



MASSACHUSETTS  
Department of Elementary  
and Secondary Education

# **Accessibility and Accommodations Manual for the 2025 MCAS Test Administrations**

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

Updated February 7, 2025



This document was prepared by the  
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
Russell D. Johnston  
Acting 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.

© 2025 Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

*Permission 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 Education  
135 Santilli Highway, Everett, MA 02149  
Phone 781-338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Relay 800-439-2370  
[www.doe.mass.edu](http://www.doe.mass.edu)



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

Purpose of this Manual.....	2
I. Overview of MCAS Accessibility and Accommodations.....	3
A. Introduction.....	3
B. Important Updates and Reminders.....	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) .....	7
III. MCAS Participation Requirements for Students with Disabilities.....	9
A. Background .....	9
B. Definition of a Student with a Disability.....	9
C. Definition of Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities.....	10
D. Students with Complex and Significant Disabilities Who May Require a Grade-Level or Competency Portfolio .....	10
IV. MCAS Accommodations for Students with Disabilities .....	11
A. Background .....	11
B. Understanding Accommodations for Students with Disabilities.....	11
C. Selecting Accommodations for Students with Disabilities .....	12
D. Descriptions of MCAS Accommodations .....	14
V. MCAS Participation Requirements for English Learners (ELs) .....	29
A. Foreign Exchange Students .....	29
VI. MCAS Accessibility and Accommodations for English Learners .....	30
A. Selecting Accessibility Features and Accommodations for EL Students .....	30
B. Accommodations for Students Who Are English Learners (ELs) .....	31
Appendix A: MCAS and ACCESS for ELLs Accessibility Features and Accommodations at a Glance 35	
Appendix B: Decision-Making Tool for MCAS Participation by Students with Disabilities .....	39
Appendix C: Procedures for Scribing and Transcribing Student Responses.....	40
Appendix D: Procedures for Providing the Human Read-Aloud.....	42
Appendix E: Guidelines for Using Assistive Technology as an MCAS Test Accommodation.....	44
Appendix F: Procedures for Creating Test Administrator Logins for Human Read-Aloud and Human Signer 49	
Appendix G: Policy on Bilingual Word-to-Word Dictionaries/Glossaries for ELs during MCAS Testing 51	

## 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) test administrations in 2025. As announced in the [June 18, 2024, edition of the Student Assessment Update](#), beginning in 2025, DESE is transitioning from PearsonAccess Next and TestNav to new testing systems. Starting in February 2025, the MCAS Portal will be the new MCAS test administration platform, and the MCAS Student Kiosk will be the student testing platform. Accordingly, accessibility features and accommodations may be implemented differently than in previous systems.

### Intended Audience and Recommended Use

This *Accessibility and Accommodations Manual* provides valuable planning information for educators working with students with disabilities and with English learners (ELs). Classroom teachers, special educators, 504 plan coordinators, Individualized Education Program (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 [Student Registration Guide](#) to correctly assign and report the use of selected accommodations.

The accessibility features and accommodations described here will also be listed in Appendix C of the MCAS *Principal's Administration Manual* (PAM).

Educators may wish to consult with DESE staff throughout the year as they plan for providing access, accommodations, and unique supports for students participating in the required state-wide assessments. Please contact DESE's Office of Student Assessment Services at [mcas@mass.gov](mailto:mcas@mass.gov) or 781-338-3625.

# I. Overview of MCAS Accessibility and Accommodations

## A. Introduction

State and federal laws 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 MCAS Student Kiosk computer-based testing platform, and others can be readily applied to the equivalent paper-based test 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, DESE 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
- assistance as needed from a test administrator in using the MCAS Student Kiosk computer-based testing platform, specifically related to navigation according to the guidance in the Test Administrator's Manual for each test administration

Furthermore, all students should have the opportunity to review the MCAS tutorial and practice tests (to be posted on the [MCAS Resource Center](#) in winter 2025) prior to test administration to become familiar with how to access the computer-based tests. Refer to the [MCAS Principal's Administration Manual \(PAM\) for each test administration](#) for guidance on these.

## B. Important Updates and Reminders

The following are updates related to accessibility features and accommodations for the winter and spring 2025 test administrations:

- Two additional universal accessibility features will be available: general masking and reverse contrast.
- Beginning in 2025, MCAS tests will be translated into Spanish for Mathematics, Science, and Civics tests at grades 3–8 (in addition to the high school tests in Mathematics and Science).
- Civics is a required assessment for students in grade 8, and accessibility features and accommodations are available for the Civics MCAS assessment. Students identified as having the most significant cognitive disabilities and whose IEPs designate the MCAS-Alt must

participate in the MCAS-Alt in Civics beginning this school year.

- Approved graphic organizers, checklists, and supplemental reference sheets [posted to the DESE website](#) are now provided in PDF format, based on requests from schools and districts.
- The MCAS Student Kiosk is the new computer-based testing platform. Although the MCAS Student Kiosk is similar to the previous computer-based test format, there are minor differences. Students and educators should review the computer-based practice tests prior to test administration.
- Student Registration (SR), like the previous SR/PNP process, is used to assign students specific test accommodations. Student Registration will be completed in the MCAS Portal, which is the new test administration and management website for the MCAS tests beginning in 2025.
- Text-to-speech is not a form-dependent accommodation in the new systems. The accommodation can be added during testing if necessary without voiding the student's test.
- To provide greater clarity about which students are eligible for the MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt), an updated definition for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities is provided in Part III of this manual.

Please see the [Crosswalk of Terminology](#) for more information related to the transition to the MCAS Portal and the MCAS Student Kiosk.

Please note the following updates to this document:

- Guidance for text-to-speech and the human read-aloud accommodation is included to affirm that these accommodations provide equivalent access and can be used interchangeably by the student, unless otherwise specified.
- Guidance for speech-to-text and the human scribe accommodation is included to affirm that these accommodations provide equivalent access and can be used interchangeably by the student, unless otherwise specified.

## C. Accessibility Features and Accommodations

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

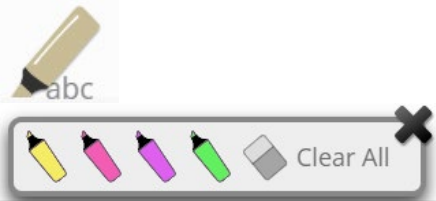
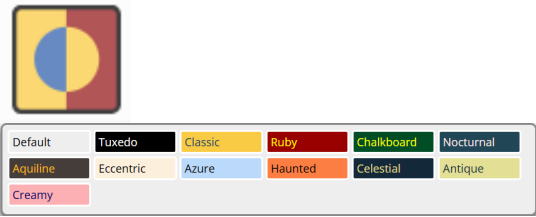
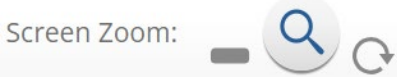


- **Universal Accessibility Features (UFs):** tools and supports that are available to *all* students, either on the computer-based tests or their paper-based equivalents; some may need to be requested prior to testing via SR.
- **Designated Accessibility Features (DFs):** flexible test administration 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 as detailed in a student's IEP or 504 plan and ELs
- **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

## II. Accessibility Features for All Students

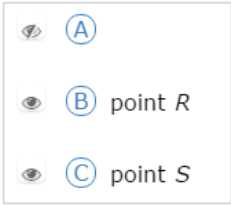



### A. Universal Accessibility Features (UFs)

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.

The UF listed with the designation of **(SR)** in the table below must be identified in the Student Registration **prior to the start of testing**.



