

APPENDIX H

MCAS TEST ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

MCAS Test Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

A. Definition and Purpose of Test Accommodations

A test accommodation is a change in the way a test is administered or in the way a student responds to test questions. Accommodations are intended to overcome the effects of the disability and provide a student with the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and skills during classroom instruction and on statewide tests.

Reliance on test accommodations should never replace appropriate and rigorous instruction in the subject being tested.

B. Students Eligible for Test Accommodations

The right to receive accommodations on statewide tests is guaranteed by law to a student with a disability. A test accommodation must be provided when the student's IEP or 504 team has determined its necessity for classroom instruction and for a particular statewide test.

While the majority of students eligible for accommodations are those with an IEP or a 504 plan, accommodations may also be provided for students with **documented** disabilities who are not served under either plan, including any student who has a broken or fractured writing arm at the time of testing. To determine such a student's eligibility for test accommodations, a request for accommodation(s) with supporting documentation of a disability must be provided to the principal, who will consult, as needed, with the local administrator of special education. The principal may then authorize or deny the use of the requested accommodation(s). **It is not necessary to obtain permission from the Department to provide an accommodation to a student with a documented disability, such as providing a scribe to a student with a broken arm,** if the principal has authorized the accommodation.

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C. Requirements for Use of Test Accommodations

Accommodations are based on an individual student's need and may only be provided when the following conditions are met:

- 1) The student uses the accommodation **routinely** during classroom instruction and assessment in this subject (both before and after the test is administered)
AND
- 2) The student **requires** the accommodation in order to participate in statewide testing
AND
- 3) The accommodation is **documented** in the student's IEP or 504 plan or the student has a documented disability.

Accommodations **may not**

- alter, explain, simplify, paraphrase, or eliminate any test item, reading passage, writing prompt, or multiple-choice answer option;
OR
- provide verbal or other clues or suggestions that hint at or give away the correct response to the student;
OR
- contradict test administration requirements or result in the violation of test security.

When accommodations do not meet the conditions stated above, the student's test score may be **invalidated**.

Both standard and nonstandard accommodations may be used on MCAS tests according to the above policies and under the conditions outlined in this document.

D. Untimed Test Sessions

All MCAS test administrations are untimed.

Since any student may be given additional time beyond the scheduled test administration session, additional time is not considered an MCAS test accommodation.

However, **no single test session may extend beyond the end of the regular school day**, and any single test session must be completed on the same day in which it is begun. Students taking the English Language Arts Composition test must complete two sessions (Sessions A and B) in one day.

E. Definition of Standard Accommodations

For MCAS, standard accommodations are defined as changes in the routine conditions under which students take MCAS tests. Standard accommodations are grouped into the following four categories:

- Changes in timing or scheduling of the test; for example, administering the test in short intervals or at a time of day that takes into account the student's medical needs
- Changes in test setting; for example, administering the test in a small group or a separate setting
- Changes in test presentation; for example, using a large-print or Braille version of the test
- Changes in how the student responds to test questions; for example, dictating responses to a scribe

A list of commonly used standard test accommodations can be found in section G of this appendix.

F. Definition of Nonstandard Accommodations

For MCAS, nonstandard accommodations are defined as changes in the way in which an MCAS test is presented or in the way in which a student responds to test questions that may alter what the test measures. Teams must **exercise caution** in considering whether a student requires a nonstandard accommodation in order to access a test. Additionally, test results for a student who took the test using nonstandard accommodation(s) must be **interpreted with caution**.

The Department will monitor the use of all nonstandard accommodations this year.

A list of nonstandard accommodations and conditions under which they may be used appears in section H of this appendix.

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G. List of Standard Accommodations

Following is a list of standard test accommodations commonly used by students with disabilities on MCAS tests.

Please use this list as a general guide and call Student Assessment Services at (781) 338-3625 with any questions. The principal or designee must request any specialized test formats, including large-print, Braille, or Kurzweil, through the MCAS Enrollment Verification form prior to testing. If additional copies are needed, follow the instructions for ordering additional materials in this manual.

