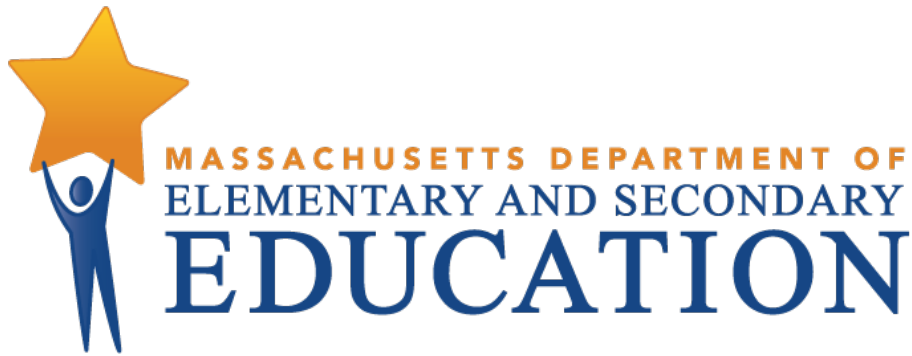# Appendix E
Accessibility Features and
Test Accommodations

Accessibility and Accommodations Manual for the 2021–2022 MCAS Tests and Retests

Including Participation Requirements for Students with Disabilities and English Learners

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Purpose of This Manual

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is providing you with the *Accessibility and Accommodations Manual for the 2021–2022 MCAS Tests and Retests.* The accessibility and accommodations policies in this manual will apply to students taking all MCAS tests and retests.

Educators will need to become familiar with the MCAS accessibility and accommodations policies since they provide guidance on the use of individualized supports for student participation in MCAS. Test coordinators and administrators should also review this manual to determine those accessibility features and accommodations that must be documented for each student in the Student Registration/Personal Needs Profile (SR/PNP) (the procedure used by schools to register students for MCAS testing), and to receive the necessary accommodated test editions.

This manual provides guidance and information about:

- MCAS participation requirements for students with disabilities, students who are English learners (ELs), and ELs with disabilities; and which students with disabilities should be considered for an alternate assessment; and

- the availability, selection, and use of

    o *universal accessibility features*, which provide tools and supports for *all* students;
    o *designated accessibility features* intended for *all* students, but which must be authorized by the principal; and
    o *test accommodations* for students with disabilities and students who are ELs.

Schools may request guidance from the Department throughout the year as they plan for the use of test accommodations and other supports for the students who need them. Please contact Student Assessment Services at mcas@doe.mass.edu or 781-338-3625 with any questions.

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I. Overview of MCAS Accessibility and Accommodations

A. Introduction

All students, including students with disabilities and ELs, will be required to participate in all MCAS assessments that are scheduled for students in their grade, including

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

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

Selection of accessibility features and accommodations should proceed according to the test format (computer or paper) to be used by the student. 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 "legacy" MCAS accommodations policies; and (d) the recommendations of Massachusetts stakeholders who were members of the MCAS Accessibility and Accommodations Work Group.

The application of universal design principles to the MCAS assessments, in conjunction with the accessibility and accommodations policies described in this manual, are intended to reduce barriers to participation in the MCAS assessments for *all* students, not just students with disabilities and English learners. While many computer-based accessibility features are unique to online testing, others can be applied to paper-based testing for students who are unable to take tests on a computer. In addition, increased flexibility for local administrators has been incorporated in test administration procedures in response to input and requests from local educators for greater autonomy in determining the testing conditions within their schools.

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

B.   What's New and Notable for School Year 2021–2022?

- "Next-Generation" November and March high school **retests** will be available as computer-based tests, with accommodated forms that include: text-to-speech, web extensions (for speech-to-text and word prediction), screen reader, Spanish-English, and compatible assistive technology. Paper-based accommodated forms will include Braille, large-print, and Spanish-English.

- The Department will offer paper-based "legacy" and "next-generation" ELA and Mathematics retests in November, and plans to offer only "next-generation" retests in March 2022.

- Computer-based "next-generation" STE high school Biology and Introductory Physics tests will be administered in spring 2022 and will include **American Sign Language (ASL) video** and bilingual **Spanish-English** versions, as well as all accommodated forms listed above.

- High school Chemistry and Technology/Engineering tests will continue to be administered only as "legacy"

paper-based tests.

- Computer-based "web extensions" are available for students who use the **speech-to-text** and/or **word prediction** accommodations, if either are listed in their IEP or 504 plan. Web extensions are described on pages 20, 24, 25, and 29 of this manual and in greater detail in the Department' *Guidelines for Using Assistive Technology as an MCAS Test Accommodation*.

- An **alternative cursor/mouse pointer** will be available for selection by all students on computer-based tests. See page 4 for details.

- Appendix A describes the ***Procedures for Scribing and Transcribing Student Responses***.

- An updated *MCAS Grade-Level and Competency Portfolio Manual* has been developed for students who will participate in MCAS through this option.

- Updated computer- and paper-based MCAS practice tests are available, including accommodated editions. Particularly those students using accommodated forms, including text-to-speech and the new "web extensions," should become familiar with these features and the basic functionality of the computer-based testing platform (TestNav) prior to testing. The Department encourages each student to take online practice tests and also view the student tutorial prior to actual test administration. Narrated training modules are also available.

- Annual decisions about test participation for each student with a disability (including ELs with disabilities) must be made by the IEP team and listed in the student's IEP, or be included in a 504 plan, for each content area test. Decisions include:
  - Which **accommodations** the student needs to participate in MCAS testing, according to the policies outlined in this manual.
  - Whether the student with a disability (or recently-arrived EL) requires a **paper- rather than a computer-based test**, and if so, in which subjects.
  - The **EL accommodations** listed in Section VI of this manual must be considered for all English learners (ELs) with or without disabilities. Accommodations decisions must 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 (or similar) form provided in Appendix B.
  - If **accessibility features** are needed by a student with a disability, the Department encourages listing these in the student's plan to guarantee that they will be provided on the test.

- The following 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
  - Blank scratch paper (including blank, lined, or graph paper)
  - Assistance as needed from a test administrator in using the computer-based testing platform

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

- **Universal Accessibility Features** (UF): Tools and supports that are available to *all* students, either on the computer-based tests or their paper-based equivalents (see pp. 4–5).

- **Designated Accessibility Features** (DF): Flexible test administration procedures that may be used with *any* student at the discretion of the principal (or designee). These include changes in the location of test settings, group size, seating of students, and scheduling of test administrations (see p. 5–6).

- **Accommodations** (A): Specific supports available only to students with disabilities and English learners. Team members and educators responsible for developing IEPs and 504 plans must make decisions regarding which accommodations to provide and list these in the plan of each student (see pp. 16–22). We encourage districts to list accommodations for EL students using the sample form entitled Documentation of MCAS Accommodations for an EL Student (in Appendix B) which must be kept on file at the school.

- **"Special Access" Accommodations** (SAs): Formerly called *nonstandard accommodations*, these may be provided to students who meet certain guidelines and criteria (see pp. 22–25).

- **English Learner Accommodations** (EL): Several accommodations are available to ELs who do not have disabilities. See pp. 28–31 for details and a description of the relative suitability of each accommodation for

students at beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels of English proficiency.

Accessibility and accommodations policies will also be described in the *MCAS Principal's Administration Manual* (PAM), available this winter.
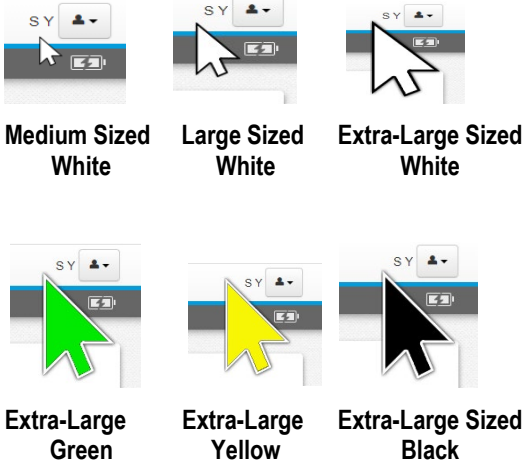
II. Accessibility Features for All Students

A. Universal Accessibility Features (UFs)

Universal Accessibility Features are tools and supports that are available to *all* students on the MCAS tests that are either built into the MCAS computer-based test platform or provided by a test administrator on the computer- or paper-based test. Although most universal accessibility features will be available on the day of the test to *any* student who wishes to use them, some *must* be **requested in advance** in the Student Registration/Personal Needs Profile (SR/PNP), the student registration system located in PearsonAccess[next] (PAN). The "*(SR/PNP)*" designation in Table 1 below refers to an accessibility feature or accommodation that must be documented and/or requested in the SR/PNP prior to the start of testing.