Table 1. Universal Accessibility Features Available to All Students			
#	Computer-Based Testing		Paper-Based Testing
	Icon in the Student Kiosk (if Available)	Description	
UF1		<p><b>Highlighter tool</b> Highlights text in four colors: yellow, pink, purple, and green.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Highlighting will not be retained if the student exits the test, submits the test, pauses the test for more than 60 minutes, or if the test abruptly closes.</p>	<p><b>Highlighter</b> Colored pencils and yellow highlighters may be used, but students must use a #2 pencil only to answer all test questions.</p>
UF2		<p><b>Color contrast</b> Changes the background color and text color during testing.</p>	<p><b>Colored overlays or tinted lens(es)</b></p>
UF3		<p><b>Screen zoom tool</b> Enlarges screen content to 150%, 200%, and 300%.</p>	<p><b>Magnification tool/device</b> or low-vision aid</p>
UF4 <b>(SR)</b>		<p><b>Enlarged cursor/Mouse pointer tool</b> Students can select an enlarged and colored cursor.</p>	<p><b>Enlarged pencil/modified writing instrument</b></p>
UF5		<p><b>Line reader tool</b> Masks text so only part of the text can be viewed at one time.</p>	<p><b>Tracking device</b>, such as a straight edge or similar tool</p>

**Table 1. Universal Accessibility Features Available to All Students (cont.)**

#	Computer-Based Testing		Paper-Based Testing
	Icon in the Student Kiosk (if Available)	Description	
UF6		<p><b>Answer masking (available for multiple-choice items)</b> Students can click an icon of an eye to toggle between hiding answer choices and having them reappear.</p>	<p><b>Mask text or answer(s)</b> using a blank card or cutout</p>
UF7		<p><b>Answer eliminator (available for multiple-choice items)</b> Students can mark an “X” through each answer option the student believes is incorrect. <b>(Note:</b> Answer choices cannot be selected while crossed out.)</p>	<p><b>Use a pencil to eliminate answer choices</b> in their booklet <b>(Note:</b> Students should take care not to eliminate answer bubble options, as stray marks will lead to an incorrect score.)</p>
UF8		<p><b>Item flag/Bookmark</b> Students can select the star icon to save a question to come back to later and can select the down arrow to access a review screen to navigate to another test question.</p>	<p><b>Use a blank place marker</b> to mark a question for later review <b>(Note:</b> Sticky notes are <i>not</i> allowed.)</p>
UF9	<p><b>Audio aid</b> (e.g., amplification device) (Note: Smartphones may not be used.)</p>		
UF10		<p><b>Notepad</b> Students can type in their own notes on each test question. <b>New for 2025,</b> the notepad is now available for all subject-area tests. <b>Note:</b> Notes written in the notepad will not be retained if the student exits the test, submits the test, pauses the test for more than 60 minutes, or if the test abruptly closes.</p>	<p><b>Scratch paper</b> is required for all students</p>
UF11	<p><b>Test administrator reads aloud selected words</b> (or <b>signs selected words</b>, in the case of a student who is Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing), as requested by the student (<b><i>not permitted</i></b> on ELA tests).</p>		



**Table 1. Universal Accessibility Features Available to All Students (cont.)**

#	Computer-Based Testing		Paper-Based Testing
	Icon in the Student Kiosk (if Available)	Description	
	The student may point to a <b>word or phrase</b> 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	<b>Test administrator redirects the student’s attention to the test</b> 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	<b>Test administrator repeats or clarifies <i>general test administration directions</i> from the appropriate Test Administrator’s Manual scripts</b> to the student, as needed.		
UF14		<b>New for 2025 General masking</b> Students can mask certain parts of the test interface or question. Students can add multiple masking squares, reposition them, and resize them.	<b>Masking</b> Student can use blank paper/index card to mask test content.
UF15		<b>New for 2025 Reverse contrast</b> Students can reverse all colors on screen (e.g., from light to dark).	N/A

## B. Designated Accessibility Features (DFs)

Most students will be tested in their regular classrooms according to the 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.

<b>Table 2. Designated Accessibility Features Available to Any Student</b>	
<b>Feature #</b>	<b>Accessibility Feature</b>
DF1	<b>Small group test administration</b> (May include up to a total of 10 students.)
DF2	<b>Individual (one-to-one) test administration</b> (Student must be tested in a separate setting.)
DF3	<b>Frequent brief supervised breaks</b>
DF4	<b>Separate or alternate test location</b> (Can be a group of one or more students; the location should be specified, e.g., library, homeroom)
DF5	<b>Seating in a specified area</b> of the testing room, including the use of a study carrel (If listed in an IEP or 504 plan, the specific area should be described.)
DF6	<b>Adaptive or specialized furniture</b> (e.g., seating, desk, or lighting)
DF7	<b>Noise buffer</b> , such as noise-canceling earmuffs/headphones or white noise (Note: music or other recordings may <i>not</i> be played, unless granted as a <i>unique accommodation</i> by DESE.)
DF8	<b>Familiar test administrator</b>
DF9	<b>Student reads test aloud to self:</b> Student must be tested in a separate setting, unless a low-volume device (e.g., a Whisperphone) is used.
DF10	<b>Specific time of day</b>
DF11	<b>Stop Testing policy:</b> 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

#### A. 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](#).

Students with disabilities are required to participate in all MCAS assessments scheduled for 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 should use the table below, as well as the decision-making tool in [Appendix B](#), to assist in determining how students will participate in MCAS.

Table 3. MCAS Participation for Students with Disabilities	
<b>Option 1</b>	The student participates in standard MCAS testing under routine testing conditions.
<b>Option 2</b>	The student participates in standard MCAS testing using necessary accessibility features and accommodations to demonstrate knowledge and skills.
<b>Option 3</b>	The student meets the definition of “students with the most significant cognitive disabilities” and participates in the MCAS-Alt.

#### B. Definition of a Student with a Disability

For the purpose of MCAS participation, a student with a disability is defined as a student with a consented-to IEP provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement 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 based on alternate achievement standards. 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](#) 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.

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

As required by federal regulation [34 CFR 200.6\(e\)](#), 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).

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

When the complexity of a student’s disability presents 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](#).

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](#), 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: any student with an identified disability that is documented in 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 staff 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 that are documented in an IEP or 504 plan**

A student who does not have a documented disability and is not served by either an IEP or 504 plan is not eligible to 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 identified 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** in the 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 generally **uses the accommodation** (with rare exceptions) during routine classroom instruction and assessment in the subject, 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’s profile meets all the criteria to receive the accommodation, as shown in Table 6.

Accommodations may **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 contact the Department at 781-338-3625 or by email at [mcas@mass.gov](mailto:mcas@mass.gov) for technical assistance.

## Nondisclosure Acknowledgment Forms

Test administrators for students using certain accommodations must sign an [MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment](#) 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**

## C. 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** and viewing the **student 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 DESE 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 for the use of a unique accommodation by submitting the request to [mcas@mass.gov](mailto:mcas@mass.gov) at least two weeks prior to testing. If approved by DESE, the student’s IEP or 504 plan must include the approved unique accommodation.

### Identifying Accommodations on the Student Registration

Accommodations listed with the designation of **(SR)** in the tables below must be identified in the Student Registration **prior 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 [MCAS Student Registration Guide](#).

#### Form-dependent accommodations for CBT:

- ASL video edition of the grade 10 Mathematics test and June high school Science tests
- Compatible assistive technology
- Human read-aloud

- Human signer
- Screen reader
- Spanish/English edition for Mathematics, Science, and Civics tests

#### **Form-dependent accommodations for PBT:**

- Large print
- Braille

### **Updating IEPs and 504 Plans**

State regulation [CMR 603 28.04\(3\)](#) requires that IEP teams annually review students' IEP plans so that plans reflect the most current needs of each student. It is also recommended that students' 504 plans be reviewed on an annual basis. The teams should decide which, if any, accommodations and accessibility features are necessary for the student to participate in MCAS testing scheduled for the student. We recommend that consideration be given to 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](#) 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](#) 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.

## **D. 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-based test. 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)

<b>Table 4. Test Presentation Accommodations for Students with Disabilities</b>		
<b>#</b>	<b>Computer-Based Test</b>	<b>Paper-Based Test</b>
A1 <b>(SR)</b>	<b>Paper-based edition</b> 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.	N/A
A2 <b>(SR)</b>	N/A  (See UF3 and UF4 in Table 1 for information on screen magnification and enlarged cursor/pointer tool)	<p><b>Large print</b> <b>New for 2025</b>, large-print materials will be presented as approximately 24-point font size on 8.5” x 11” paper (i.e., a standard-sized test booklet).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large-print special instructions will accompany the large-print test.</li> <li>• Either the student or the test administrator must transcribe the student’s responses verbatim from the large-print test &amp; answer booklet into the standard test &amp; answer booklet and returned according to instructions in the PAM so the student will receive credit. (See additional procedures listed in Appendix C.)</li> <li>• Test administrators for students using accommodation A2 must sign an <a href="#">MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment</a> before administering this accommodation.</li> </ul> <p><b>⚠</b> See Appendix A of the <a href="#">MCAS Student Registration Guide</a> for important information about assigning this accommodation.</p>