Changes in Timing or Scheduling of the Test

1. **Frequent Breaks:** The test is administered in short periods with frequent breaks.
 2. **Time of Day:** The test is administered at a time of day that takes into account the student's medical or learning needs (IEP or 504 plan must specify time of day).
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Changes in Test Setting

3. **Small Group:** The test is administered in a small group setting (no more than 10 students).
 4. **Separate Setting:** The test is administered in a room other than the one used by the rest of the class.
 5. **Individual:** The test is administered to the student individually.
 6. **Specified Area:** The test is administered with the student seated at the front or other specified area of the room, in a study carrel, or in another other enclosed area (IEP or 504 plan must specify where).
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Changes in Test Presentation

7. **Familiar Test Administrator:** The test is administered by a test administrator familiar to the student.
8. **Noise Buffers:** The student wears noise buffers, after test administration instructions have been read (headphones with music playing are not allowed).
9. **Magnification or Overlays:** The student uses magnifying equipment, enlargement devices, or colored visual overlays (IEP or 504 plan must specify which).

10. **Test Directions:** The test administrator clarifies general administration instructions. No portion of the test items themselves (e.g., the introduction to a reading selection) may be read or signed.

11. **Large-Print:** The student uses a large-print version of the test.

- All answers must be transcribed verbatim from the large-print answer booklet to the student's standard answer booklet.

12. **Braille:** The student uses a Braille version of the test.

- All answers must be transcribed verbatim from the Braille test to the student's standard answer booklet.

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

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

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

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

16. **Test Administrator Reads Test Aloud (except ELA Language and Literature test):** The test administrator reads the ELA Composition writing prompt or the Mathematics, Science and Technology/Engineering, and/or History and Social Science passages and test items to the student.

a) All passages and test items must be read word-for-word, exactly as written. The test administrator may not provide assistance to the student regarding the meanings of words, intent of any test item, or responses to test items. The test administrator must read in a neutral tone, with no emphasis given to any terms, passages, or response options. The test can be read aloud in one of the following ways, which **must be specified** in the IEP or 504 plan:

- Test administrator reads entire test session (passages and test items) word-for-word exactly as written.

OR

- Test administrator reads selected words, phrases, and/or sentences as directed by the student. The student points to the word, phrase, or sentence that he or she needs read aloud.

b) The test must be administered in a **separate setting**, either individually or to a small group (2–5 students). For reading aloud to a small group, follow the procedures outlined at the end of this appendix.

Note: Reading the ELA Language and Literature test aloud to a student is nonstandard accommodation 26.

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17. Test Administrator Signs Test (except ELA Language and Literature test): The test administrator signs the ELA Composition writing prompt or the Mathematics, Science and Technology/Engineering, and/or History and Social Science passages and test items to a student who is deaf or hard of hearing.

- a) All passages and test items must be signed exactly as written, except in cases when doing so would reveal an answer to a test question. If a sign visually defines a word or passage, it must be finger-spelled. Interpreters may not provide assistance to the student regarding the meanings of words, intent of any test question, or responses to test items.
- b) The test may be administered either individually or to a small group (2–5 students). For signing the test to a small group, follow the procedures outlined at the end of this appendix.

Notes:

- Under secure conditions supervised by the principal, sign interpreters may review test materials up to four days prior to test administration. Test materials may not be removed from the school.
- American Sign Language DVDs and videotapes of the grade 10 Mathematics test are available.
- Sign interpreting the ELA Language and Literature test is nonstandard accommodation 27.

18. Electronic Text Reader (except ELA Language and Literature test): The student uses an electronic text reader for the ELA Composition writing prompt or the Mathematics and Science and Technology/Engineering tests.

- a) Kurzweil MCAS tests are read-only; all answers must be submitted in the student's standard answer booklet.
- b) The following tests are available in electronic text reader format for accommodation 18:
 - Grades 3–10 Mathematics in Kurzweil 3000 format (CD)
 - Grades 4, 7, and 10 ELA Composition in Kurzweil 3000 format (CD)
 - Grades 5, 8, and High School Science and Technology/Engineering in Kurzweil 3000 format (CD)
 - Grade 10 ELA Composition and Mathematics tests in Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic (RFB&D) format (CD)

Note: Using an electronic text reader for the ELA Language and Literature test is nonstandard accommodation 28.

Changes in How the Student Responds to Test Questions

19. **Scribe Test (except ELA Composition):** For open-response test items (and multiple-choice items if needed), the student dictates responses to a scribe or uses a speech-to-text conversion device to record responses.
- A scribe may be used for students who have this accommodation documented in their IEPs or 504 plans, or who have a broken bone or fracture in their writing hand or arm at the time of testing.
 - The scribe must record the student's words **exactly as dictated** into the student's answer booklet and may not edit or alter the student's responses in any way.
 - The scribe must allow the student to review and edit what the scribe has written.
 - When a student uses an electronic speech-to-text conversion device, the test administrator must follow the instructions for submitting typed responses described under accommodation 23.
 - The test must be administered individually in a **separate setting**.