Table 1. *Universal Accessibility Features* Available to All Students

#	Computer-Based Testing	Paper-Based Testing
UF1	**Highlighter tool** Four highlighter colors are offered: blue, pink, green, and orange	**Highlighter** Colored highlighters and/or colored pencils may be used by students taking paper-based tests. See *Principal's Administration Manual* for details.
UF2 *(SR/PNP)*	**Alternative background and font color** The student can select a color combination for text and background.	**Colored overlays or tinted lens(es)**
UF3	**Magnifier or Zoom tool** Magnifier tool enlarges part of the screen; Zoom tool enlarges or reduces the entire screen by pressing Ctrl + or Ctrl -	**Magnification tool/device** or low-vision aid

#	Computer-Based Testing	Paper-Based Testing
UF4 *(SR/PNP)*	**Alternate Cursor/Mouse Pointer tool** The student can select an enlarged and colored cursor. **Medium Sized White**　**Large Sized White**　**Extra-Large Sized White** **Extra-Large Green**　**Extra-Large Yellow**　**Extra-Large Sized Black** **Note:** Pointers are not shown in actual size which will differ according to the size of the student's computer screen.	**Enlarged pencil/modified writing instrument**
UF5	**Line reader tool** Masks text so only part of the text can be viewed at one time	**Tracking device**, such as a straight edge or similar tool
UF6 *(SR/PNP)*	**Answer masking** Student selects which answer choices will be shown on the screen	**Mask text or answer(s)** using a blank card or cutout
UF7	**Answer eliminator** Student marks an "X" through each answer option he or she believes is incorrect	**Use a pencil to eliminate answer choices** in test booklet (not answer bubbles)
UF8	**Item flag/bookmark**	**Use a blank place marker** to mark a question for later review (Note: post-its are *not* allowed)
UF9	**Audio aid** (e.g., amplification device) (**Note**: smartphones may not be used)	**Audio aid** (e.g., amplification device) (Note: smartphones may not be used)
UF10	**Notepad** for notes or calculations	**Scratch paper** is required for all students
UF11	**Test administrator reads aloud selected words** (or **signs selected words**, in the case of a student who is Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing) on the Mathematics and/or Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) tests, as requested by the student.	The student may point to a **word or phrase** that he or she needs read aloud or signed. Test administrator quietly reads aloud or signs the selected word to the student. Students using this feature may be tested alongside other students in groups of any size.
UF12	**Test administrator redirects student's attention to the test** without coaching or assisting the student to answer any questions (e.g., test administrator reminds	student to stay focused; it is not permissible to say, "Add more to your response" or "Make sure to answer all questions.")
UF13	**Test administrator reads aloud, repeats, or clarifies** *general test administration directions*	**from the Test Administration Manual scripts** to student, as needed.

B. Designated Accessibility Features (DFs)

Although most students will be tested in their regular classrooms according to the guidelines and schedule intended for all students, principals have the flexibility to test *any* student, including non-disabled and non-EL students, 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 Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plan of a student with a disability who requires them.

Table 2.
Designated Accessibility Features **available to any student, at the principal's discretion**

#	Designated Accessibility Feature
DF1	**Small group test administration** (May include up to a total of 10 students.)
DF2	**Individual (one-to-one) test administration** (Student must be tested in a separate setting.)
DF3	**Frequent brief supervised breaks**
DF4	**Separate or alternate test location**
DF5	**Seating in a specified area** of the testing room, including the use of a study carrel
DF6	**Adaptive or specialized furniture** (e.g., seating, desk, or lighting)
DF7	**Noise buffer,** such as noise-canceling earmuffs/headphones or white noise (**Note:** music or other recordings may *not* be played, unless granted as a *unique accommodation* by the Department. See pp. 14-15)
DF8	**Familiar test administrator**
DF9	**Student reads test aloud to self**: Student must be tested in a separate setting, unless a low-volume device (e.g., a Whisperphone™) is used.
DF10	**Specific time of day**
DF11	**"Stop Testing" policy**: The student should be given the opportunity to attempt each test session). If the student does not appear to be responding to test questions after a period of 15–20 minutes, the test administrator may ask if the student is finished. If so, the test administrator may collect the student's test materials and the student can either sit quietly or be excused from the test setting.

III. MCAS Participation Requirements for Students with Disabilities

A. Background

The information in this manual is intended to guide decision-making by Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams and 504 plan coordinators as to *how* a student with a disability will participate in MCAS. Students with disabilities are required to participate in all MCAS assessments scheduled for students in their grade. Students with significant cognitive disabilities who are unable to take the standard tests, even with accommodations, must take the MCAS Alternate Assessment (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 an approved Individualized Education Program (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").

C. Participation Requirements for Students with Disabilities

State and federal education laws mandate that *all* students with disabilities who are educated with Massachusetts public funds participate in annual statewide assessments, including students enrolled in public schools, educational collaboratives, and approved and unapproved private special education schools, and students in the custody of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) or the Department of Youth Services (DYS).

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

Only a student's IEP team can make decisions about which test accommodations are appropriate for the student and whether the student should take the standard or alternate assessment. Assessment decisions for students with disabilities are made on an annual basis in each content area for each student and must be listed in the IEP. If the student has a 504 plan rather than an IEP, then the 504 plan must also include this information. 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.

English Learners (ELs) with Disabilities

EL students, both with and without disabilities, must participate in all MCAS assessments required for students in their grade, regardless of the number of years they have been enrolled in U.S. schools, with one exception: **EL students who first enrolled in a U.S. school after March 1, 2021**, are *not required* to take the spring 2022 MCAS ELA tests, although schools have the *option* to assess first-year EL students in ELA.

EL students with disabilities are entitled to receive test accommodations and to participate in the MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt), as determined by their IEP team or 504 plan. See additional information on the participation of EL students in MCAS beginning on page 26

Students Diagnosed with Concussions

The Department has issued underlined 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.

D. Decision-Making Guidelines for MCAS Participation

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

The student's IEP team or 504 plan coordinator should address the questions below and consider options 1, 2, and 3 in the chart on pages 8-10:

- Can the student demonstrate knowledge and skills, either fully or partially, on the **standard MCAS test under routine conditions**?
- Can the student demonstrate knowledge and skills, either fully or partially, on the **standard MCAS test with accommodations**? If so, which accommodations are necessary for the student to participate?
- If no to the above questions, see the options below to determine whether the student should be assessed with the **alternate assessment** (MCAS-Alt) or should submit a "**grade-level"** or "**competency" portfolio**.

    (**Note: Alternate assessments** are intended only for students with significant cognitive disabilities who are unable to participate in standard MCAS tests, even with accommodations.

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

Characteristics of Student's Instructional Program and Local Assessment	Recommended Participation in MCAS
OPTION 1	
If the student is a) generally able to demonstrate knowledge and skills on a computer- or paper-based test, either with or without test accommodations, *and* is b) working on learning standards **at or near grade-level expectations,** *or* is c) working on learning standards that have been modified and are **somewhat below grade-level expectations** due to the nature of the student's disability,	*Then* the student should take the computer- or paper-based **MCAS test**, either with or without accommodations.

Characteristics of Student's Instructional Program and Local Assessment	Recommended Participation in MCAS
OPTION 2	
If the student is a) an individual with a **significant cognitive disability**, *and* is b) **generally unable** to demonstrate knowledge and skills on a computer- or paper-based test, even with accommodations, *and* is c) working on learning standards that have been **substantially modified** due to a *significant cognitive disability*, *and* is d) receiving **intensive, individualized instruction** in order to acquire, generalize, and demonstrate knowledge and skills,	*Then* the student should take the **MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt)** in this subject**.**

E.   Further Guidance on Designating Students for the MCAS-Alt (Option 2)

IEP teams should **not** designate a student for an alternate assessment solely because he/she:

- is frequently absent from school;
- has not received instruction in the general curriculum;
- has a particular disability (e.g., all students with intellectual disabilities should not automatically be designated for the MCAS-Alt);
- is placed in a program or classroom where it is expected that students will take the MCAS-Alt;
- has taken an alternate assessment in the past (since this is an annual decision);
- has previously failed the MCAS test;
- is an English learner;
- is economically disadvantaged ;
- is a child in foster care;
- requires assistive technology or an augmentative communication system that has not been provided;
- attends a school in which the IEP team may have been influenced to designate the student
for an alternate assessment in order to receive disproportionate credit toward the school's accountability rating.