**Table 4. Test Presentation Accommodations for Students with Disabilities (cont.)**

#	Computer-Based Test	Paper-Based Test
<p>A3.1 <b>(SR)</b></p> <p>A3.2 <b>(SR)</b></p> <p>A3.3 <b>(SR)</b></p>	<p>A3.1 – <b>Screen reader:</b> ONLY for a student who is <b>blind</b> and uses the assistive technology program JAWS or NVDA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A separate hard-copy Braille edition test with the appropriate Braille graphics will automatically be sent for this accommodation.</li> <li>• All responses must be entered onscreen, either by the student or test administrator.</li> <li>• Test administrators for students using accommodation A3.1 must sign an <a href="#">MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment</a> before administering this accommodation.</li> </ul> <p>▲ See Appendix A of the <a href="#">MCAS Student Registration Guide</a> for important information about assigning this accommodation.</p> <p>See <a href="#">Appendix E: Guidelines for Using Assistive Technology as an MCAS Test Accommodation</a> for additional information about this accommodation.</p>	<p>A3.2 – <b>Braille edition</b> (hard copy):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All answers must be either <b>scribed</b> or <b>transcribed</b> verbatim into the student’s standard booklet and returned according to instructions in the PAM so the student will receive credit. (See additional procedures listed in Appendix C.)</li> <li>• Braille special instructions will accompany the Braille test.</li> <li>• Test administrators for students using accommodation A3.2 must sign an <a href="#">MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment</a> before administering this accommodation.</li> </ul> <p>▲ See Appendix A of the <a href="#">MCAS Student Registration Guide</a> for important information about assigning this accommodation.</p>
	<p>A3.3 – <b>Assistive Technology:</b> 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.</p> <p>Test administrators for students using accommodation A3.3 must sign an <a href="#">MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment</a> before administering this accommodation.</p> <p>▲ See Appendix A of the <a href="#">MCAS Student Registration Guide</a> for important information about assigning this accommodation.</p>	

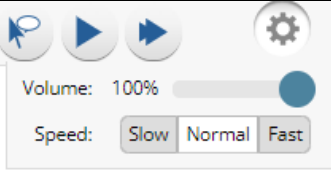

Table 4. Test Presentation Accommodations for Students with Disabilities (cont.)		
#	Computer-Based Test	Paper-Based Test
	See <a href="#">Appendix E: Guidelines for Using Assistive Technology as an MCAS Test Accommodation</a> for additional information about this accommodation.	
	<p>Note for A3.1, A3.2, and A3.3</p> <p><b>Previewing Braille test content by test administrators:</b> 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.</p>	
A4 (SR)	 <p><b>Text-to-speech (TTS):</b> computer reads text aloud for Mathematics, Science, and Civics (<i>not ELA</i>). Test takers can play, pause, or stop audio, and can skip content by selecting specific portions of text to be read aloud. Test takers can adjust the volume and speed at which content is read aloud.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For students who require that text be read aloud, IEP teams should consider <b>whether TTS is preferable to a human reader (or vice versa). Human read-aloud provides the same accessibility support as TTS, and the two can be used interchangeably, unless otherwise specified</b> (e.g., “text-to-speech is preferable, but human reader is acceptable”).</li> <li>TTS may be used either with headphones or without headphones in a separate setting.</li> <li>Students should view the tutorial and take an online TTS practice test prior to testing.</li> </ul> <p>Note: TTS for ELA is a <a href="#">special access accommodation</a> (SA1.1). See Table 6 for guidelines and criteria to receive this accommodation.</p>	
A5 (SR)	<p><b>Human read-aloud for Mathematics, Science, and Civics (<i>not ELA</i>)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Human read-aloud provides the same accessibility support as TTS, and the two can be used interchangeably unless otherwise specified</b> (e.g., “text-to-speech is preferable, but human reader is acceptable”).</li> <li><b>Note:</b> For computer-based testing, schools may choose to have test administrators read the test over the student’s shoulder, or create test administrator logins so that test administrators can log in to their own test on their own device in order to read aloud.</li> <li>If using test administrator logins, test administrators will need their own computer to sign in to their own version of the test. (Students will sign in and record responses using their student logins.)</li> <li>For instructions on creating test administrator logins for human read-aloud, test coordinators should refer to Appendix F.</li> <li>Note: Reading aloud the ELA test is a <a href="#">special access accommodation</a> (SA1.2). See Table 6 for guidelines and criteria to receive this accommodation.</li> </ul>	

Table 4. Test Presentation Accommodations for Students with Disabilities (cont.)		
#	Computer-Based Test	Paper-Based Test
	<p>Review <a href="#">Appendix D: Procedures for Providing the Human Read-Aloud</a>.</p> <p>Test administrators for students using accommodation A5 must sign an <a href="#">MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment</a> before administering this accommodation.</p> <p>▲ See Appendix A of the <a href="#">MCAS Student Registration Guide</a> for important information about assigning this accommodation.</p>	
A6.1 <b>(SR)</b>	<p><b>Human signer</b> for Mathematics, Science, Civics and for ELA test questions (<b>but not ELA reading passages</b>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If using test administrator logins, test administrators will need their own computer to sign in to their own version of the test. (Students will sign in and record responses using their student logins.)</li> <li>• For instructions on creating test administrator logins for human signer, test coordinators should refer to Appendix F.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• The test must be administered either <b>individually</b> or to a <b>small group of 2–5 students</b> receiving the human signer accommodation.</li> <li>• If preferred, selected words, phrases, or sections may be signed to the student, as requested, rather than signing the entire test.</li> <li>• <b>Signing the ELA reading passages</b> is a special access accommodation (SA2). See Table 6 for guidelines and criteria to receive this accommodation.</li> <li>• <b>Previewing test content by human signers:</b> Under secure conditions supervised by the principal, interpreters may review test materials up to four days prior to testing (unless given special permission for an earlier review). Test materials may not be removed from the school nor accessed online outside of the school.</li> <li>• Test administrators and interpreters for students using accommodation A6.1 must sign an <a href="#">MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment</a> before administering this accommodation.</li> </ul> <p>▲ See Appendix A of the <a href="#">MCAS Student Registration Guide</a> for important information about assigning this accommodation.</p>	
A6.2 <b>(SR)</b>	 <p><b>ASL video</b> editions of the computer-based spring 2025 MCAS grade 10 Mathematics and June high school Science tests (<b>not available</b> for February high school Science or the ELA and Math retests). The icon to the right shows how the ASL video</p>	N/A (See A6.1 for Human Signer)

<b>Table 4. Test Presentation Accommodations for Students with Disabilities (cont.)</b>		
<b>#</b>	<b>Computer-Based Test</b>	<b>Paper-Based Test</b>
	<p>appears in the student testing platform.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An embedded ASL video is built into these computer-based tests.</li> <li>• Students may turn on, turn off, pause, and control the signing speed of the ASL video.</li> <li>• Students should view the tutorial and take <b>online ASL practice tests</b> prior to testing to become familiar with the features of the ASL video player.</li> </ul> <p>⚠ See Appendix A of the <a href="#">MCAS Student Registration Guide</a> for important information about assigning this accommodation.</p>	
A7	<p><b>Human signer for test directions only</b> (from the appropriate Test Administrator’s Manual scripts) for a student who is Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing</p>	
A8	<p><b>Track student progress</b> by assisting the student to move from one test question to the next</p> <p>Students requiring this accommodation may have attention challenges and require supports and redirection to participate in multi-page assessments.</p> <p>Test administrators for students using accommodation A8 must sign an <a href="#">MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment</a> before administering this accommodation.</p>	

