



# **Accessibility and Accommodations Manual for the Spring 2018 MCAS Grades 3–8 Tests**

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

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## Purpose of This Manual

Massachusetts will administer the next generation computer-based MCAS tests in 2018, with an option for paper-based testing for students with disabilities who are unable to use a computer, as well as English learners who are new to the country and are unfamiliar with technology. MCAS tests will assess students' knowledge and skills based on the 2017 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for English Language Arts and Literacy, and for Mathematics. Science and Technology/Engineering tests will be based on the overlapping 2001/2006 and 2016 standards. Educators will need to become familiar with the MCAS accessibility and accommodations policies that provide options for student participation.

This *Accessibility and Accommodations Manual for the Spring 2018 MCAS Grades 3–8 Tests* provides guidance and information about:

- MCAS participation requirements for students with disabilities, students who are English language learners (ELLs), and ELLs with disabilities.
- the availability, selection, and use of
  - *universal accessibility features*, which provide support and accessibility for *all* students;
  - *designated accessibility features* intended for all students, but which require prior authorization from the principal; and
  - *test accommodations* for students with disabilities and students who are ELLs.
- which students with disabilities should be considered for an alternate assessment.

Please note that the requirements for high school students are contained in a separate publication entitled [\*Requirements for the Participation of Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners for the 2017–2018 MCAS High School Tests\*](#).

The appropriate use of accessibility features and accommodations provides all students with increased access to MCAS assessments. Decisions about appropriate test accommodations must be made carefully and be based on the needs of individual students and the requirements outlined in this manual. School and district staff must be trained annually on the use and selection of features and accommodations so they can determine which students are eligible to receive them, and update the selected accessibility features and accommodations for each student in the online Personal Needs Profile (PNP), during the student registration process.

Information on accessibility features and accommodations are provided in this document for planning purposes. Principals and test administrators must follow additional requirements that will be provided in the *MCAS Principal's Administration Manual* for the purpose of administering tests to students using these features and accommodations to students.

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](mailto:mcas@doe.mass.edu) or 781-338-3625 with any questions.

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# I. Overview of MCAS Accessibility and Accommodations

## A. Introduction

Participation requirements for the MCAS grades 3–8 tests are similar to prior years. All students, including students with disabilities and ELLs, 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).

MCAS tests for grades 3–8 will be offered in computer-based and paper-based formats, selection of accessibility features and accommodations should proceed according to whichever test format (computer or paper) will be used by the student. The assessment options indicated on the following pages were informed by (a) accepted practices for statewide assessments; (b) existing MCAS accommodations policies; and (c) the recommendations of stakeholders who were members of the [MCAS Accessibility and Accommodations Work Group](#).

The application of universal design principles to the new 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. Many computer-based accessibility features are unique to online testing, while others can be transferred to the paper-based testing experience for students who are unable to take tests on a computer. Increased flexibility in test administration procedures (called *designated accessibility features*) has been incorporated as a result of input from local administrators who have requested greater autonomy in determining the testing conditions within their schools.

To assist principals in tracking the provision of accessibility features and accommodations during testing, the Department recommends organizing a table or spreadsheet prior to test administration that lists where, when, and with whom students will be tested to ensure that each student receives the accessibility features and/or accommodations to which he or she is entitled.

This manual combines information that was previously available in two Department publications that are no longer available:

- *Requirements for the Participation of Students with Disabilities in MCAS*, and
- *Requirements for the Participation of ELLs in ACCESS for ELLs and MCAS*.

Please also note that the requirements for high school students are contained in a separate publication entitled [Requirements for the Participation of Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners in 2017–2018 MCAS High School Tests](#).

## B. What's New?

- It is expected that students in grades 4, 5, 7, and 8 will take computer-based tests in 2018, in accordance with the timeline proposed by the Commissioner to test virtually all students on computers by 2019.
- For spring 2018, computer-based testing will include the **grades 5 and 8 Science and Technology/Engineering (STE)** tests. As with English Language Arts and Mathematics MCAS tests, special test forms, including text-to-speech, screen reader, and assistive technology editions will be available for STE computer-based tests; paper-based STE tests will also be available as an accommodation for students with disabilities who are unable to use a computer, and ELLs who are new to the U.S. and are unfamiliar with technology.
- The Department will begin collecting information on the use of approved English Language Arts graphic organizers and Mathematics and STE reference sheets in the Personal Needs Profile (PNP) for 2018.