Note: Scribing the ELA Composition is nonstandard accommodation 29.

20. **Organizer, Checklist, Reference Sheet, or Abacus:** The student uses a graphic organizer, checklist, individualized mathematics reference sheet, or abacus.
- ELA graphic organizers and mathematics reference sheets approved in 2006 do not need to be resubmitted to the Department for approval this year.

A student may use a graphic organizer or checklist to generate a draft ELA Composition or open-response question or to check the steps in the writing process. The student may use no more than two different graphic organizers.

Generic graphic organizers (e.g., webs, Venn diagrams) do not need to be submitted to the Department for approval. Personalized graphic organizers must be pre-approved by the Department.

Graphic organizers **may not include**

- definitions,
 - specific examples, or
 - sentence starters.
- A student may use an individualized mathematics reference sheet or checklist **previously approved** by the Department to provide memory prompts, mnemonic devices, formulas, word banks, and/or generic steps in solving a mathematics problem.

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The mathematics checklist or individualized reference sheet **may not include**

- definitions of any mathematical terms,
- graphic illustrations (e.g., pictures of geometric shapes),
- specific examples showing solutions to actual mathematical problems, or
- arithmetic tables (including multiplication/division charts).

The mathematics checklist or reference sheet must be

- developed in response to the individual student's learning needs,
- documented in the student's IEP and used for routine instruction,
- limited to 1–3 pages,
- specific to the student's grade, and
- submitted for approval by the Department (if not approved in 2006), either by e-mail (in MS Word or pdf format only) to mcas@doe.mass.edu, or by fax to (781) 338-3630, no later than May 1, 2007, for the spring mathematics tests and at least two weeks prior to MCAS retests. Mathematics reference sheets submitted after these deadlines will not be approved. Notice of approval will take approximately two weeks from the time reference sheets are received at the Department.

A student who is visually impaired may use an abacus to solve mathematics problems.

Note: The use of calculators, arithmetic tables (including multiplication/division charts), and manipulatives on non-calculator sessions of the mathematics test is nonstandard accommodation 30.

21. **Student Signs or Reads Test Aloud:** The student reads the test aloud to himself or herself, or student reads test and records answers on audio-tape, then writes responses to test items while playing back the tape; a student who is deaf or hard of hearing signs test items/responses onto video, then writes answers while playing back the tape.

- a) The test must be administered individually in a **separate setting**.
- b) All video and audio tapes must be returned with the nonscorable materials.

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

23. **Word Processor:** The student uses a word processor, Alpha-Smart, or similar electronic keyboard to type the ELA Composition and/or answers to open-response questions.

See Appendix C of *Requirements for the Participation of Students with Disabilities in MCAS [Spring 2007 Update]* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation/?section=sped>) for complete instructions for submitting typed responses.

24. **Answers Recorded in Test Booklet:** The student records answers directly in the test booklet.

Note: The test administrator must transcribe answers verbatim into the student's standard answer booklet.

25. **Other Standard Accommodation:** Other standard accommodation that is identified by the IEP Team or 504 team, documented in the student’s IEP, and not on this list. The accommodation must meet the conditions of the Requirements for Use of Test Accommodations, section C, page 2 of this appendix.

No more than two weeks prior to test administration the principal or designee must notify (and may consult with) the Department when a standard accommodation not on the above list is being considered for a student. Please call (781) 338-3625, e-mail mcas@doe.mass.edu, or fax (781) 338-3630.

H. List of Nonstandard Accommodations

Students may use one or more of the following nonstandard MCAS test accommodations when they are consistent with accommodations provided to the student during routine instruction and assessment in the subject being tested. The student’s IEP or 504 team must determine that the student meets all criteria listed below, and that the nonstandard accommodation is absolutely necessary in order for the student to participate in MCAS testing.

26. **Test Administrator Reads Aloud ELA Language and Literature Test:** The test administrator reads the ELA Language and Literature test to a student.

- a) The use of nonstandard accommodation 26 may be considered when **all** of the following conditions apply:
- The student has a specific disability that **severely limits or prevents him or her from decoding text, or from comprehending decoded text**, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so (i.e., the student is a virtual **non-reader**, not simply reading below grade level).

AND

- The student has access to printed materials only through a reader, or is provided with spoken text on audiotape, CD, video, or other electronic format during routine instruction (except during actual instruction in learning to decode).