Please refer to the Commissioner's memorandum regarding MCAS-Alt eligibility criteria.

OPTION 3	Characteristics of Student's Instructional Program and Local Assessment	Recommended Participation in MCAS
	If the student is a) working on learning standards **at or near grade-level expectations** *and* is b) **sometimes able** to take a computer- or paper-based test, either without or with one or more test accommodation(s) *but* c) has a **complex and significant disability*** that does not allow the student to fully demonstrate knowledge and skills on a computer- or paper-based test of this duration, * See Section F for examples of complex and significant disabilities for which the student may require an alternate assessment.	*Then* the student should take the computer- or paper-based **MCAS test**, if possible, with necessary accommodations. *However* the team may recommend that the student submit a "grade-level" or "competency" portfolio when the severity and complexity of the disability prevent the student from demonstrating knowledge and skills on the computer- or paper-based MCAS test, even with the use of accommodations.

F. Students with Complex and Significant Disabilities Who May Require a "Grade-Level" or "Competency" Portfolio (Option 3)

When the nature and complexity of a student's disability present significant barriers or 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 either in 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 Manual.

The following examples are provided to expand the team's understanding of students who may be appropriate for the "grade-level" or "competency" portfolios in unique circumstances:

- 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 prolonged test administration;

- a student with a significant motor, communication, or other disability, who requires more time than is reasonable or available for testing, even with the allowance of extended time (i.e., the student is unable to complete a test session in a single school day).

G.   Decision-Making Tool for MCAS Participation by Students with Disabilities

The decision chart shown below may be used by IEP teams and 504 plan coordinators to make annual decisions regarding appropriate student participation in MCAS. Make separate decisions in *each content area* being assessed: ELA, mathematics, and science and technology/engineering.

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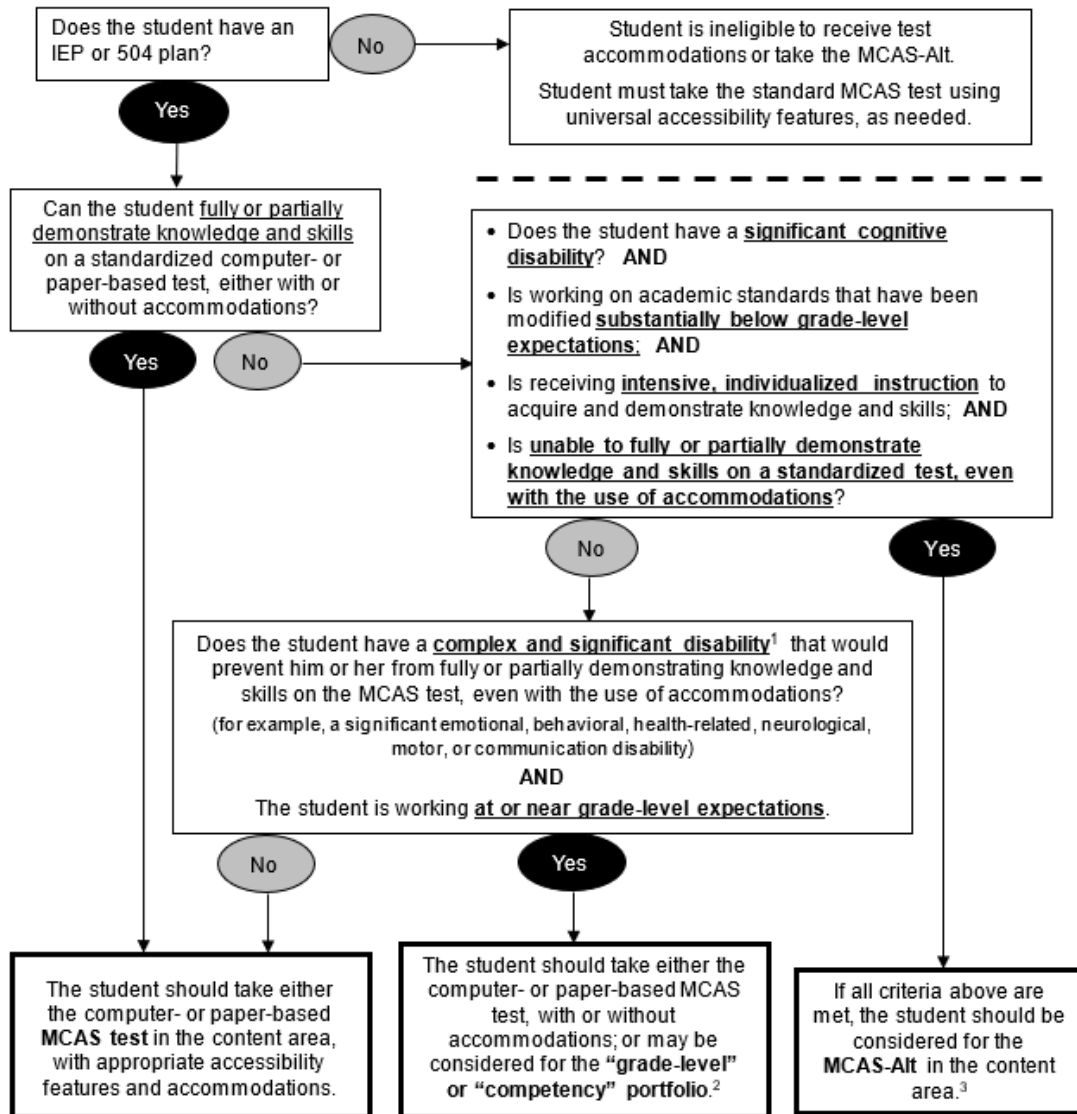
[1] See page 10 of this manual for additional details on "complex and significant disabilities."
[2] See the *MCAS Grade-Level and Competency Portfolio Manual* for details on submission of "grade-level" and "competency" portfolios.
[3] Students who take the MCAS-Alt in high school will not earn a Competency Determination in the assessed subject and therefore will not be eligible to earn a high school diploma.

IV.   MCAS Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

A.   Background and Purpose

The information in this section is intended to guide decision-making regarding the selection, use, and evaluation of accommodations for MCAS testing. As required by <u>34 CFR 300.160</u>, the state is providing districts with these guidelines for the provision of appropriate accommodations on the MCAS tests, and stipulating that IEP teams and 504 plan coordinators carefully identify and select only those accommodations for each assessment that are needed by the student and do not invalidate the score. IEP teams should be trained annually on these guidelines. Please read the following information carefully.

B.   Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

1. 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

Based on the information and guidance found on the following pages, the IEP or 504 plan for each student with a disability must be reviewed and revised as needed, either during routinely scheduled meetings prior to testing or through the IEP amendment process. The principal is responsible for ensuring that each student is provided with the test accommodations listed in his or her IEP or 504 plan during testing. It is also advisable (though not required) to list the *designated accessibility features* (see Table 2) in the plans of students to ensure these will be provided.

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

2. Eligibility for Test Accommodations

ELIGIBLE: students with disabilities served by an IEP or 504 plan

The right of a student with a disability to receive allowable accommodations on MCAS tests is protected by both federal and state laws. The student's IEP or 504 plan must specify which MCAS accommodation(s) a student will receive, and the IEP must be approved by the parent/guardian (or student over 18) before an accommodation may be used by the student. Similarly, a student's 504 plan must already be in place or under development. In cases where a 504 plan is under development, the school personnel responsible for writing the plan must have already met and agreed upon the necessary MCAS accommodation(s) before the accommodation may be provided.

NOT ELIGIBLE: students <u>without</u> identified disabilities and students who are <u>not</u> served by an IEP or 504 plan

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

3. General Requirements for Use of Test Accommodations

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

a) The student **has a disability** that is documented in an IEP or 504 plan and **requires the use of one or more accommodations** to participate in MCAS testing.

   AND

b) 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(s)/guardian(s) prior to the date of test administration; or is listed as an MCAS accommodation in a 504 plan developed for the student.

   AND

c) The student **uses the accommodation routinely** (with rare exceptions) during classroom instruction and assessment in the subject, both before and after the MCAS test is administered, and the student is **comfortable and familiar** with its use. Use of an accommodation during routine instruction does not *necessarily* qualify a student to receive the same accommodation during MCAS testing; for example, the student must meet additional criteria to receive a *special access* **accommodation** on an MCAS test.

   AND

d) If a *special access* **accommodation** will be provided, the student meets all of the criteria to receive the accommodation, as shown in Table 5.