**Accessibility features and accommodations** for students in grades 3–8 are listed in the following categories:

- **Universal Accessibility Features (UF):** Many supports are now available to *all* students that were previously considered accommodations, either on the computer-based tests or on their paper-based equivalent. Universal Accessibility Features may be used by any student (see pp. 3–4).
- **Designated Accessibility Features (DF):** Flexible test administration procedures may be used with *any* student, at the discretion of the principal (or designee). These include changes in the location of testing rooms, group size, seating of students, and scheduling of test administrations (see p. 4).
- **Accommodations (A):** As before, accommodations will be available to students with disabilities, with several accommodations also available to English language learners. Team members and educators responsible for developing Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and 504 plans must make decisions regarding which accommodations to provide, and must list these in the plan for each student (see pp. 14–18). We encourage districts to list accommodations for ELL students using the sample form entitled Documentation of MCAS Accommodations for an ELL Student in Appendix B, though this is not required.
- **Special Access Accommodations (SAs):** Formerly called *nonstandard accommodations*, these accommodations will be offered to students who meet certain guidelines and criteria (see pp. 19–21).

The following supports must be provided to *all* students, including students with disabilities and ELLs:

- Untimed test sessions
- Blank scratch paper (including blank lined or graph paper)
- Assistance from a test administrator regarding the use of the computer-based testing platform

Additional testing policies will be described in the *MCAS Principal's Administration Manual*, which will be available this winter.

Students should become familiar with the features and basic functionality of the computer-based testing platform (TestNav) by viewing the [student tutorial](#) and taking [online practice tests](#) prior to test administration.

## 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 grades 3–8 MCAS tests that are either built into the MCAS computer-based test platform or provided by a test administrator on either the computer- or paper-based tests. Although the majority of 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’s Personal Needs Profile (PNP), a section of the student registration system in PearsonAccess<sup>next</sup> (PAN). The “*(PNP)*” designation in Table 1 below refers to a feature that must be documented and/or requested in the PNP prior to the start of testing.

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

#	Computer-Based Testing	Paper-Based Testing
UF1	<b>Highlight tool</b>	<b>Highlighter</b> (Used in test booklets, not answer booklets, by students in grades 4–8; colored pencils may be used by students in grade 3. See <i>Principal’s Administration Manual</i> for details)
UF2 <i>(PNP)</i>	<p><b>Alternative background and font color</b> (Color contrast);</p> <p>The student can select a color combination for text and background.</p> 	<b>Colored overlays or tinted lens(es)</b>
UF3	<p><b>Magnifier or Zoom tool</b></p> <p>(Magnifier tool enlarges part of the screen; Zoom tool enlarges or reduces entire screen by pressing Ctrl + or Ctrl -)</p>	<b>Magnification tool</b> or device/low-vision aid
UF4	<p><b>Line reader tool</b></p> <p>(Masks text so only part of the text can be viewed at one time)</p>	<b>Tracking device</b> , such as a straight edge or similar tool
UF5 <i>(PNP)</i>	<p><b>Answer masking</b></p> <p>(Student selects which answer choices will be shown on the screen)</p>	<b>Mask text or answer(s)</b> using a blank card or cutout
UF6	<p><b>Answer eliminator</b></p> <p>(Student marks an “X” through each answer option he or she believes is incorrect)</p>	<b>Use a pencil to eliminate answer choices</b> in test booklet (not for grade 3 tests)