**Table 5. Response Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

#	Computer-Based Test	Paper-Based Test								
<p>A9 <b>(SR)</b></p>	<p><b>Use of approved graphic organizers, checklists, or supplemental reference sheets:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only the approved ELA organizers and supplemental mathematics reference sheets <a href="#">made available by DESE</a> (<i>new for 2025</i>, posted in PDF format) 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.</li> </ul> <p>Exception: ELA graphic organizers <i>without</i> text (e.g., paper with only lines, arrows, boxes, dots) <b>may be used without</b> DESE approval by students who have this accommodation listed in their IEP or 504 plans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For STE, students may use a <a href="#">sample reference sheet</a>, or schools may submit a customized reference sheet for DESE approval, as follows:</li> </ul> <table border="1" data-bbox="581 785 1289 1037"> <thead> <tr> <th>MCAS Test Administration</th> <th>Reference Sheet Submission Deadline</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>February High School Science</td> <td><b>January 10, 2025</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Spring Grades 5 and 8 STE</td> <td><b>March 7, 2025</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>June High School Science</td> <td><b>April 25, 2025</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individualized reference sheets approved prior to the 2022–23 school year <b>must be resubmitted for approval</b> for use on the 2025 STE tests.</li> <li>All science reference sheets submitted for approval must be accompanied by a completed <a href="#">cover sheet</a>.</li> </ul> <p>Students may not use reference sheets that have already been filled out prior to the beginning of the test administration, and test administrators must check to confirm that they are providing students with blank sheets. Additional guidance is provided on the first page of each supplemental reference sheet posted to the DESE website.</p>		MCAS Test Administration	Reference Sheet Submission Deadline	February High School Science	<b>January 10, 2025</b>	Spring Grades 5 and 8 STE	<b>March 7, 2025</b>	June High School Science	<b>April 25, 2025</b>
MCAS Test Administration	Reference Sheet Submission Deadline									
February High School Science	<b>January 10, 2025</b>									
Spring Grades 5 and 8 STE	<b>March 7, 2025</b>									
June High School Science	<b>April 25, 2025</b>									
<p>A10.1 <b>(SR)</b></p>	<p><b>Scribe responses (A10.1)</b> for Mathematics, Science, and Civics (<i>not ELA</i>) A <b>human scribe</b> will record the student’s responses verbatim (i.e., as dictated or signed by the student) <i>at the time of testing</i>, either on the computer-based test or in the student’s paper-based test. (See <a href="#">Appendix C</a> for specific guidance on providing the scribe accommodation.)</p> <p>Often for students with motor, processing, or expressive language difficulties, or who have had a recent injury (such as a broken hand or arm).</p> <p>Department approval is not required for using a scribe with a 504 plan that is under development for student with a recent injury.</p> <p>Scribing responses for ELA is a <b>special access accommodation</b> (SA3.1). See Table 6 for guidelines and criteria to receive this accommodation.</p> <p>Test administrators for students using accommodation A10.1 must sign an <a href="#">MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment</a> before administering this accommodation.</p>									

**Table 5. Response Accommodations for Students with Disabilities (cont.)**

#	Computer-Based Test	Paper-Based Test
<p>A10.2 (SR)</p>	<p><b>Speech-to-text (A10.2)</b> for Mathematics, Science, and Civics (<b>not ELA</b>). Students use a computer-based voice recognition program (other than a smartphone) that generates responses by converting speech into text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A speech-to-text accommodation provides the same access as a human scribe, and the two can be used interchangeably, unless otherwise specified.</li> <li>• If the student will use both scribe and speech-to-text on one test, schools should select speech-to-text during Student Registration or in the MCAS Portal user interface instead of human scribe.</li> <li>• All answers must be either <b>scribed</b> or <b>transcribed</b> verbatim into the student’s standard booklet and returned according to instructions in the PAM so the student will receive credit. (See additional procedures listed in Appendix C.)</li> <li>• Students who use speech-to-text will need headphones/Whisperphones unless they are tested individually in a separate setting.</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> Speech-to-text for ELA is a <b>special access accommodation</b> (SA3.2). See Table 6 for guidelines and criteria to receive this accommodation.</p> <p>Test administrators for students using accommodation A10.2 must sign an <a href="#">MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment</a> before administering this accommodation.</p> <p>See <a href="#">Appendix E: Guidelines for Using Assistive Technology as an MCAS Test Accommodation</a> for additional information about this accommodation.</p>	
<p>A11</p>	<p><b>Responses recorded by student on special paper or specialized device:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responses <b>must be transcribed</b> into the student’s computer-based test or test &amp; answer booklet by a test administrator <i>anytime during the testing window</i>.</li> <li>• <b>Students who transcribe</b> their own responses must do so <i>during the test session</i> and must finish on the day in which the test session began.</li> <li>• See <a href="#">Appendix C</a> for guidelines on transcribing student responses.</li> <li>• Test administrators for students using accommodation A11 must sign an <a href="#">MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment</a> before administering this accommodation.</li> </ul>	
<p>A12 (SR)</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p><b>Typed responses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responses must be printed out, one per page, and inserted in the student’s test &amp; answer booklet with all required header information typed on each page (see the <a href="#">PAM</a>).</li> <li>• Schools should not transcribe students’ responses into their test &amp; answer booklet.</li> <li>• After being printed, responses <b>must</b> be deleted from the device.</li> </ul> <p>Test administrators for students using accommodation A12 must sign an <a href="#">MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment</a> before administering this accommodation.</p>

<b>Table 5. Response Accommodations for Students with Disabilities (cont.)</b>		
<b>#</b>	<b>Computer-Based Test</b>	<b>Paper-Based Test</b>
A13	<p><b>Student records responses</b> on a device (other than a smartphone) for the purpose of playing back and transcribing the recorded segment(s). Students that use stand-alone text-to-speech software or an audio recording device to listen to their draft response should also have accommodation A11 listed in their IEP or 504 plan. <b>Responses must be deleted from the device once they have been transcribed into the student’s test.</b></p> <p>Test administrators for students using accommodation A13 must sign an <a href="#">MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment</a> before administering this accommodation.</p>	
A14	<p><b>Responses signed onto video (for a student who is Deaf or Hard-of Hearing)</b>, then transcribed by the student onscreen or into the test &amp; answer booklet during playback. The video must be deleted after transcription.</p> <p>Test administrators for students using accommodation A14 must sign an <a href="#">MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment</a> before administering this accommodation.</p>	
A15	<p><b>Monitor placement of responses</b> in the appropriate area onscreen or in the test &amp; answer booklet by the test administrator</p> <p>Test administrators for students using accommodation A15 must sign an <a href="#">MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment</a> before administering this accommodation.</p>	
A16	<p><b>Refreshable Braille Display/Braille note-taker</b> (specific external device used in conjunction with screen reader for student who is blind or has a vision impairment)</p> <p>A hard-copy edition of the Braille test must also be ordered and the screen reader test must be selected.</p>	<p><b>Braille note-taker</b> (specific external device used in conjunction with hard-copy Braille test)</p> <p>Braille notes should be placed in the school’s return shipment.</p>
A17	<p><b>Braille writer</b> (specific external device used in conjunction with screen reader and hard-copy Braille test)</p> <p>A hard-copy edition of the Braille test must also be ordered and the screen reader test must be selected.</p>	<p><b>Braille writer</b> (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 &amp; answer booklet, with all required information on each page (also see the <a href="#">PAM</a>).</p>



**Table 5. Response Accommodations for Students with Disabilities (cont.)**

#	Computer-Based Test	Paper-Based Test
<p>A18 <b>(SR)</b></p>	<p><b><i>New for 2025</i></b></p> <p><b>Word Prediction for Mathematics, Science, and Civics (not ELA)</b></p> <p>An assistive technology tool for writing that provides a list of suggested words for the student to select based on letters typed by the student. Note: The word prediction tool is embedded into the MCAS Student Kiosk. See <a href="#">Appendix E</a> if attempting to use a school-owned word prediction application.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Word Prediction for ELA is a <b>special access accommodation (SA6)</b>. See Table 6 for guidelines and criteria to receive this accommodation.</p>	<p>NA</p>

## 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 word decoding/reading, writing, or performing basic numerical 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 apply 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 accompany the results of students who use a special access 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.


Schools should be careful to provide special access accommodations only to students who are entitled to them. Students who receive these accommodation but do not have them listed in their IEPs **are likely to have their tests invalidated**.

**Table 6. Special Access Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

#	Computer- and Paper-Based Tests
<p>SA1.1 (SR) and SA1.2 (SR)</p>	<p><b>Text-to-speech (SA1.1) or human read-aloud (SA1.2) for ELA only</b>, including oral presentation of test questions, response options, and passages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Text-to-speech and human read-aloud may be used interchangeably, unless otherwise specified.</li> <li>• A human reader may either read aloud from the <b>computer-based test</b> (signed in to a nearby computer or sitting next to the student) or from the <b>paper-based test</b>. A human reader may read aloud to a group of up to five students.</li> </ul> <p>This accommodation is intended for a very small number of students with disabilities resulting in substantial reading deficits, as documented in locally administered diagnostic evaluations and observations. To receive the text-to-speech or human read-aloud accommodation for ELA, the student must meet <b>all</b> of the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be <b>virtually unable to read</b>, 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)</li> <li>• receive <b>ongoing intervention</b> to learn the skill of reading</li> <li>• use this accommodation routinely (except during instruction in learning to read)</li> </ul> <p>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).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note: For computer-based testing, schools may choose to have test administrators read the test over the student’s shoulder, or create test administrator logins so that test administrators can log in to their own test on their own device in order to read aloud.</li> <li>• If using test administrator logins, test administrators will need their own computer to sign in to their own version of the test. (Students will sign in and record responses using their student logins.)</li> <li>• For instructions on creating test administrator logins for human read-aloud, test coordinators should refer to <a href="#">Appendix F</a>.</li> </ul> <p>Review <a href="#">Appendix D: Procedures for Providing the Human Read-Aloud</a>.</p> <p>Test administrators for students using special accommodation SA1.2 must sign an MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment before administering this accommodation.</p> <p>⚠ See Appendix A of the <a href="#">MCAS Student Registration Guide</a> for important information about assigning this accommodation.</p>