IEP teams must reconvene at least annually and determine which accommodations will be needed for state- and district-wide assessments.

Accommodations may **not**

- 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; for example:
  - 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 allowed **only** for legacy ELA Composition retest sessions. English-language dictionaries are **not** permitted for any student on next-generation 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 student was provided a test accommodation that was *not* listed in his or her IEP or 504 plan, or if a student was *not* provided a test accommodation listed in his or her plan, the school should immediately contact the Department at 781-338-3625 or by email at mcas@doe.mass.edu.

4. Updating IEPs and 504 Plans

IEPs and 504 plans should be updated as needed for all students with disabilities prior to the spring 2022, and other test and retest, MCAS administrations throughout the year to reflect the most current needs of each student, and policies and accommodations described in this manual. Proper notation of accommodations in students' IEPs and 504 plans will ensure that students receive all the necessary supports to which they are entitled.

Virtually all students are expected to take the next-generation MCAS tests using the computer-based testing platform (TestNav) and be given an opportunity to view the tutorial and take online practice tests prior to test administration.

5. If a Student Refuses an Accommodation

If a student refuses to use an accommodation listed in his or her plan during testing, the school should document in writing that the student refused the accommodation and keep the documentation on file at the school. The student should be told that the accommodation will remain available during testing should 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. A sample form (optional) for documenting a student's refusal of an accommodation is available in Appendix C.

If a student refuses an accommodation, and 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 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 the educators familiar with the student. Consent by the parent/guardian is *not* required for a new or amended 504 plan, although the parent/guardian must be notified of any changes.

6. Unique Accommodations Requests

If a student with a disability or an English learner requires an accommodation that is not listed in Tables 1–6, the school may request approval from the Department for the use of the unique accommodation.

Unique accommodations may **not**:

- fundamentally change the test or the construct being measured by the test,
  OR
- assist the student to obtain the answers to test questions,
  OR
- violate test security requirements.

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

7. Process for Selecting and Evaluating MCAS Accessibility Features and 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 consider 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.*
- ***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 the subject (see Tables 1–5 elsewhere in this manual); and*

- o *develop or amend the IEP or 504 plan accordingly, listing each accommodation (required) or accessibility feature (optional) for the specific MCAS test(s).*

8. Description of MCAS Accommodations

Tables 3–5 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. **Note:** the paper-based accommodations described below also apply to legacy MCAS retests. MCAS accommodations are grouped into the following categories:

- **Test Presentation:** allowable changes to the format in which the test is presented to the student (Table 3);
- **Response:** allowable changes to the procedures, supports, or devices used to facilitate a student's response to test questions (Table 4); and
- **Special Access:** accommodations intended for a small number of students to offset the effects of a disability that would otherwise severely limit or prevent their participation in the assessment, and that may somewhat impact the interpretation of the test results (Table 5); and
- **EL accommodations:** available to all ELs with and without disabilities on MCAS tests (Table 6)

Note: Accommodations listed with the "*(SR/PNP)*" designation in the tables below must be identified in the Student Registration/Personal Needs Profile for each student in PearsonAccess^next.

Table 3. *Test Presentation Accommodations* for Students with Disabilities

Test Presentation Accommodations		
#	**Computer-Based Test**	**Paper-Based Test**
A1 *(SR/PNP)*	**Paper-based edition** of the MCAS test may be administered as an accommodation to a student who is unable to use a computer or take the computer-based test due to a disability. (**Note:** This must be listed as an accommodation in the student's IEP or 504 plan)	N/A
A2 *(SR/PNP)*	N/A (See UF3 and UF4 on page 4 for information on screen magnification and alternate cursor/mouse.)	**Large print** (approximately 18-point font size on 11x17-inch paper) • All responses in the large-print booklet **must be transcribed** verbatim from the large-print booklet to the student's combined test & answer booklet (or standard answer booklet for legacy tests) and returned according to instructions in the PAM, so student will receive credit for his or her work. • Large-print special instructions will accompany the large-print test. • Students may either use the **large-print booklet** to respond to test questions, in which case the answers will need to be transcribed, either by the student (at the time of testing) or a test administrator (anytime during the test window); **OR** the student may write answers directly in the **test & answer booklet**. IEPs and 504 plans should indicate how students taking the large-print test will record their answers.

Test Presentation Accommodations		
#	Computer-Based Test	Paper-Based Test
A3.1 *(SR/PNP)* A3.2 *(SR/PNP)*	A3.1 – **Screen reader:** ONLY for a student who is blind or visually impaired and uses the assistive technology program JAWS or NVDA • If the student will use a screen reader, a separate hard-copy Braille edition test with the appropriate Braille graphics must also be ordered for the student. • All answers must be entered onscreen, either by the student or test administrator.	A3.2 – **Braille edition** (hard copy) • All answers must be either **scribed** or **transcribed** verbatim into the student's test & answer booklet and returned according to instructions in the PAM so the student will receive credit for his or her work. • Braille special instructions will accompany the Braille test. • See Appendix D for a schedule of the transition to Unified English Braille (UEB).
	Previewing Braille test content by test administrators: Under secure conditions supervised by the principal, Braille test administrators may review Braille test materials up to four days prior to testing once they are received by the school for the purpose of preparing to orient the student. Test materials may not be removed from the school. Braille test administrators who review the test prior to testing will be asked to sign non-disclosure agreements.	

A4.1 *(SR/PNP)* and A4.2 *(SR/PNP)*	A4.1 – **Text-to-speech (TTS)** digital text read aloud on the computer-based MCAS Mathematics and Science and Technology/ Engineering tests
	
	• TTS may be used either with or without headphones.
	• If a TTS-enabled version of the computer-based test is used with **headphones**, the student may be tested in a typical-size group. If student will not use headphones, student must be tested individually in a separate setting.
	• Students should view the tutorial and take an **online TTS practice test** prior to testing. If the student is unable to use the TTS feature, but has this accommodation listed in his or her plan, a human reader may be substituted.
	• TTS for ELA is a special access accommodation (SA 1.1). See Table 5 for guidelines and criteria to receive this accommodation.
		A4.2 – **Kurzweil 3000** electronic text reader
		
		• Kurzweil 3000 test editions are available for the following tests:
		  o **High school legacy STE tests (Chemistry and Technology/Engineering)**
		  o February 2022 **high school legacy Biology test**
		  o Legacy **ELA Composition retest**
		  o Legacy **ELA Reading Comprehension retest** (special access accommodation SA 1.3 – see Table 5)
		  o Legacy **Mathematics retest**
		• Kurzweil 3000 tests are in read-only format. Responses must be recorded in the student's test & answer booklet.
		• Kurzweil 3000 special instructions will be sent to the school with the test.

A5 *(SR/PNP)*	**Human read-aloud** for the Mathematics and Science and Technology/Engineering computer- or paper-based tests • A human reader may either read aloud 1) the **computer-based test** logged in to a nearby computer or sitting next to the student; or 2) the **paper-based test**. • The test must be administered in a **separate setting**, either **individually** or to a **small group of 2–5 students** (or up to 10 students for the legacy ELA Composition retest), all of whom are being provided the human read-aloud accommodation. • **For students who require that text be read aloud, IEP teams should consider whether TTS is preferable to a human reader (or vice versa) and list this in each student's IEP or 504 plan (e.g., "text-to-speech is preferable, but human reader is acceptable").** • The entire test must be read word-for-word, exactly as it appears. The test administrator may not provide assistance to the student regarding the meanings of words, intent of any test item, or responses to test items. The test administrator should read with emphasis only when indicated by bold or italicized text. (Note: Reading aloud **selected words** on the Mathematics and/or Science and Technology/Engineering		