UF7	<b>Item flag/bookmark</b>	<b>Use a blank place marker</b> to mark a question for later review
UF8	<b>Audio aids</b> (e.g., amplification device, noise canceling headphones, or white noise machine. <b>Note:</b> a smartphone may not be used)	<b>Audio aids</b> (e.g., amplification device, noise canceling headphones, or white noise machine, provided a smart phone is not used)
UF9	<b>Notepad</b> for notes or calculations	<b>Scratch paper</b> (required for all students)
UF10	<b>Test administrator reads aloud</b> (or <b>signs</b> , in the case of a student who is Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing) <b>selected words</b> on the Mathematics and/or Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) tests, as requested by the student.  The student will point to the 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.	
UF11	<b>Test administrator redirects student’s attention to the test</b> without coaching or assisting the student to answer any questions (e.g., test administrator reminds student to stay focused; it is not permissible to say, “Add more to your response” or “Make sure to answer all questions.”)	
UF12	<b>Read aloud, repeat, or clarify general test administration directions</b> 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-ELL 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	<b>Small group test administration</b> (May include up to a total of 10 students.)
DF2	<b>Individual (one-to-one) test administration</b> (Student must be tested in a separate setting.)
DF3	<b>Frequent brief supervised breaks</b>
DF4	<b>Separate or alternate test location</b>
DF5	<b>Seating in a specific area</b> of the testing room, including the use of a study carrel
DF6	<b>Adaptive or specialized furniture</b> (seating, desk, or lighting)
DF7	<b>Noise buffer</b> or noise-canceling earmuffs/headphones (Music or other recordings may not be played on headphones worn during testing.)
DF8	<b>Familiar test administrator</b>
DF9	<b>Student reads test aloud to self.</b> Student must be tested in a separate setting, unless a low-volume device such as a “Whisperphone” is used.
DF10	<b>Specific time of day</b>
DF11	<b>“Stop Testing” policy:</b> 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 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), and students in the custody of the Department of Youth Services (DYS).

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

Only a student's IEP team can make decisions about which test accommodations are appropriate for the student and whether the student should take a 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 Language Learners (ELL) with Disabilities

ELL students with 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: ELL students who **first enrolled in a U.S. school after March 1, 2017**, are *not required* to take the spring 2018 MCAS ELA tests, although schools have the *option* to assess first-year ELL students in ELA.

ELL 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 ELL students in MCAS beginning on page 23.

## Students Diagnosed with Concussions

The Department has issued [guidelines](#), including 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 that follows:

- Can the student demonstrate knowledge and skills (fully or partially) on the **standard MCAS test under routine conditions**?
- Can the student demonstrate knowledge and skills (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, the student should take the **alternate assessment** (MCAS-Alt).  
(**Note: Alternate assessments** are intended only for students with significant disabilities who are unable to take standard MCAS tests, even with accommodations. Students should not be identified for alternate assessments on the basis of a particular disability, placement in a specific classroom or program, previous low achievement, or ELL status.)

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
<p><b>OPTION 1</b></p> <p><i>If the student is</i></p> <p>a) generally able to demonstrate knowledge and skills on a computer- or paper-based test, either with or without test accommodations,</p> <p><i>and is</i></p> <p>b) working on learning standards <b>at or near grade-level expectations</b>,</p> <p><i>or is</i></p> <p>c) working on learning standards that have been modified and are <b>somewhat below grade-level expectations</b> due to the nature of the student's disability,</p>	<p><i>Then</i></p> <p>the student should take the computer- or paper-based <b>MCAS test</b>, either with or without accommodations.</p>

**Characteristics of Student's  
Instructional Program and Local Assessment**

**Recommended Participation  
in MCAS**

**OPTION 2**

*If the student is*

- a) **generally unable** to demonstrate knowledge and skills on a computer- or paper-based test, even with accommodations,

*and is*

- b) working on learning standards that have been **substantially modified** due to the nature and severity of his or her disability,

*and is*

- c) 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.

**Characteristics of Student's  
Instructional Program and Local Assessment**

**Recommended Participation in  
MCAS**

**OPTION 3**

*If the student is*

- a) working on learning standards **at, near, or somewhat below 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,

\* Examples of complex and significant disabilities for which the student may require an alternate assessment are provided in the following section.

*Then*

the student should take the computer- or paper-based **MCAS test**, if possible, with necessary accommodations.