Table 6. Special Access Accommodations for Students with Disabilities (cont.)	
#	Computer- and Paper-Based Tests
SA2 (SR)	<p><b>Human signer for ELA</b>, including reading passages, questions, and answer options: This accommodation is intended for students who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing and who are <b>severely limited or prevented from reading</b>, as documented in locally administered diagnostic evaluations. The student must meet <b>all</b> the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be <b>virtually unable to read</b> (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</li> <li>• use this accommodation routinely, except during reading instruction</li> <li>• receive ongoing intervention to learn the skill</li> </ul> <p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Note:</b> For computer-based testing, schools may choose to have test administrators use the student’s test for signing content to the student, or create test administrator logins so that test administrators can log in to their own test on their own device in order to sign the test.</li> <li>• If using test administrator logins, test administrators will need their own computer to sign in to their own version of the test. (Students will sign in and record responses using their student logins.)</li> <li>• For instructions on creating test administrator logins for human signer, test coordinators should refer to <a href="#">Appendix F</a>.</li> </ul> <p>▲ See Appendix A of the <a href="#">MCAS Student Registration Guide</a> for important information about assigning this accommodation.</p> <p>Test administrators for students using accommodation SA2 must sign an <a href="#">MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment</a> before administering this accommodation.</p>
SA3.1 (SR)	<p><b>Scribe responses ELA:</b></p> <p><b>A human scribe</b> (SA3.1) will record the student’s responses verbatim (i.e., as dictated by the student) <i>at the time of testing</i>, either onscreen (computer-based test) or in the student’s test &amp; answer booklet (paper-based test).</p> <p>This accommodation is intended for students who have the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• documented significant motor difficulties or difficulties producing writing</li> <li>• a recent injury (such as a broken hand or arm) that makes it difficult to produce responses.</li> </ul> <p>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. A human scribe and speech-to-text provide the same access and can be used interchangeably, <b>if the student is familiar with the features</b>. 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.</p>

Table 6. Special Access Accommodations for Students with Disabilities (cont.)	
#	Computer- and Paper-Based Tests
	<p>See <a href="#">Appendix C</a> for specific guidance on providing the scribe accommodation.</p> <p>Test administrators for students using accommodation SA3.1 must sign an <a href="#">MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment</a> before administering this accommodation.</p>
SA3.2 (SR)	<p><b>Speech-to-text (SA3.2) for ELA:</b> Students use a speech recognition program that converts voice to written text.</p> <p>This accommodation is intended for students who have the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• documented significant motor or processing difficulties</li> <li>• a recent injury (such as a broken hand or arm) that makes it difficult to produce responses.</li> <li>• Students taking the computer-based test will be able to use an embedded speech-to-text tool that functions within MCAS Student Kiosk. 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 <a href="#">Appendix E</a> for a step-by-step guide on accessing and using this feature. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ If students use their own AT devices, all assessment content must be deleted from these devices after the test for security purposes.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Students who use speech-to-text will need headphones/Whisperphones, unless they are teste individually in a separate setting.</li> </ul> <p>This accommodation is intended for students who have significant challenges producing written text, which can result from significant motor or processing difficulties.</p> <p>Test administrators for students using accommodation SA3.2 must sign an <a href="#">MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment</a> before administering this accommodation.</p>
SA4 (SR)	<p><b>Calculator device</b> (including addition/subtraction or multiplication/division tables) on a <b>noncalculator session</b> for Mathematics tests: Students taking the computer-based test will be able to use an embedded calculator (or a handheld calculator).</p> <p>This accommodation is intended for a small number of students with documented disabilities that <b>severely limit or prevent them from performing basic calculations</b> 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.</p> <p>The student must meet all of the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be <b>virtually unable to calculate</b> (i.e., unable to perform single-digit addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division without a calculation device or other mathematics tool)</li> <li>• use the calculation device or tool during routine instruction in mathematics</li> <li>• receive ongoing intervention to learn the skill</li> </ul>

Table 6. Special Access Accommodations for Students with Disabilities (cont.)	
#	Computer- and Paper-Based Tests
	Students using handheld calculators to fulfill SA4 should be tested in their own group to minimize confusion during test administration. Please contact Student Assessment Services at 781-338-3625 or <a href="mailto:mcas@mass.gov">mcas@mass.gov</a> to request approval of a unique calculation device.
SA5 (SR)	 <p><b>Spell checker for ELA</b>, including an external spell-checking device for the paper-based test; or in conjunction with the typed response accommodation for the paper-based test:</p> <p>This accommodation is intended for a small number of students with disabilities that <b>severely limit or prevent them from spelling correctly</b>, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so.</p> <p>The student must meet all of the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be <b>unable to spell simple words</b> (i.e., at the beginning stages of learning how to spell), as documented by locally administered diagnostic evaluations</li> <li>• produce understandable written work only when provided this accommodation, which the student uses during routine instruction</li> <li>• receive ongoing intervention to learn the skill</li> </ul> <p>The student may <i>not</i> use grammar check or access the internet during the test.</p>
SA6 (SR)	<p><b>Word prediction for ELA tests</b>, which provides a choice of frequently used words after the student types the first few letters of a word:</p> <p>Students using the word prediction special access accommodation for the computer-based ELA test will be able to use an embedded word prediction that functions within the MCAS Student Kiosk. Refer to <a href="#">Appendix E</a> for a step-by-step guide on accessing and using this feature.</p> <p>For paper-based tests, a word prediction application must be used at a separate external computer, and a test administrator or the student must transcribe the selected word(s) into the student’s test &amp; answer booklet. (See <a href="#">Appendix C</a> for information and guidelines on transcribing student responses.)</p> <p>This accommodation is intended for a small number of students who meet the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have a disability that results in significant challenges to generate written responses</li> <li>• requires access to word prediction to produce basic written expression commensurate with the student’s skills</li> <li>• Test administrators for students using accommodation SA6 must sign an <a href="#">MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment</a> before administering this accommodation.</li> </ul>

## Procedures for Students with Diabetes Who Use a Cell Phone to Control a Continuous Glucose Monitor (CGM) or an Insulin Pump

For students with diabetes who use a cell phone application to monitor blood glucose levels with a CGM, or to control an insulin pump, the Department recommends that the school test coordinator consult with the school nurse, and that the school nurse follow the student’s Individual Health Care Plan and/or 504 plan/IEP in regard to remote monitoring of blood glucose levels. The student may retain the cell phone during testing in order to monitor blood glucose levels, or to control the pump, provided that the student is tested in a small group (no more than 10 students) or individually, so that the test administrator can closely monitor the student and ensure that the phone is not used for any other purpose.

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

ELs in grades 3–8 must participate in all MCAS 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 2025 ELA testing is *optional* for ELs who enrolled in U.S. schools **after March 1, 2024**, and who were not reported in the March 2024 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.

	Subject Area Test		
	ELA	Mathematics	STE
<b>First-Year EL Students<sup>1</sup></b>	<i>Optional<sup>2</sup></i>	Required	Required
<b>All Other Students</b>	Required	Required	Required

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

<sup>2</sup> 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](mailto: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](#).

### A. 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](#) or a similar locally developed form, and maintain this information in the student’s file.

### Involving Students in Selecting and Using Accommodations

The more that students are involved in the accommodations selection process, the more likely they are to 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. Educators should play a role in assisting students to advocate on their own behalf regarding accessibility features and accommodations.

### B. 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 designated in the Student Registration (**SR**) prior to the start of testing. These accommodations are noted with a designation of (**SR**) in Table 8. The names of certain accommodations and the process for their selection in the SR are identical to accommodations for students with disabilities, although the EL accommodations have unique codes (e.g., EL1).