Test Presentation Accommodations		
#	Computer-Based Test	Paper-Based Test
	(STE) tests, as requested by the student, is UF10.) • Test administrators who review the test, including human readers, will be asked to sign non-disclosure agreements. • **Note: Reading aloud the ELA tests or legacy ELA Reading Comprehension retest** is a *special access* accommodation (SA1). See Table 5 for guidelines and criteria to receive this accommodation.	
A6.1 *(SR/PNP)*	**Human signer** for the Mathematics, Science and Technology/Engineering tests, and ELA test questions (but NOT reading passages) • The test must be signed exactly as it appears. The signer may not provide assistance to the student regarding the meaning of words, intent of any test item, or responding to test questions. The signer may finger-spell key words in addition to providing the sign for a term. The signer may sign emphasis only when indicated by bold or italicized text. • The test must be administered in a **separate setting**, either **individually** or to a **small group of 2–5 students**, all of whom are receiving the human signer accommodation. • **Signing the ELA reading passages and legacy ELA Reading Comprehension retest passages** is a special access accommodation (SA2). See Table 5 for guidelines and criteria to receive this accommodation. • **Previewing test content by human signers**: Under secure conditions supervised by the principal, interpreters may review test materials up to four days prior to testing once they become available, either online or shipped to the school, for the purpose of preparing to sign the test. Test materials may not be removed from the school nor accessed online outside of the school. Test administrators and interpreters who review the test prior to testing will be asked to sign non-disclosure agreements.	
A6.2 *(SR/PNP)*	**ASL video** editions of the computer-based spring 2022 MCAS grade 10 Mathematics and high school Introductory Physics and Biology tests An embedded ASL video is built into these computer-based tests. • Students may turn on, off, pause, and control the signing speed of the ASL video. The size of the ASL video may be adjusted (using the "control + or -" keys) and it may be moved around on the computer screen. • Students should view the tutorial and take **online ASL practice tests** prior to testing to become familiar with all of the features of the ASL video player. If the student is unable to use the ASL video, but has this accommodation listed in his or her plan, a human signer may be substituted.	N/A (See A6.1 for Human Signer)
A7	**Human signer for <u>test directions only</u>** for a student who is Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing	
A8	**Track test items** by assisting the student to move from one test question to the next	

Table 4. *Response Accommodations* for Students with Disabilities

	Response Accommodations	
#	**Computer-Based Test**	**Paper-Based Test**

A9
(SR/PNP)
	Use a Department approved graphic organizer, checklist, or supplemental reference sheet for ELA, Mathematics, and/or Science and Technology/Engineering tests
	
	Only the approved ELA organizers and supplemental mathematics reference sheets made available by the Department may be used as accommodations on ELA and Mathematics tests. Graphic organizers *without* text may also be used without Department approval by students who have this accommodation listed in their IEP or 504 plan.
	
	Notes:
	
	• Approved graphic organizers and supplemental reference sheets are available on the <u>Department's website.</u> These have been developed for use on next-generation 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 previously approved versions and proposed changes submitted by schools.
	
	• A student may use no more than **three** different approved graphic organizers or **two** supplemental reference sheets per test session.
	
	• For **Science and Technology/Engineering** tests in grades 5, 8, and high school, a student may use a <u>sample reference sheet</u>, if available, or submit a customized reference sheet for Department approval (see Appendix E)
	
	• Individualized graphic organizers and reference sheets **for the following tests ONLY** may be submitted to the Department for approval according to the schedule below.
	
	<table><tr><td>**Test Administration Date**</td><td>**MCAS Test**</td><td>**Reference Sheet Submission Deadline**</td></tr><tr><td>November 2021</td><td>ELA and Mathematics Retests</td><td>**October 14, 2021**</td></tr><tr><td>February 2022</td><td>February Biology</td><td>**January 7, 2022**</td></tr><tr><td>April 2022</td><td>Grades 5 and 8 STE</td><td>**March 4, 2022**</td></tr><tr><td>June 2022</td><td>High School STE</td><td>**April 28, 2022**</td></tr></table>
	For the tests/retests listed in the table above:
	
	• Students may continue to use individualized ELA graphic organizers, supplemental mathematics reference sheets and checklists, and individualized STE reference sheets provided they have been submitted and approved by the Department prior to testing.
	
	• All individualized organizers, checklists, and reference sheets submitted for approval must be accompanied by a completed cover sheet (see Appendix E).
	
	• Individualizedreference sheets approved prior to the 2019–20202 school year **must be resubmitted for approval** for use on the 2021–2022 retests and STE tests.
	
	Notes on the use of graphic organizers for ELA legacy <u>retests:</u>
	
	• The student may use no more than **three** different graphic organizers per test session.
	
	• Graphic organizers and checklists may *not* include definitions, specific examples, or sentence starters.
	
	Notes on the use of individualized reference sheets for Mathematics legacy <u>retests</u>:
	
	• The reference sheet must:
	   o be developed in response to the student's specific learning needs;
	   o be no more than 3 pages in length; and
	   o conform to the <u>Approval Guide for Individualized Mathematics Reference Sheets</u>.

	Response Accommodations	
#	**Computer-Based Test**	**Paper-Based Test**

A10.1 *(SR/PNP)* and A10.2 *(SR/PNP)*	**Scribe responses** for the Mathematics, Science and Technology/Engineering tests, and/or legacy ELA *Reading Comprehension* retest using either:
	
	• **human scribe** (A10.1) who will record the student's responses verbatim (i.e., as dictated by the student) *at the time of testing*, either onscreen (computer-based test) or in the student's test & answer booklet (paper-based test). The student must be tested in a separate setting. Test administrators (and/or sign interpreters) who review the test will be asked to sign non-disclosure agreements. (See Appendix A for specific guidance on providing the scribe accommodation)
	
	If a student is unable to use his or her hand to respond to test questions due to a **recent injury or recovery from surgery**, the scribe accommodation may be provided, if:
	    ○ this is listed in a 504 plan or an approved IEP (Department approval is not required); OR
	    ○ if a 504 plan is under development, and the staff responsible for writing the plan have already met and agreed upon the need for the scribe accommodation before providing it to the student.
	
	• **speech-to-text** (A10.2); a speech recognition program or device that converts speech into text (other than a smartphone) used to generate responses to test questions.
	
	Students using the speech-to-text accommodation for grades 5 and 8 STE tests, or high school Biology test, will be able to use a speech-to-text "web extension" that functions within TestNav. This embedded assistive technology will allow students to dictate their responses directly into the computer-based test without using a separate, adjacent (external) device.
	The web extension for speech-to-text will function only on the computer-based grades 5 and 8 STE tests; the high school Biology test; and (if listed in a student's IEP or 504 plan as *special access* accommodation SA3.2) the ELA tests. **The web extension for speech-to-text does not function on mathematics or Introductory Physics computer-based tests** due to its incompatibility with the Equation Editor answer box used for open responses. Refer to the <u>Guidelines for Using Assistive Technology as an MCAS Test Accommodation</u> for a step-by-step guide to accessing and using this feature**.**	

A11	N/A	**Responses recorded by student on special paper**, rather than in the test & answer booklet. • Responses **must be transcribed** into the student's test & answer booklet by a test administrator *anytime during the test window*. • If the **student transcribes** his or her own responses, then transcription must occur *during the test session* and be completed on the day in which the test session began.
A12 *(SR/PNP)*	N/A	**Typed responses** • Responses must be printed out, one per page, and inserted in the student's test & answer booklet with all required information on each page (see the <u>Principal's Administration Manual</u>). • Transcription of typed responses into the test & answer booklet is NOT required. • After printing out, responses must be deleted from the word processor or device.
A13	**Student records responses on a recording device** (other than a smartphone) for the purpose of playing back and transcribing recorded segment(s). Student may use text-to-speech software or an audio recording device. Responses must be deleted from any external devices once they have been transcribed into the student's test & answer booklet.	
A14	**Responses signed onto video (for a student who is Deaf or Hard-of Hearing)**, then transcribed by the student onscreen or into the answer booklet during playback. The video must be deleted after transcription.	

Response Accommodations		
#	Computer-Based Test	Paper-Based Test
A15	**Monitor placement of responses** in the appropriate area onscreen or in the test & answer booklet by the test administrator	
A16	**Refreshable Braille Display/Braille note-taker** (specific external device used in conjunction with screen reader for student who is blind or has a vision impairment). A hard-copy edition of the Braille test must also be ordered.	**Braille note-taker** (specific external device used in conjunction with hard-copy Braille test) Note: Braille notes should be returned with the school's nonscorable shipment.
A17	**Braille writer** (specific external device used in conjunction with screen reader and hard-copy Braille test)	**Braille writer** (specific external device used in conjunction with the hard-copy Braille test). A printout of each response may be generated and inserted in the student's test & answer booklet, with all required information on each page (also see the Principal's Administration Manual).

A note regarding the transcription of student responses: The process of transcribing a student's responses onscreen or into his or her test & answer booklet by a test administrator (e.g., from the large print answer booklet) may occur at any time during the testing window, and must be monitored and supervised by the principal, test coordinator, or another test administrator. Details on transcribing responses are provided in Appendix A.

9. *Special Access Accommodations* for Students with Disabilities

Special access (formerly called "nonstandard") accommodations are intended for use by a *very small number of students* 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 may alter part of what the test is designed to measure. Teams must carefully review the guidelines and criteria described for each special access accommodation listed in Table 5.