*However*

the team may recommend the **MCAS-Alt** "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.

## E. Complex and Significant Disabilities for Which a Student May Require an Alternate Assessment (Option 3)

While the majority of students who take alternate assessments have significant intellectual disabilities, participation in the MCAS-Alt is not limited to those students. 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 even when the student may be working at or near grade-level expectations, the student's IEP team or 504 plan coordinator may determine that the student should participate in MCAS-Alt in one or more subjects.

In addition to the criteria for participating in alternate assessments outlined in Options 2 and 3 above, the following examples are provided to expand the team's understanding of the appropriate use of alternate assessments in unique circumstances.

An alternate assessment may be administered, for example, to each of the following students:

- 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)

## F. “Grade-Level” and “Competency” Portfolios

Students with significant disabilities like those described above who are unable to demonstrate knowledge and skills on the standard grades 3–8 MCAS tests, even with accommodations, but who are working **at or close to grade-level expectations**, should be considered for the “grade-level” (grades 3–8) or “competency” (high school) MCAS-Alt portfolio. More information on “grade-level” and “competency” MCAS-Alt portfolios is available in the [Educator's Manual for MCAS-Alt](#).

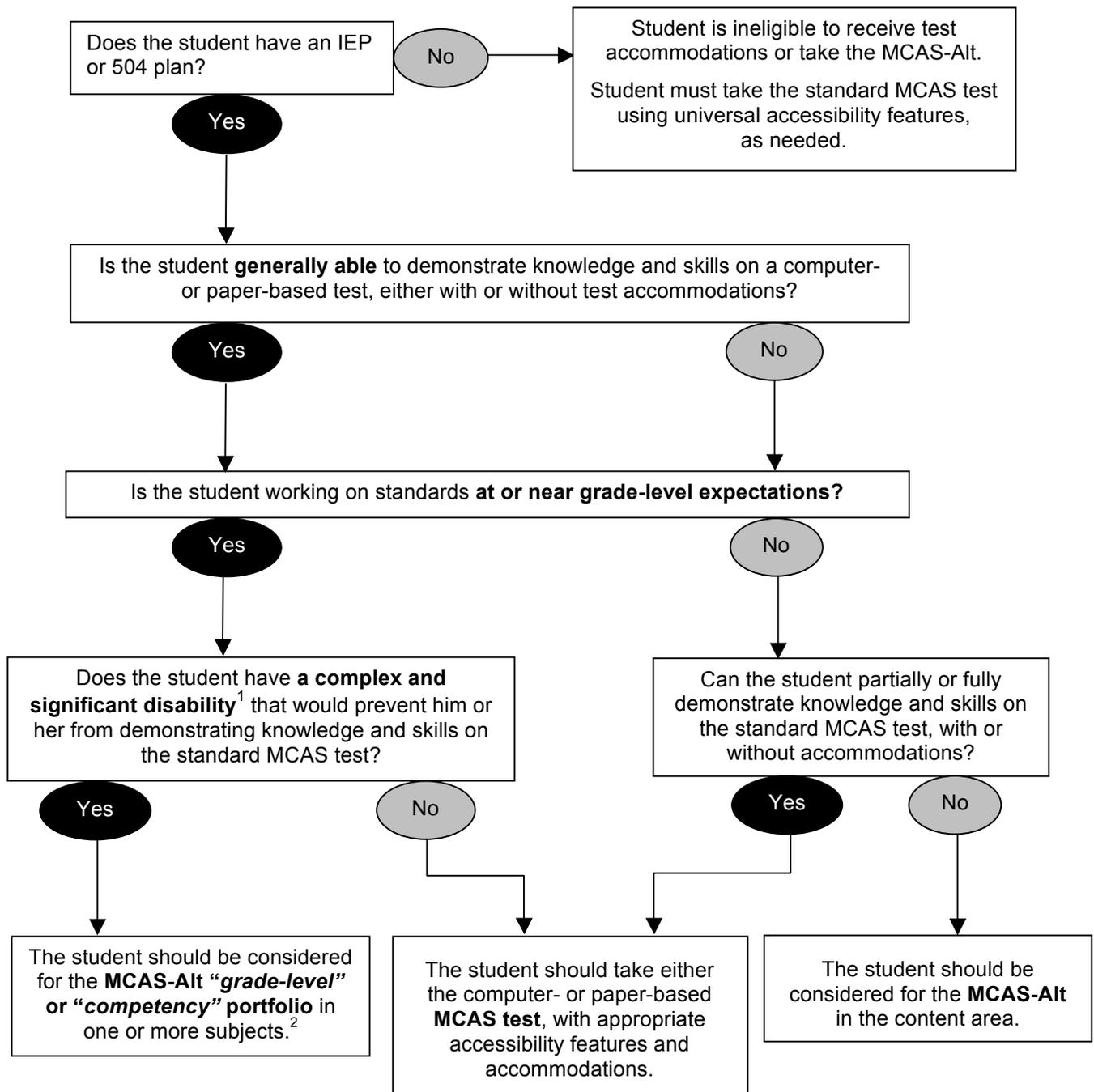
## G. Further Guidance on Designating Students for the MCAS-Alt