AND

- The accommodation is documented in the student’s IEP, after the IEP team has considered the conditions listed above in determining whether the student is eligible for this accommodation.

- b) All passages and test items must be read word-for-word, exactly as written. The test administrator may **not** provide assistance to the student regarding the meanings of words, intent of any test item, or responses to test items. The test administrator must read in a neutral tone, with no verbal emphasis given to any terms, passages, or response options. The test can be read aloud in one of the following ways, which **must be specified** in the IEP or 504 plan:

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- Test administrator reads entire test session (passages and test items) word-for-word exactly as written.

OR

- Test administrator reads selected words, phrases, or sentences as directed by the student. The student points to the word, phrase, or sentence that he or she needs read aloud.

- c) The test must be administered in a **separate setting**, either individually or to a small group (2–5 students). When reading aloud to a small group, follow the procedures outlined at the end of this appendix.

The Department will closely monitor and report the use of this accommodation this year.

Note: Reading aloud the ELA Composition writing prompt or the Mathematics, Science and Technology/Engineering, and/or History and Social Science tests is standard accommodation 16.

27. Test Administrator Signs ELA Language and Literature Test for a Student Who Is Deaf or Hard of Hearing

- a) The use of nonstandard accommodation 27 may be considered when **all** of the following conditions apply:

- The student has a specific documented disability that **severely limits or prevents him or her from decoding text, or from comprehending decoded text**, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so (i.e., the student is a virtual **non-reader**, not simply reading below grade level).

AND

- The student has access to printed materials only through a sign language interpreter, or is provided with signed text on video or other electronic format during routine instruction (except during actual instruction in learning to decode).

AND

- The accommodation is documented in the student's IEP, after the IEP team has considered the conditions listed above in determining whether the student is eligible for this accommodation.

- b) All passages and test items must be signed exactly as written, except in cases when doing so would reveal an answer to a test question. If a sign visually defines a word or passage, it must be finger-spelled. Interpreters may not provide assistance to the student regarding the meanings of words, intent of any test question, or responses to test items.

- c) The test must be administered in a **separate setting**, either individually or to a small group (2–5 students). When signing a test to a small group, follow the procedures outlined at the end of this appendix.

Notes:

- Under secure conditions supervised by the principal, sign interpreters may review test materials up to four days prior to test administration. Test materials may not be removed from the school.
- Signing the ELA Composition writing prompt or the Mathematics, Science and Technology/Engineering, and/or History and Social Science tests is standard accommodation 17.

28. Electronic Text Reader for the ELA Language and Literature Test: The student uses an electronic text reader for the ELA Language and Literature test.

a) The use of nonstandard accommodation 28 may be considered when **all** of the following conditions apply:

- The student has a specific documented disability that **severely limits or prevents him or her from decoding text, or from comprehending decoded text**, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so (i.e., the student is a virtual **non-reader**, not simply reading below grade level).

AND

- The student has access to printed materials only through a reader, or is provided with spoken text on audio-tape, CD, video, or other electronic format during routine instruction (except during actual instruction in learning to decode).

AND

- The accommodation is documented in the student's IEP, after the IEP team has considered the conditions listed above in determining whether the student is eligible for this accommodation.

b) The following ELA Language and Literature tests are available in electronic text reader format for accommodation 28:

- Grades 3–10 in Kurzweil 3000 format (CD)
- Grade 10 in Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic (RFB&D) format (CD)

c) Kurzweil MCAS tests are read-only; all answers must be submitted in the student's standard answer booklet.

Note: Using an electronic text reader for the ELA Composition writing prompt or the Mathematics, and/or Science and Technology/Engineering tests is standard accommodation 18.

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

Note: The Department strongly urges IEP Teams to **consider alternatives to the use of a scribe for students who are deaf and taking the ELA Composition test**. One such alternative is accommodation 21, which would permit a deaf student to sign his or her draft composition onto a video and then transcribe the signed composition into written English while viewing the video. IEP Teams should select accommodations that promote the independence of deaf students to write in English.