Test results for students who took the test using special access accommodations should be interpreted with caution by parents and schools who 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 will review each district's rate of use of special access accommodations. To ensure that IEP teams and 504 plan coordinators carefully review and apply appropriate criteria for use of special access accommodations, districts must do the following:

- train members of IEP teams and 504 plan coordinators on the guidelines for the selection and use of accommodations, including *special access* accommodations, listed in Table 5; and
- revise the IEPs and 504 plans of students with disabilities as needed.

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 are encouraged to make consistent, appropriate, and defensible decisions regarding the use of *special access* accommodations for each student based on locally administered diagnostic assessments, and to 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 5.

Table 5. *Special Access Accommodations* **for Students with Disabilities**

Special Access Accommodations	
#	Computer- and Paper-Based Tests
SA1.1 *(SR/PNP)* and SA1.2 *(SR/PNP)* and SA1.3 *(SR/PNP)*	**Text-to-speech** (SA1.1) **or Human read-aloud** (SA1.2) **for next-generation ELA tests; or Kurzweil 3000** (SA1.3) **electronic text reader or Human read-aloud** (SA1.2) **for the legacy ELA Reading Comprehension retest**, including oral presentation of test questions, response options, and passages. • text-to-speech may be used either with or without headphones; • a human reader may either read aloud 1) the **computer-based test** logged in to a nearby computer or sitting next to the student; or 2) the **paper-based test**. This accommodation is intended for a small number of students with disabilities that **severely limit or prevent them from reading**, as documented in locally administered diagnostic evaluations. The student must meet all of the following criteria: • be **virtually unable to read**, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so (i.e., the student is at the very beginning stages of learning to read, and not simply reading below grade level), as determined by locally administered diagnostic evaluations; and • receive **ongoing intervention** to learn the skill of reading; and • use this accommodation routinely (except during instruction in learning to read). The human read aloud (SA1.2) may also be provided to a student who is blind or has a visual impairment and uses a screen reader and/or has not yet learned (or is unable to use) Braille on the tests and retests listed above. If the student will use a screen reader, 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). The student • may be tested in a typical-sized group if using text-to-speech *with* headphones; • must be tested individually in a separate setting if text-to-speech will be used *without* headphones; and • may be tested in a group of up to five students if a human reader will be used.
SA2 *(SR/PNP)*	**Human Signer for next-generation ELA tests or legacy ELA Reading Comprehension retest**, including reading passages, questions, and answer options, for a student who is Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing This accommodation is intended for students who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing, and who are **severely limited or prevented from reading**, as documented in locally administered diagnostic evaluations. The student must meet all of the following criteria: • be **virtually unable to read** (i.e., decode text), even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so (i.e., the student is at the very beginning stages of learning to read, and not simply reading below grade level), due to a documented disability and/or history of early and prolonged lack of exposure to and use of language; and • uses this accommodation routinely, except during reading instruction; and • receives ongoing intervention to learn the skill. The student must be tested in a group of no more than five students, unless approval is obtained from the Department to increase the group size in rare circumstances.
SA3.1 *(SR/PNP)* and SA3.2 *(SR/PNP)*	**Scribe responses on the ELA test or ELA Composition retest**, administered individually and in a separate setting to a student using either: • **a human scribe** (SA3.1) who records the student's responses verbatim during testing (See Appendix A for guidelines on scribing student responses) OR • **speech-to-text** (SA3.2), a speech recognition program that converts spoken language to written text, used under the direct supervision of a test administrator to generate responses to test questions Students using the speech-to-text *special access* accommodation for the CBT ELA test will be able to use an embedded speech-to-text "web extension" that functions within TestNav. This embedded assistive technology will allow students to dictate their responses directly into the computer-based test without using a separate adjacent

Special Access Accommodations	
#	**Computer- and Paper-Based Tests**

	(external) device. Refer to *Guidelines for Using Assistive Technology as an MCAS Test Accommodation* for a step-by-step guide on accessing and using this feature**.**
	
	These accommodation are intended for a student who either:
	1. has a **language-processing (or other) disability** and requires the dictation of virtually all written responses to a scribe or an electronic speech-to-text conversion device to generate responses.
	OR
	2. who is unable to use his or her hand or arm at the time of testing due to a **fracture, severe injury, or recovery from surgery.** In this case, the accommodation must either be
	   a. listed in a 504 plan or an approved IEP (additional approval by the Department is *not* required); OR
	   b. in cases where a 504 plan is under development, school personnel responsible for writing the plan must have already met and agreed upon the necessary MCAS accommodation(s) before a student may be provided the accommodation(s).

SA4 *(SR/PNP)*	**Calculation device or other mathematics tool** (including addition/subtraction or multiplication/division tables; or manipulatives) on the *non-calculator session* of the Mathematics test or retest This accommodation is intended for a small number of students with documented disabilities that **severely limit or prevent them from performing basic calculations** without a calculation device or other mathematics tool, as documented in locally administered diagnostic evaluations, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so. The student must meet all of the following criteria: • be **virtually unable to calculate** (i.e., unable to perform single-digit addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division without a calculation device or other mathematics tool); and • uses the calculation device or tool during routine instruction in mathematics; and • receives ongoing intervention to learn the skill. The student's IEP or 504 plan must specify which calculation device or tool will be used (e.g., calculator or multiplication table). Manipulatives and other mathematics tools (excluding calculators and arithmetic tables) must be approved by the Department prior to their use on MCAS tests. Please contact Student Assessment Services at 781-338-3625 or mcas@doe.mass.edu to request approval.
SA5 *(SR/PNP)*	**Spell-checker for the ELA test or ELA Composition retest**, including an external spell-checking device for the paper-based test; or in conjunction with the typed response accommodation for the paper-based test This accommodation is intended for a small number of students with disabilities that **severely limit or prevent them from spelling correctly**, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so. The student must meet all of the following criteria: • be **virtually unable to spell simple words** (i.e., at the beginning stages of learning how to spell), as documented by locally-administered diagnostic evaluations; and • produces understandable written work only when provided this accommodation, which the student uses during routine instruction; and • receives ongoing intervention to learn the skill. The student may *not* use grammar check or access the internet during the test.

Special Access Accommodations	
#	Computer- and Paper-Based Tests
SA6 *(SR/PNP)*	**Word prediction for the ELA test and ELA Composition retest**: Word prediction provides a student with a bank of frequently or recently used words after the student keyboards the first few letters of a word. Students using the word prediction *special access* accommodation for the ELA test will be able to use an embedded word prediction "web extension" that functions within TestNav. This embedded assistive technology will allow students to use word prediction assistive technology within TestNav without using a separate, adjacent (external) device. Refer to the *Guidelines for Using Assistive Technology as an MCAS Test Accommodation* for a step-by-step guide on accessing and using this feature**.** For paper-based tests, a word prediction application must be used at a separate external computer station and a test administrator or the student must transcribe the selected word(s) on the student's onscreen test or into the student's answer booklet. (See Appendix A for information and guidelines on transcribing student responses.) This accommodation is intended for a small number of students who: 1. have a disability that **severely limits or prevents them from recalling and processing language** in order to generate written responses; AND 2. can access written expression only through the use of word prediction software, application, or device during routine instruction in order to generate written responses. Test administrators who review the test will be asked to sign non-disclosure agreements. During testing, internet access must be turned off/restricted; and functions that *automatically* select words for the student must be turned off.

V. MCAS Participation Requirements for Students Who Are English Learners (ELs)

EL students must participate in all MCAS tests scheduled for their grades, regardless of the language program and/or services they are receiving or the amount of time they have been in the United States, with one exception: Spring 2022 ELA testing is *optional* for EL students who enrolled in U.S. schools **after March 1, 2021** and who were not reported in the March 2021 SIMS report. ELA testing is also optional for EL students from Puerto Rico who are in their first year of enrollment in a Massachusetts school. District staff should refer to the *Graduation Requirements for Displaced Puerto Rico High School Students* who may wish to obtain a diploma from Puerto Rico.

Schools may elect to administer the MCAS ELA tests to first-year ELs and *must* administer the ACCESS for ELLs test to first-year and all other EL students, even those who have opted out of English language programs and services. **First-year EL students *must* also participate in MCAS Mathematics and Science and Technology/Engineering tests**, although results will be reported for diagnostic purposes only and students' results will not be included in school and district summary results or in state accountability reporting. For first-year ELs who participate in ELA testing, results will be provided at the school level and will be used for Competency Determination purposes for grade 10 students.