Do **not** assume that a student should take an alternate assessment solely because he or she:

- 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 language learner;
- is from a low-income family or 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 for the school's accountability rating.

## H. 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 *for each content area* being assessed.



<sup>1</sup> An explanation and examples of “complex and significant disabilities” can be found on page 8 of this manual.

<sup>2</sup> See the [Educator’s Manual for MCAS-Alt](#) for details and the submission requirements of “grade-level” and “competency” portfolios.

## 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 34 CFR 300.160, the state is providing districts with these guidelines for the provision of appropriate accommodations on the state assessment, and stipulating that IEP teams and 504 plan coordinators take care to 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 the test results of students who require accommodations;
- provide comparable test results to those of students who did not receive accommodations; and
- yield results that do not affect the validity or reliability of the interpretation of scores for their intended purposes.

The principal is responsible for ensuring that each student is provided with the test accommodations listed in his or her IEP or 504 plan. Based on the information and guidance found on the following pages, the IEP or 504 plan for each student with a disability must be revised as needed, either during routinely scheduled meetings prior to testing or through the 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. 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.

Reliance on 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 precisely which MCAS accommodation(s) he or she will receive, and the IEP must be signed by the parent/guardian (or student over 18) before an accommodation may be given. Similarly, a student’s 504 plan must already be in place or under development; in cases in which a 504 plan is under development, the school personnel

responsible for writing the plan must have already met and agreed upon the necessary MCAS accommodation(s) before a student may be provided them.

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

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

### **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 as an approved accommodation in this manual (or if not, prior written approval has been obtained from the Department); the **accommodation is listed** on the “State- and District-Wide Assessment” page of the student’s IEP and the **IEP has been signed** by the student’s parent(s)/guardian(s) prior to the date of test administration; or is listed as an MCAS accommodation in a 504 plan developed for the student.

AND

- 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 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; e.g.,
  - test questions may not be modified, reordered, or reformatted in any way for any student;

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- paper-based tests may not be photocopied, photographed, scanned, altered, or duplicated;
- screen shots of computer-based tests may not be taken or reproduced;
- English-language dictionaries are not allowed for any student on any test for grades 3–8.

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, 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. If a student was provided an accommodation that was not in his or her IEP or 504 plan, all or part of the student’s score may be invalidated.

#### 4. Updating IEPs and 504 Plans

IEPs and 504 plans should be updated for all students with disabilities in grades 3–8 for the spring 2018 MCAS test administration to reflect the updated policies and accommodations available on the MCAS tests. Proper notation of these accommodations will ensure that students receive all the necessary supports to which they are entitled. Designated accessibility features should also be included in the plans of students, although this is not required.

The IEPs and 504 plans of **high school** students taking the “legacy” high school MCAS tests should continue to list accommodations using the accommodations designations found in the Department publication entitled [\*Requirements for the Participation of Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners in the 2017–2018 MCAS High School Tests\*](#).