Table 8. Accommodations for ELs	
EL1 <b>(SR)</b>	<p><b>Paper-based edition:</b> 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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● ELs should have the opportunity to take computer-based practice tests prior to selecting the paper-based test.</li> <li>● Administering the ELA test to a first-year EL is <i>optional</i>.</li> </ul>
EL2	<p><b><a href="#">Approved Bilingual Word-to-Word Dictionary and Glossary</a></b> (English/Native language)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● This accommodation is available to students who are currently or were ever reported as EL.</li> <li>● 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.</li> <li>● Schools that currently use e-book versions, such as from <a href="#">wordtoward.com</a>, in regular instruction and classroom assessments may use them during MCAS testing. See <a href="#">Appendix G</a> for more information.</li> </ul>

Table 8. Accommodations for ELs (cont.)	
EL3.1 <b>(SR)</b> and EL3.2 <b>(SR)</b>	<p><b>Text-to-speech (TTS)</b> (EL3.1) computer reads text aloud for Mathematics, STE and Civics (<b>not ELA</b>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The TTS and human read-aloud accommodations provide the same access and can be used interchangeably, if necessary.</li> <li>TTS is in English only.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Human read-aloud</b> (EL 3.2) for Mathematics, STE and Civics (<b>not ELA</b>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The test must be administered in a separate setting either <b>individually</b> or to a <b>group of 2–5 students</b> all of whom are receiving the human reader accommodation.</li> </ul> <p>Review <a href="#">Appendix D: Procedures for Providing the Human Read-Aloud</a>.            Test administrators for students using accommodation EL3.2 must sign an <a href="#">MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment</a> before administering this accommodation.</p>
EL4.1 <b>(SR)</b> and EL4.2 <b>(SR)</b>	<p><b>Scribe or speech-to-text</b> for Mathematics, STE, and Civics (<b>not ELA</b>), consisting either of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a <b>human scribe</b> (EL4.1), who records student’s responses verbatim <i>at the time of testing</i>. See <a href="#">Appendix C</a> for specific guidance on providing the scribe accommodation; or</li> <li>a <b>speech-to-text</b> (EL4.2) computer program that converts voice to written text.</li> <li>A speech-to-text accommodation provides the same access as a human scribe, and the two can be used interchangeably, unless otherwise specified.</li> </ul> <p>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 tool.</p> <p>Test administrators for students using accommodation EL4.1 or EL4.2 must sign an <a href="#">MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment</a> before administering these accommodations.</p>
EL5	<p><b>Test administrator reads aloud/repeats/clarifies general administration directions in English</b> (from the appropriate Test Administrator’s Manual scripts)</p>
EL6	<p><b>Test administrator reads aloud/repeats/clarifies general administration directions</b> (from the appropriate Test Administrator’s Manual scripts) <b>in student’s native language</b>, if a native language speaker is available</p>
EL7 <b>(SR)</b>	<p><b>Spanish/English</b> edition: <b>New for 2025</b>, the Spanish/English is available for all Mathematics, STE, and Civics tests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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).</li> <li>These tests are intended for Spanish-speaking ELs who have been in the U.S. less than 3 years.</li> <li>Students may respond either in Spanish or English. (Note that for all other MCAS tests, students may respond only in English.)</li> <li>When signing in to the computer-based Spanish/English test, students may select the language (Spanish or English) in which they would like to see the MCAS Student Kiosk icons and directions. This selection is made prior to entering the test.</li> </ul>

**Table 8. Accommodations for ELs (cont.)**

<p>EL8 <b>(SR)</b></p>	<p><b>Word prediction for Mathematics, Science, and Civics (not ELA) tests</b> provides a choice of frequently used words after the student types the first few letters of a word:</p> <p>For computer-based tests, students will be able to use an embedded word prediction tool that functions within the MCAS Student Kiosk. (See <a href="#">Appendix E</a> for a step-by-step guide on accessing and using this feature.)</p> <p>For paper-based tests, a word prediction application must be used at a separate external computer, and a test administrator or the student must transcribe the selected word(s) into the student’s test &amp; answer booklet. (See <a href="#">Appendix C</a> for information and guidelines on transcribing student responses.)</p> <p>Test administrators for students using accommodation EL8 must sign an <a href="#">MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment</a> before administering this accommodation.</p>
----------------------------	--

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

<b>Table 9. Selecting Accommodations for English Learners</b>				
#	Accommodation	Level of Proficiency		
		Beginning	Intermediate	Advanced
EL1	<b>Paper-based editions</b> 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 <b>bilingual word-to-word dictionary</b> and glossary (English/Native language)	○	●	●
EL3.1 and EL3.2	<b>Text-to-speech</b> (EL3.1) for the computer-based Mathematics, STE or Civics tests (in English <i>only</i> ); OR <b>Human read-aloud</b> (EL3.2)	⊙	⊙	○
EL4.1 and EL4.2	<b>Human scribe</b> (EL4.1) for Mathematics, STE or Civics tests <b>Speech-to-text</b> (EL4.2) for Mathematics, STE, or Civics tests	●	⊙	○
EL5	Test administrator reads aloud/repeats/clarifies general administration <b>directions in English</b>	●	⊙	○
EL6	Test administrator reads aloud/repeats/clarifies general administration <b>directions in student’s native language</b>	●	⊙	○
EL7	<b>Spanish/English</b> editions of the Mathematics, STE or Civics tests	●	⊙	○
EL8	<b>Word Prediction</b> on the Mathematics, STE or Civics tests ( <i>not ELA</i> )	●	⊙	○
<b>KEY:</b> ● <b>Recommended</b> for use by English learners at this ELP level ⊙ <b>May be appropriate</b> for use by English learners at this ELP level ○ <b>May not be appropriate</b> for English learners at this ELP level				

## Appendix A: 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 Student Registration (SR) for MCAS and for assigning them correctly for English learners participating in ACCESS tests.

<b>Accessibility Features for MCAS and ACCESS for ELLs</b>			
<b>Feature Number</b>	<b>Accessibility Feature</b>	<b>SR Column</b>	<b>Available for ACCESS for ELLS</b>
UF1	Highlighter tool	N/A	Yes
UF2	Color contrast	N/A	Yes
UF3	Screen zoom tool	N/A	Yes
UF4	Enlarged cursor/Mouse pointer tool	Column Q	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 <i>general test administration directions</i>	N/A	Yes
UF14	General masking	N/A	No
UF15	Reverse contrast	N/A	No
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

<b>Accommodations for Students with Disabilities for MCAS and ACCESS for ELLs</b>			
<b>Accommodation Number</b>	<b>Accommodation</b>	<b>SR Column</b>	<b>Available for ACCESS for ELLS</b>
A1	Paper-based test	Column L	Yes
A2	Large-print <i>PBT only</i>	Column AI	Yes
A3.1	Screen reader	Column AL	No
A3.2	Braille edition	Column AJ	Yes
A3.3	Assistive Technology	Column AM	No
A4	Text-to-speech <i>Math, STE, and Civics tests only</i>	Column S	No
A5	Human read-aloud <i>Math, STE, and Civics tests only</i>	Column T	Yes, only for Listening, Speaking, and Writing
A6.1	Human signer <i>Math, STE, and Civics tests only</i>	Column U	No
A6.2	ASL video <i>Grade 10 Math and June high school Science only</i>	Column AK	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 R	No
A10.1	Scribe responses <i>Math, STE, and Civics tests only</i>	Column V	Yes, only for Listening, Speaking, and Writing
A10.2	Speech-to-text <i>Math, STE and Civics tests only</i>	Column W	Yes, only for Listening, Speaking, and Writing
A11	Responses recorded on special paper	N/A	Yes
A12	Typed responses <i>PBT only</i>	Column AH	
A13	Student records responses on a recording device	N/A	No
A14	Responses signed onto 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
A18	Word Prediction <i>Math, STE, and Civics tests only</i>	Column X	No

<b>Special Access Accommodations for Students with Disabilities for MCAS and ACCESS for ELLs</b>			
<b>Accommodation Number</b>	<b>Special Access Accommodation</b>	<b>SR column</b>	<b>Available for ACCESS for ELLS</b>
SA1.1	Text-to-speech for ELA	Column Y	N/A
SA1.2	Human read-aloud for ELA	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	Column AA	No
SA3.1	Scribe for ELA	Column AB	N/A
SA3.2	Speech-to-text for ELA	Column AC	N/A
SA4	Calculator for Mathematics noncalculator sessions	Column AF	N/A
SA5	Spell checker for ELA	Column AG	No
SA6	Word prediction for ELA	Column AD	No