EL Participation Requirements for Spring 2022 MCAS Tests

	Content Area Test		
	ELA	**Mathematics**	**Science and Tech/Eng**
First-Year EL Students[1]	*Optional*[2]	Required	Required
All Other Students	Required	Required	Required

[1] Results for first-year EL students are **not** included in MCAS school and district summary results.
[2] Optional, provided that the student has participated in ACCESS for ELLs testing.

Questions regarding the **identification screening, placement, and reclassification of EL students** should be directed to the Office of English Language Acquisition and Academic Achievement at 781-338-3584 or via email at el@doe.mass.edu. For additional details, refer to the Guidance on Identification, Assessment, Placement, and Reclassification of English Learners.

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 EL Students

In addition to the accessibility features listed elsewhere in this manual that are available to English learners, several accommodations are also available to ELs, as described in Table 6. Table 7 describes the relative suitability of each accommodation for students who are at beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels of English proficiency.

A.   Individuals Involved in Selecting Accessibility Features and Accommodations for EL Students

Decisions about which universal and designated accessibility features, and which accommodations, are appropriate for an EL student should be made by a group of educators familiar with the student. The decisions of the decision-making team must be documented using either the sample form for **Documentation of MCAS Accommodations for an EL Student** provided in Appendix B, or using a similar, locally designed form.

Individuals involved in the decision-making process may include any of the following:

- the student
- the student's English as a Second Language (ESL) educator
- school administrator (principal/assistant principal)
- general educator (content area teacher)
- special educator (if appropriate)
- 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 is familiar with their use. The student should not be introduced to an accessibility feature or accommodation on the day of the assessment. Accessibility features and accommodations are intended to remove barriers and allow EL students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills more effectively.

B.   Guidelines for Selecting and Evaluating Accessibility Features and Accommodations for EL Students

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.

1. Decision-Making Procedures

The following procedures may be used to make appropriate decisions regarding the selection of accessibility features and accommodations for EL students:

- After examining the range of supports allowed on MCAS tests that may help the EL student access the curriculum and take assessments more effectively, the student's classroom teacher should consider the following:

  - *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?*

- After trying out the selected supports during routine instruction to determine whether they meet the student's needs, the teacher should consider the following questions:

  - *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?*

- The teacher should 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 accessibility feature(s) and/or accommodations listed in this manual that were used successfully in the classroom, the teacher can select the appropriate features and/or accommodations for use on the MCAS tests.

- The teacher should document the final decisions on the use of specific accessibility features or accommodations, either on the sample form provided in Appendix B or using a similar locally developed form and maintain this information in the student's file.

2. Involving Students in Selecting and Using Accommodations

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

It is important to introduce the use of selected features and accommodations as early as possible in the school year to familiarize students with their use and determine their effectiveness. Accommodations should not be introduced for the first time on a statewide assessment.

C.   Accommodations for Students Who Are English Learners (ELs)

In addition to universal features and designated features available to all students, the accommodations listed in Table 6 are available to all ELs, with and without disabilities, on MCAS tests.

Note that *some* EL accommodations must be **requested in advance** in the Student Registration/Personal Needs Profile (SR/PNP) in PearsonAccess[next]. The names of accommodations and the process for their selection in the SR/PNP are identical to accommodations for students with disabilities, although the EL accommodations have unique codes (e.g., EL1.).

Table 6. Accommodations for Students Who Are ELs

#	Accommodations for EL Students
EL1 *(SR/PNP)*	**Paper-based editions** of the next-generation tests may be administered to a first-year EL student (i.e., a student in his or her first calendar year of enrollment in a U.S. school) with a low level of English proficiency, or an EL who has little or no familiarity with technology. (Note: Administering the ELA test to a first-year EL student is *optional*)
EL2	**Approved Bilingual Word-to-Word Dictionary and Glossary** (English/Native language) (Note: this accommodation is also available to former ELs)
EL3.1 *(SR/PNP)* and EL3.2 *(SR/PNP)* and EL3.3 *(SR/PNP)*	**Text-to-speech (TTS)** (EL3.1) for next-generation computer-based Mathematics, grades 5 and 8 Science and Technology/Engineering, and/or high school Biology or Introductory Physics (STE); or **Human read-aloud** (EL 3.2) for next-generation computer-based or paper-based Mathematics; Science and Technology/Engineering tests; legacy Mathematics or ELA *Composition* retests; or **Kurzweil 3000** (EL3.3) for legacy paper-based Mathematics retests, ELA Composition retests, and/or legacy high school Science and Technology/Engineering tests • If administering the paper-based test with a human reader, the test must be read word for word in English, exactly as written. The test administrator may not provide assistance to the student regarding the translation or meaning of words. The test administrator should read with emphasis only when indicated by bold or italicized text. • If a human reader is used, the test must be administered in a separate setting either **individually** or to a **group of 2–5 students** all of whom are receiving the human reader accommodation. • A student using the TTS-enabled English-only edition of the computer-based test with **headphones** may be tested in a typical-size group. If *not* using headphones, then student must be tested in a separate setting. **Note:** Reading aloud **selected words** on the Mathematics and/or Science and Technology/ Engineering tests is UF10. (See Table 1.)
EL4.1 *(SR/PNP)* and EL4.2 *(SR/PNP)*	**Scribe or speech-to-text** for Mathematics test responses, STE test responses, and/or legacy ELA *Reading Comprehension* retest responses, consisting either of: • **human scribe** (EL4.1), who records student's responses verbatim *at the time of testing*. See Appendix A for specific guidance on providing the scribe accommodation; or • a **speech-to-text** (EL4.2) program that converts spoken language to written text, used under the direct supervision of a test administrator to generate responses to test questions. Students using the speech-to-text accommodation for the grade 5 and 8 STE tests, and high school Biology, will be able to use an embedded speech-to-text "web extension" that functions within TestNav. This assistive technology is compatible with TestNav and will allow students to dictate their responses directly into the computer-based test without using a separate adjacent (external) device. The embedded web extension **is not available to ELs on the ELA tests; nor does the speech-to-text web extension function on the mathematics and Introductory Physics computer-based tests** due to incompatibility with the Equation Editor answer box used for open responses on those tests. Refer to the *Guidelines for Using Assistive Technology as an MCAS Test Accommodation* for a step-by-step guide to accessing and using this feature**.**
EL5	**Test administrator reads aloud/repeats/clarifies general administration directions in English** (from the Test Administration Manual scripts)
EL6	**Test administrator reads aloud/repeats/clarifies general administration directions** (from the Test Administration Manual scripts) **in student's native language**, if native language speaker is available
EL7	NEW for Spring 2022 **Spanish-English** version of the Grade 10 Mathematics test or retest and **High School Biology** and **Introductory Physics** tests • Spanish-English tests are available in computer- and paper-based formats; legacy retests are paper-based only. Paper-based tests consist of Spanish and English on facing pages (side-by-side); computer-based tests consist of "stacked"

#	Accommodations for EL Students
	Spanish text above English text. • Intended for Spanish-speaking EL students who have been in the U.S. less than 3 years. • Students may respond either in Spanish or English. (Note that for all other MCAS test versions, students may respond only in English.)

Table 7 provides guidance regarding the suitability of EL accommodations based on the English language proficiency (ELP) level of the student.