#### 5. If a Student Refuses an Accommodation

If a student refuses to use an accommodation listed in his or her plan, the accommodation must remain available to the student during testing. The school should document in writing that the student refused the accommodation and keep this documentation on file at the school. A sample form for optional use to document a student’s refusal of an accommodation can be found in Appendix C. Students should *not* be asked to sign an agreement waiving their right to receive an accommodation.

If a student refuses an accommodation, and the IEP team believes that the listed accommodation should be removed from the plan because it is no longer necessary for the student, the **team must amend the plan** prior to testing, and obtain written consent from the parent/guardian (or student, if over 18 years of age).

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

#### 6. Unique Accommodations Requests

If a student with a disability or an English language learner requires an accommodation (e.g., an assistive technology device) that is not listed in Tables 1–6, the school may request approval for use of the unique accommodation, provided the accommodation does **not** accomplish any of the following:

- 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 or fax) for use of the accommodation by submitting the request to [mcas@doe.mass.edu](mailto:mcas@doe.mass.edu) or by fax at 781-338-3630 at least two weeks prior to testing. If approved by the Department, the accommodation must also be listed in the IEP or 504 plan of a student with a disability.

## 7. Process for Selecting and Evaluating MCAS Test 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, universal features, and test administration considerations** 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 accommodation(s)** in different assessment settings and make adjustments as needed.
- **Evaluate whether the accommodation addresses the student’s need.**
  - If not, revise the plan to provide accommodation(s) and supports accordingly.
- **If the accommodation addresses the challenge,**
  - determine whether the accommodation is allowed for MCAS testing in the subject (see list of accommodations in Tables 3–5); and then
  - develop or amend the IEP or 504 plan accordingly, listing each accommodation for the specific MCAS test(s).

## 8. Description of MCAS Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Tables 3–5 list the MCAS accommodations available to students with disabilities on the computer-based test, and where available, the comparable accommodation on the *paper-based* test, grouped into the following categories:

- **Test Presentation:** allowable changes to the format in which the test is presented (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 impact the interpretation of the test results (Table 5).

**Note:** Accommodations listed with a “(PNP)” designation in the tables below must be identified in the Personal Needs Profile of each student in PearsonAccessNext.

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

Test Presentation Accommodations		
#	Computer-Based Test	Paper-Based Test
A1 (PNP)	<b>Paper-based edition</b> of the grades 3–8 tests may be administered as an accommodation for a student who is unable to use a computer or take the computer-based test due to a disability.	N/A
A2 (PNP)	N/A (see UF4, page 3, for information on screen magnification)	<p><b>Large print edition</b> (approximately 18-point font size on 11x17-inch paper)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All responses in the large print answer booklet must be transcribed verbatim from the large-print answer booklet to the student’s standard answer booklet in order for the student to receive credit for his or her work.</li> <li>Additional large print special instructions will accompany the large print test.</li> <li>Students are not required to use the large-print <b>answer booklet</b> to respond to test questions, so IEPs and 504 plans should indicate whether student taking the large-print test also requires a large-print answer booklet. Students who do not require the large-print answer booklet may record their answers in a <b>standard</b> answer booklet.</li> </ul>
A3.1 (PNP) and A3.2 (PNP)	<p>A3.1 – <b>Screen reader</b> for a student who is blind or visually impaired</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If the student will use a screen reader, a separate hard-copy Braille edition test should also be ordered to provide the student with the appropriate Braille graphics.</li> <li>All answers must be entered, either by the student or test administrator, onscreen.</li> </ul>	<p>A3.2 - <b>Braille edition</b> (hard copy)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All answers must be either scribed or transcribed verbatim into the student's answer booklet in order for the student to receive credit for his or her work.</li> <li>Additional Braille special instructions will accompany the Braille test.</li> <li>See Appendix D for a schedule of the planned transition of MCAS tests to Unified English Braille (UEB).</li> </ul>
A4 (PNP)	<p><b>Text-to-speech (TTS)</b> (i.e., computer-based read-aloud) for grades 3–8 Mathematics or Science and Technology/Engineering tests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If TTS-enabled version of the computer-based test is read aloud to student using headphones, students may be tested in a typical-size group. If not using headphones,</li> </ul>	N/A