<b>Accommodations for ELs for MCAS and ACCESS for ELLs</b>			
<b>Accommodation Number</b>	<b>Accommodation</b>	<b>SR Column</b>	<b>Available for ACCESS for ELLS</b>
EL1	Paper-based test	Column K	Yes
EL2	Word-to word dictionary and glossary	N/A	No
EL3.1	Text-to-speech <i>Math, STE and Civics tests only</i>	Column S	No
EL3.2	Human read-aloud <i>Math, STE, and Civics tests only</i>	Column T	Yes, only for Listening, Speaking, and Writing
EL4.1	Scribe responses <i>Math, STE, and Civics tests only</i>	Column V	Yes, only for Listening, Speaking, and Writing
EL4.2	Speech-to-text <i>Math, STE, and Civics tests only</i>	Column W	Yes, only for Listening, Speaking, and Writing
EL5	Test administrator reads aloud, repeats, or clarifies <i>general test administration directions</i>	N/A	Yes
EL6	Test administrator reads aloud, repeats, or clarifies <i>general administration directions in student's native language</i>	N/A	Yes. Can read directions or clarify in native language. Cannot repeat.
EL7	Spanish/English edition <i>Math, Science, and Civics tests only</i>	Column AE	No
EL8	Word prediction <i>Math, Science, and Civics tests only</i>	Column X	No

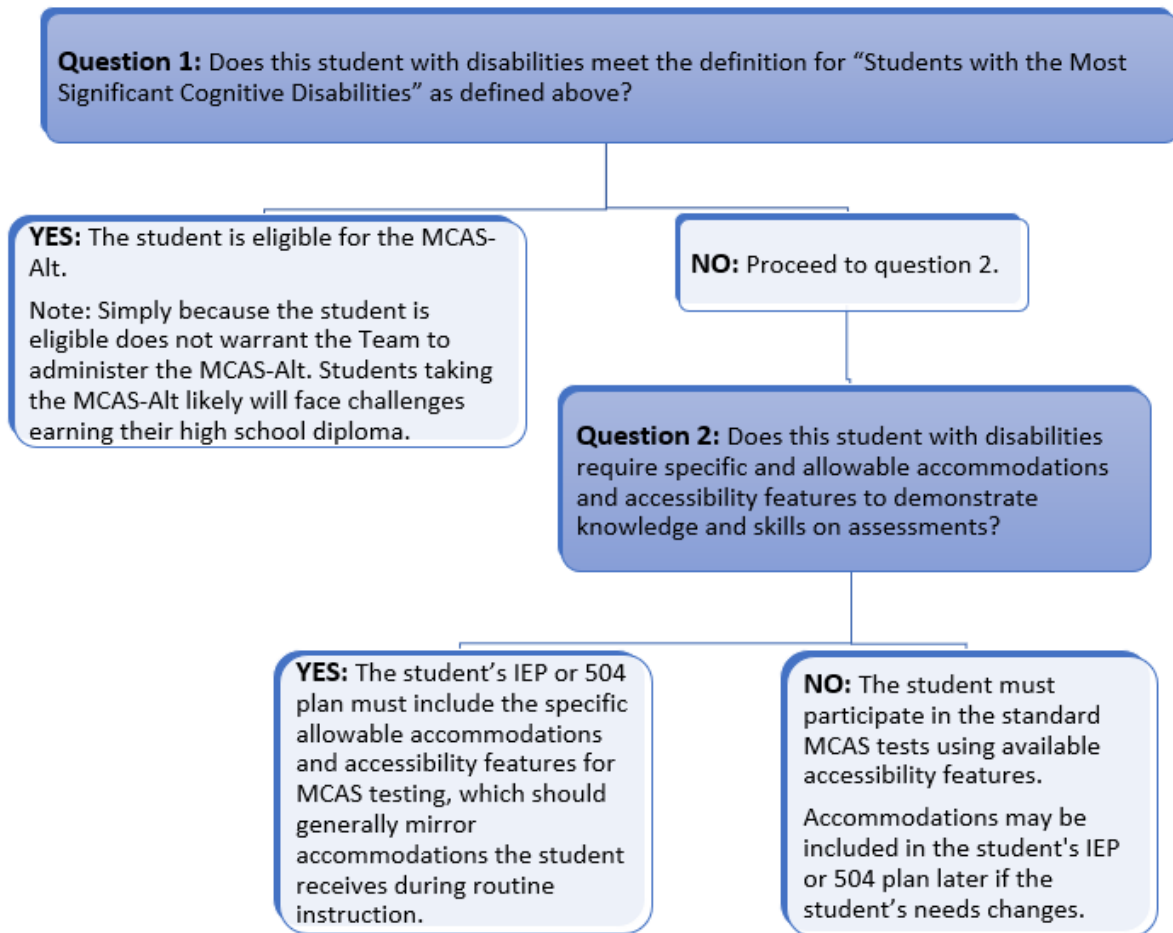


## Appendix B: Decision-Making Tool for MCAS Participation by Students with Disabilities

Use the definition and 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 C: Procedures for Scribing and Transcribing Student Responses

The human scribe (A10.1, SA3.1, EL4.1) and speech-to-text (A10.2, SA3.2, EL4.2) accommodations allow students to produce responses orally to a test administrator who will type the responses (or write in the student's test & answer booklet) or into a speech recognition device. 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, SA3.1, EL4.1)

- 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 the MCAS Student Kiosk** and printed their responses for transcription by a test administrator.
- A student recorded answers on blank paper as an accommodation, instead of in the computer-based test or test & answer booklet.
- 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 D: 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, braille, 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.

## Appendix E: 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 MCAS computer-based testing.

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

1. **Embedded Assistive Technology:** Assistive Technology programs that are embedded in the MCAS Student Kiosk computer-based testing platform.
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 the MCAS Student Kiosk.
3. **AT on a separate device:** Assistive Technology programs that may be incompatible with the MCAS Student Kiosk and must be **used on separate device** in order for the student to access the MCAS test. Schools must request approval prior to administration by contacting [mcas@mass.gov](mailto:mcas@mass.gov).

### Group 1: Embedded AT Programs in the MCAS Student Kiosk

This group includes AT programs that are embedded within the MCAS Student Kiosk and are available as described below.

The following accommodations must be selected in advance in the Student Registration (SR) process.

- ASL Video (SR)
- Enlarged Cursor/ Pointer (SR)
- Spell Checker (SR) for the MCAS ELA tests; automatically available on Mathematics, STE, and Civics tests
- Calculator (SR) for the noncalculator session of the Mathematics tests; automatically available for Mathematics (in the calculator session) and STE tests
- Speech-to-Text (SR)
- Text-To-Speech (SR)
- Word Prediction (SR)

### Group 2: Assistive Technology Confirmed as Compatible with the MCAS Student Kiosk

The Screen Reader and the Assistive Technology test forms permit students to use their own assistive technology program within the MCAS Student Kiosk.

The following accommodations must be selected in advance in the Student Registration (SR) process.

- **Screen Reader (SR)**
  - The screen reader test form is for students using JAWS 2021® and NVDA. Other screen reader programs may not be compatible with the screen reader test form.
- **Compatible AT Accommodation (SR)**
  - In the MCAS Student Kiosk, the external compatible assistive technology accommodation is available for students who require Windows-based third-party

accessibility software. Note that this accommodation is only available in the Windows® MCAS Student Kiosk. Due to the MCAS Student Kiosk's security features and the variability among assistive technologies, some assistive technology software may not be compatible with the MCAS Student Kiosk, even with the selected Assistive Technology accommodated form. Test coordinators will follow the guidelines below to determine if the Assistive Technology accommodation needs to be assigned for the assistive technology to work with MCAS Student Kiosk or whether a separate computer is necessary for the student's AT program.

## Determining Compatibility of Assistive Technology

Some assistive technology can be used with the MCAS Student Kiosk with or without the Compatible Assistive Technology accommodation.

Many commonly used Windows-based speech-to-text programs (e.g., Windows dictation, Dragon Professional) can be used with the MCAS Student Kiosk without the Compatible Assistive Technology accommodation, provided the software is running prior to launching the kiosk. Speech-To-Text (STT) programs can be used for basic dictation, but editing commands (i.e., voice commands used to select and edit text that was previously dictated) will not function. If the student closes the STT application during testing, the student must exit the kiosk, restart the STT program, and then re-log into the kiosk to continue testing with STT (shortcut keys cannot be used to launch the application while the kiosk is open).

**Important Note:** The Compatible Assistive Technology accommodation reduces kiosk security controls to allow third-party software to operate in conjunction with the kiosk. If the Compatible Assistive Technology accommodation is used, test administrators should closely monitor students using this accommodation to ensure that test security is not compromised.