Table 7. Guidance on Selecting Accommodations for English Learners

KEY for Table 7:

● **Highly recommended** for use by English learners at this ELP level

◉ **Recommended** for use by English learners at this ELP level

○ **May not be appropriate** for students at this ELP level

#	Accommodation	Most Likely to Benefit English Language Learners at the Following English Proficiency Levels		
		Beginning	Intermediate	Advanced
EL1	**Paper-based editions** of the next-generation tests may be administered to a first-year EL student (i.e., in the first calendar year of enrollment in a U.S. school) with a low level of English proficiency and/or no familiarity with technology.	◉	○	○
EL2	Approved **bilingual word-to-word dictionary** and glossary (English/Native Language)	○	●	●
EL3.1 and EL3.2	**Text-to-speech** (EL3.1) for the next-generation computer-based Mathematics or Science Technology/Engineering (STE) tests (in English *only);* OR **Human read-aloud** (EL3.2) for Mathematics, STE, or legacy ELA Composition retest	●	◉	○
EL4.1 and EL4.2	**Human scribe** (EL4.1) or **speech-to-text** (EL4.2) for Mathematics and/or Science and Technology/Engineering test responses, or legacy ELA Reading Comprehension retest	●	◉	○
EL5	Test administrator reads aloud/repeats/clarifies general administration **directions** **in English**	●	◉	○
EL6	Test administrator reads aloud/repeats/clarifies general administration **directions** **in student's native language**	●	◉	○
EL7	**Spanish-English** version of the Grade 10 Math test/retest, June High School Biology or Introductory Physics	●	◉	○

APPENDIX A

Procedures for Scribing and Transcribing Student Responses

A human scribe (A10.1, EL4.1, SA3.1) or speech-to-text (A10.2, EL4.2, SA3.2) are accommodations that allow students to either provide their responses orally to a test administrator who will write or keyboard the responses directly onscreen (or into the student's test booklet) or into a speech recognition device that converts spoken words into text. Students who receive this accommodation may respond to test questions either through:

- 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 <u>Human Scribe</u> Accommodation (A10.1, EL4.1, SA3.1)
- A scribe may administer this accommodation only to **one student at a time** during a test session. The student must be tested in a separate setting.
- If scribing responses into a paper-based test 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 for scribing next-generation ELA tests and legacy ELA composition retests (SA3.1):
- When scribing, the scribe may assume that each sentence begins with an upper-case letter and ends with a period. All other capitalization, punctuation, and paragraph breaks are the responsibility of the student.
- After the student has finished dictating his or her response(s), the scribe must:
  - 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 direct the scribe to make the edits.
  - not assist the student in making decisions during the editing process.

Guidelines for <u>Transcribing</u> Student Responses

Circumstances may occur during test administration that may require a test administrator to **transcribe** a student's responses into a test & answer booklet or onscreen. Transcribing responses by a test administrator may occur at any time until the end of the test window under secure conditions supervised by the principal (or designee). These situations may include:

- answers recorded in the wrong section of, or in an incorrect test & answer booklet or computer-based test.
- a student took the test using a special test format requiring that answers be transcribed; e.g., Braille, large print. (Braille responses must be transcribed by persons fluent in Braille).
- a student uses speech-to-text software, or augmentative communication, or an assistive technology device (**that is not compatible with TestNav**) and prints responses for transcription by a test

administrator.

- A student recorded answers on blank paper, instead of in the required test & answer booklet or computer-based test, as an accommodation.
- The test & answer booklet or document becomes unusable; e.g., torn, wrinkled, or contaminated.

In cases where a student's responses must be transcribed *after* test administration is completed, the following steps must be followed:

- 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 a principal or designee.
- the student's response must be transcribed verbatim into the combined test & answer booklet (or separate answer booklet for legacy tests) or computer-based test.
- the student's original printed responses must either be securely shredded or returned with the school's nonscorable materials.

APPENDIX B

Sample Form

Documentation of MCAS Accommodations
for an EL Student

Use this form or a locally developed form to document the selection of **MCAS accessibility features and accommodations** for each EL student. Available accessibility features and accommodations are listed in the *Accessibility and Accommodations Manual for the 2021–2022 MCAS Tests/Retests*. This form or the locally developed form should be completed within 60 days of the start of school year or student's date of enrollment and must be **updated annually**. If the EL is a student with a disability, accommodations decisions for EL students with disabilities must also be documented in the student's IEP or 504 plan.

Student Name: _____School Year: _____

Grade: _____ SASID: _____

School: _____District: _____

Name of staff and others who determined the test accommodations and features for the student:

Teacher(s) _____

Others (including student and/or parent)_____

_____

If the **parent** and/or **student** were not part of the decision-making process, then they should be notified of the features and accommodations the student will receive on the tests.

Directions: Indicate below the **accessibility features and accommodations** that will be provided to the student on MCAS tests.

Accessibility Feature or Accommodation Needed by the EL Student for Testing	Notes/Comments
(Continue on additional pages as needed.)	

APPENDIX C

Sample Form (Optional)

Student Accommodation Refusal

If a student refuses an accommodation listed in his or her IEP or 504 plan, the school should document in writing that the student refused the accommodation, and the accommodation must be offered and remain available to the student during testing.

This form can be completed and placed in the student's file, and a copy sent to the parent. IEP teams, 504 plan coordinators, and educators making MCAS accommodations decisions for ELs should consider this information when making future accommodations decisions for the student. Use of this form is encouraged, but not required.

Student Name: _____ **Date**: _____

Grade: _____ **SASID**: _____

School: _____

District: _____

MCAS Test:_____

Test Administrator:_____

Accommodation(s) refused by student_____

_____

Reason for refusal:_____

_____

_____

Comments:

_____

_____

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

APPENDIX D

Timeline for the Transition of MCAS tests to Unified English Braille (UEB)

The state's transition to Unified English Braille (full UEB/UEB Technical) from English Braille American Edition (EBAE) and Nemeth Code will continue according to the calendar shown below for school years 2021–2022 and 2022–2023. UEB symbol sheets will be provided with MCAS UEB Braille test materials. All tests listed below are "next generation" unless noted as "legacy."

School Year	
Fall 2021–Spring 2022	**Fall 2022–Spring 2023**

EBAE with Nemeth Code:
 	
• November 2021 ELA and Mathematics Retests (legacy)
• March 2022 ELA and Mathematics Retests (legacy, if offered)
• No EBAE tests in Spring 2022
 	
UEB Technical (full UEB):
 	
• November 2021 ELA and Mathematics Retests (next-generation)
• February 2022 Biology (legacy)
• March 2022 ELA and Mathematics Retests (next-generation)
• All grades 3–8 and grade 10 spring MCAS tests, including:
  ○ ELA and Mathematics (next-generation)
  ○ Biology and Intro Physics (next-generation)
  ○ Chemistry and Technology/Engineering (legacy)
	EBAE with Nemeth Code:
	
	• No EBAE tests or retests
	
	UEB Technical (full) UEB:
	
	• November 2022 ELA and Mathematics Retests (next-generation)
	• February 2023 Biology and Introductory Physics (next-generation)
	• March 2023 ELA and Mathematics Retests (next-generation)
	• Spring 2023: All grades 3–8 and grade 10 MCAS tests, including:
	  ○ ELA and Mathematics (next-generation)
	  ○ Biology and Introductory Physics (next-generation)
	  ○ Chemistry and Technology/Engineering (legacy, if offered)

APPENDIX E

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4">

Submitting Customized Materials for Approval
for MCAS Science and Technology/Engineering Tests and ELA and Mathematics Retests
</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">

Instructions: This cover sheet must accompany all requests for approval to use customized materials for accommodation A9. Customized material may *only* be used on MCAS STE tests in grades 5, 8, and high school; and legacy mathematics and ELA retests. Please complete and submit this form to the Department's Student Assessment Services Office by email to mcas@doe.mass.edu.

Please submit a **separate cover sheet for each content area** (English Language Arts, Mathematics, or Science and Technology/ Engineering).

Materials submitted after the deadline(s) shown below may not be reviewed before the testing window begins.

Responses will be sent approximately ten school days after a request is received. Please contact the Student Assessment Services Unit at 781-338-3625 with any questions. Retain documentation on file for three years.
</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">

Contact Information
</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Name:</td><td colspan="2">Date:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">School Name:</td><td colspan="2">District Name:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Telephone Number:</td><td colspan="2">Fax Number:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Email:</td><td colspan="2">Resubmittal (Check one): ☐ Yes ☐ No</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">

Accommodation A9 Customized Materials Submitted
</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">*Place a check mark next to each material being submitted for approval.*</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">☐ Legacy ELA Graphic Organizer</td><td colspan="2">☐ Legacy Math Reference Sheet</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">☐ Legacy STE or Other Checklist</td><td colspan="2">☐ STE Reference Sheet</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">

MCAS TEST ADMINISTRATION
</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">*Place a check mark next to each test administration for which the material will be used. (Submission deadline in parentheses)*</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">☐ November legacy retests (10/14/2021)</td><td colspan="2">☐ February Biology (1/7/2022)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">☐ High School STE (4/28/2022)</td><td colspan="2">☐ Grades 5 and 8 STE (3/4/2022)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">

Principal or Designee Statement

The principal or designee of the school must sign below to acknowledge the following:
I have reviewed the Department's policy for administering customized materials for accommodation A9 .
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Name:</td><td colspan="2">Signature
(or Electronic Signature):</td><td>Date:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">*Approval/Denial of Request – For Department Use Only*</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Database number: Date Received</td><td>Date of Response</td><td>☐ Email ☐ Fax</td></tr>
<tr><td>☐ Approved</td><td>☐ Approved with Changes</td><td>☐ Denied</td><td>Date Reviewed</td></tr>
</table>