. Purchased e-books from this site will expire after 18 months.

In order to use this option, the tablet **must be put into kiosk mode during testing** so that only the Word-to-Word app is available.

To assist in maintaining test security while using this app, students must be tested in small groups (up to 10 students).

DESE recommends administering practice tests to students using the app so that they can familiarize themselves with how they will plan their desk space during MCAS testing using two devices and scratch paper.

Questions may be directed to DESE’s Office of Student Assessment Services at mcas@doe.mass.edu, and schools are invited to contact DESE after MCAS test administration with feedback on these applications to assist in future updates.