### Test Coordinator Responsibilities

Prior to operational testing, test coordinators must use practice tests to do the following:

- Ensure the student's assistive technology will work with MCAS Student Kiosk.
- Determine whether the student's Compatible Assistive Technology accommodation must be assigned to use assistive technology.
- Provide the student an opportunity to practice using assistive technology with the MCAS Student Kiosk.

Students should use the MCAS practice tests to become familiar with these tools, accessibility features, and accommodations prior to testing.

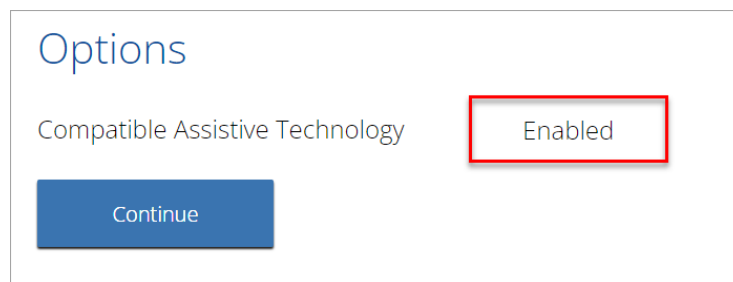
If the preferred third-party assistive technology does not work well with the MCAS Student Kiosk Assistive Technology accommodation, see the instructions under Group 3: Assistive Technology Not Compatible and Requires a Second Computer.

## Using the Assistive Technology Accommodation

1. School staff should first verify that the Assistive Technology accommodation has been selected for a student by navigating to the Students page in the Administration section of the MCAS Portal, selecting the student, and then selecting the Accommodations tab.

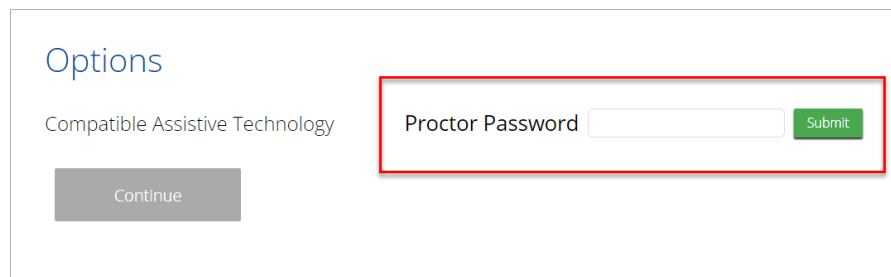


2. Open the third-party accessibility application on the testing device and log in to the application if necessary.
3. Launch the MCAS Student Kiosk.
4. Student enters their username and password to log in to the MCAS Student Kiosk.
5. Student selects the session and enters the session access code. On the Options screen, verify that the student has Assistive Technology listed as Enabled, which indicates that they were assigned the Assistive Technology accommodation. There should additionally be a field for the test administrator to enter the proctor password.



**Note:** The student will only see Assistive Technology listed as enabled on the Options screen if they are using the MCAS Student Kiosk **on Windows**. If they are using a browser or other operating system kiosk (e.g., the macOS MCAS Student Kiosk), this accommodation will not be available.

6. The test administrator will enter the proctor password.







**Note:** The proctor password is located on the Administration home page of the MCAS Portal. The student will not be allowed to advance past the accommodations Options screen without the test administrator entering the correct proctor password.

After the test administrator enters the proctor password, the student will be able to successfully use their assistive technology software, which will display as additional windows or an interface on top of the kiosk on screen.

7. When the student submits the test session and returns to the profile screen, the Compatible Assistive Technology accommodation will be disabled.

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

If the student's specific AT program is not compatible with the MCAS Student Kiosk and therefore must be accessed by the student using a separate external (i.e., stand-alone) computer, 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 (if CBT) or the student's paper-based test (if PBT). 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.

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.

**Please contact the Department at [mcas@mass.gov](mailto:mcas@mass.gov) for approval to use stand-alone AT devices or programs and for specific test administration instructions.**

## Appendix F: Procedures for Creating Test Administrator Logins for Human Read-Aloud and Human Signer

For computer-based testing for human read-aloud and human signer classes, schools may choose to have test administrators read the test over the student’s shoulder, or create test administrator logins so that test administrators can log in to their own version of the test on their own device in order to read aloud or sign the test.

If using test administrator logins, test administrators will need their own computer to sign in to their own version of the test, and will need the MCAS Student Kiosk downloaded and installed on that computer. (Students will sign in and record responses using their student logins on their own devices.) School or district test coordinators will need to create a test administrator login for each test administrator for each human read-aloud or human signer class.

### Instructions for Preparing Test Administrator Logins Prior to Testing

The test administrator login will allow the test administrator to sign in to the test on the MCAS Student Kiosk to see the same test questions that their students see, to be able to read aloud or sign the test to their students. **Responses should not be entered using a test administrator login; all test administrator login tests will be voided at the end of testing.**

1. There are two options for creating a test administrator login in the MCAS Portal.

**Option 1:** Manually add a student to the MCAS Portal on the Students page using the field definitions outlined below.

**Option 2:** Add the test administrator login as a student during the Student Registration file upload.

**Test administrator logins should use the following field definitions. Any fields not listed below should be left blank.**

Column of Student Registration file	Field Name	Field notes
<b>A</b>	District code	The testing district
<b>B</b>	School code	The testing school
<b>C</b>	SASID	Begin with your 8-digit school code. Add “01”, “02”, etc. to the end of your school code for each test administrator login needed.  Example: For a school whose code is 77665555, their test administrator login SASIDs would be 7766555501, 7766555502, 7766555503, etc.
<b>D</b>	Student grade	The grade level for the test that is being administered
<b>E</b>	Last name	Enter in “TA LOGIN”
<b>F</b>	First name	The test administrator’s first name

<b>I</b>	Date of birth	Enter in “01/01/1900”
<b>J</b>	Test code	The test code for the test that is being administered
<b>L</b>	Test format	“O”
<b>Select Y for one of the following if administering the Human Read Aloud accommodation:</b>		
<b>T</b>	Human Read Aloud Standard	“Y” if administering Math, STE, or Civics
<b>Z</b>	Human Read Aloud Special	“Y” if administering ELA
<b>Select Y for one of the following if administering the Human Signer accommodation:</b>		
<b>U</b>	Human Signer Standard	“Y” if administering Math, STE, or Civics
<b>AA</b>	Human Signer Special	“Y” if administering ELA

2. Once the test administrator logins have been added to the MCAS Portal, create a class for the students requiring a human read aloud or human signer accommodation for that content area. See additional information on creating classes in the Guide to the MCAS Portal, available on the [MCAS Resource Center](#) this fall.
  - a. Add the appropriate student(s) to the class.
  - b. Add the test administrator login to the class.
  - c. Save the class.
3. Schedule the class to take the appropriate test. See additional information on scheduling tests in the Guide to the MCAS Portal, available on the [MCAS Resource Center](#) this fall.

### Instructions on Using Test Administrator Logins: During and After Testing

1. Ensure all students, including the test administrator login, are assigned the human read aloud (or human signer) accommodated form.

To view the form a student or test administrator is assigned to for a test, navigate to the Test Scheduling page in the Administration section of the MCAS Portal. Then select the organization, program, content area, and test from the selection drop-down, the list will update to show classes scheduled for the selected test. Then select the View Details/Student Logins link for the class scheduled, view the forms on the Scheduled Tests details page under the Form Name column for each student, as shown in the screenshot below.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Last Name	First Name	Username	Password	Form Name	Date/Time Created	Test Report Code	Status
<input type="checkbox"/>	Student	James	1888446157	2yadhfs	MAT08-HumanSigner-Form1	11/18/2024 4:12:58 PM	+	Session 1:Not Started
<input type="checkbox"/>	Student	Steven	3557280177	hkuz3qyf	MAT08-HumanReadAloud-Form1	11/18/2024 4:12:58 PM	+	Session 1:Not Started

2. After testing, school test coordinators should void the test administrator login tests.

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

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 **guidance on electronic dictionaries** for use during MCAS testing. Schools that currently use e-book versions as described below in regular instruction and classroom assessments may use them during MCAS testing. **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 [wordtoward.com](http://wordtoward.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 (one for the Word-to-Word app and one for the student testing device) and scratch paper.

Questions may be directed to DESE's Office of Student Assessment Services at [mcas@mass.gov](mailto:mcas@mass.gov), and schools are invited to contact DESE after MCAS test administration with feedback on these applications to assist in future updates.