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- a) The use of nonstandard accommodation 29 may be considered when any of the following conditions apply:
- The student routinely dictates all compositions to a scribe.
- OR**
- The student routinely uses an electronic speech-to-text conversion device for all compositions.
- OR**
- The student does not have sufficient manual dexterity at the time of testing to produce legible written work.
- OR**
- The student has a documented broken bone or fracture in his or her writing hand or arm at the time of testing.
- b) When a student uses an electronic speech-to-text conversion device, the test administrator must follow the instructions for submitting typed responses described in the *Test Administration Manuals*.
- c) The test must be administered individually in a **separate setting**.
- d) Clarification on the role of a scribe for the ELA Composition
- During *session A*, the scribe must write exactly what the student dictates into the student's test booklet. The scribe may not edit or alter the student's dictation in any way. When scribing the draft composition, the scribe may assume that each sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a period. All other capitalization, punctuation, and paragraph breaks are the responsibility of the student.
 - After the student has finished dictating his or her draft composition, the scribe must ask the student to do the following:
 - Spell key words. Key words include proper nouns, multi-syllable words, and other words pertinent to the story.
 - Review the draft composition and make any necessary edits, including edits to capital letters, punctuation, and paragraph breaks. The student may make edits independently or direct the scribe to make the edits. The scribe must not assist the student in making decisions during the editing process.
 - During *session B*, the scribe copies the final draft, including the student's edits, into the student's answer booklet.

30. **Calculation Devices:** The student uses a calculator, arithmetic table (including multiplication and division charts), or manipulatives on all sections of the Mathematics or Science and Technology/Engineering test.

The use of nonstandard accommodation 30 is allowed only when **both** of the following conditions apply:

- The student has a specific documented disability that **severely limits or prevents her or his ability to calculate mathematically** (i.e., the student cannot perform ANY calculation without the use of a calculator), even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so;

AND

- The student has access to mathematical calculation only through the use of a calculator, arithmetic table, or manipulatives, which the student uses for routine instruction (except instruction specifically related to learning to calculate).

Note: The Department will closely monitor and report the use of accommodation 30 this year.

31. Spell- or Grammar-Checking Function on Word Processor, Spell-Checking Device, or Word Prediction Software for the ELA Composition: The student uses a spell- or grammar-checking function, spelling device (including hand-held electronic spellers), or word prediction software for the ELA Composition.

a) The use of nonstandard accommodation 31 may be considered when one of the following conditions applies:

- The student has a specific documented disability that **severely limits or prevents her or his ability to spell**, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so.

OR

- The student can produce understandable written work only through the use of a spell- or grammar-checking device or word prediction software that is routinely used by the student.

b) When word prediction software is used, the “predict-ahead” and “predict online” software functions must be turned off.

32. Other Nonstandard Accommodation: Other nonstandard accommodation that is identified by the IEP Team or 504 team, documented on the student’s IEP, and not on this list. The accommodation must meet the conditions of the Requirements for Use of Test Accommodations, section C, page 2 of this appendix.

No more than two weeks prior to test administration, the principal or designee must notify (and may consult with) the Department when a nonstandard accommodation not on the above list is being considered. Please call (781) 338-3625, e-mail mcas@doe.mass.edu, or fax (781) 338-3630.

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

The test administrator may read test items aloud to a small group of students, provided that each student has an IEP or 504 plan that includes either standard accommodation 16 or nonstandard accommodation 26. **The following procedures must be followed:**

- No more than five students may be grouped together, since students typically proceed through the test at different rates.
- The principal or designee must supervise the assignment of students to groups that will have test items read aloud to them. Student test booklets may not be opened or reviewed by students or test administrators prior to testing.
- Students grouped together must have the same test form number, since all questions in a given test form are identical. If more than one group of students in the school will have test items read aloud, each group must use a different test form if possible. Test form numbers appear in the upper right-hand corner of each student test booklet.
- The principal or designee may order packets of 6 of the same test form on the online MCAS Enrollment Verification order form. These packets are intended specifically for use with accommodations 16 and 26. Each packet includes five test booklets (one each for a group of up to five students) and one additional test booklet for the test administrator.

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

The test administrator may sign test items to a small group of students, provided that each student has an IEP or 504 plan that includes either standard accommodation 17 or nonstandard accommodation 27. **The following procedures must be followed:**

- No more than five students may be grouped together, since students typically proceed through the test at different rates.
- Students grouped together must be given test Form 1 (Form 00 for Grade 10 Mathematics), since all questions in a given test form are identical. Test form numbers appear in the upper right-hand corner of each student test booklet. These test forms must be ordered by the principal or designee on the MCAS Enrollment Verification order form.
- Student test booklets may not be opened or reviewed by students prior to testing.
- Under secure conditions supervised by the principal, sign interpreters may review test materials up to four days prior to test administration. Test materials must be reviewed in a secure location supervised by the principal and may not be removed from the school.