	<p>then student must be tested individually in a separate setting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Kurzweil</b> test editions will no longer be available for grades 3–8 tests</li> <li>• <b>TTS for ELA</b> is a <i>special access accommodation</i> (SA 1.1). See Table 5 for guidelines to receive this accommodation.</li> </ul>	
A5 (PNP)	<p><b>Human read-aloud</b> for the grades 3–8 Mathematics and/or STE tests (computer- or paper-based tests)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 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.</li> <li>• The test must be administered in a <b>separate setting</b>, either <b>individually</b> or to a <b>small group of 2–5 students</b>, all of whom receive the human read-aloud accommodation.</li> <li>• <b>Reading aloud the ELA test</b> is a <i>special access</i> accommodation. See Table 5 for guidelines on this accommodation.</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> Reading aloud <b>selected words</b> to any student on the Mathematics and/or STE test(s) is a universal accessibility feature. See Table 1.</p>	
A6 (PNP)	<p><b>Human signer</b> for the grades 3–8 Mathematics, Science and Technology/Engineering, and test questions only, but <i>not reading passages</i> for the ELA tests for a student who is Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing (computer- and paper-based tests)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The test must be signed exactly as it appears. The signer may not provide assistance to the student regarding the meaning of words, intent of any test item, or responding to test questions. The signer may finger-spell key words in addition to providing the sign for a term, in cases where a signed term may be unfamiliar to the student. The signer should read with emphasis only when indicated by bold or italicized text.</li> <li>• The test must be administered in a <b>separate setting</b>, either <b>individually</b> or to a <b>small group of 2–5 students</b>, all of whom are receiving the human signer accommodation.</li> </ul> <p><b>Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under secure conditions supervised by the principal, interpreters may review the test materials once they become available, either online or delivered to the school, for the purpose of preparing to sign the test. Test materials may not be removed from the school or 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.</li> <li>• If preferred, selected words, phrases, or sections of the Mathematics and/or Science and Technology/Engineering test(s) may be signed to the student, as requested, rather than signing the entire test.</li> <li>• <b>Signing the ELA reading passages</b> is a <i>special access</i> accommodation. See Table 5 for guidelines to receive that accommodation.</li> </ul>	
A7	<b>Human signer for test directions only</b> for a student who is Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing	
A8	<b>Track test items</b> (i.e., helping the student 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 (PNP)	<p><b>Use a Department approved graphic organizer, checklist, or supplemental reference sheet</b> for grades 3–8 ELA and/or Mathematics tests (computer- and paper-based tests)</p> <p><b>Only approved versions made available by the Department may be used as an accommodation. Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approved graphic organizers and reference sheets have been updated and are available on the <a href="#">Department’s website</a>. These have been customized for use on next-generation MCAS ELA tests based on: the most current versions of the Curriculum Framework standards measured by MCAS tests; the MCAS test design; expectations for how student essays and text-based responses will be scored; and submissions from schools for proposed changes to previous approved graphic organizers and reference sheets.</li> <li>Graphic organizers <i>without</i> any text may be used without Department approval by a student with a disability who has this accommodation listed in his or her plan.</li> <li>A student may use no more than <b>three</b> different approved graphic organizers or two supplemental reference sheets per test session.</li> <li>Educators will have an opportunity to provide suggestions on future editions of graphic organizers and reference sheets after the spring 2018 administration of the grades 3–8 MCAS tests.</li> <li>For <b>Science and Technology/Engineering</b> tests, students may use the available <a href="#">sample reference sheets</a> or submit a customized reference sheet to the Department for approval by emailing <a href="mailto:mcas@doe.mass.edu">mcas@doe.mass.edu</a>.</li> </ul>	
A10.1 (PNP) and A10.2 (PNP)	<p><b>Scribe responses</b> for the Mathematics and/or Science and Technology/Engineering tests using either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a <b>human scribe</b> (A10.1) who will record the student’s responses verbatim, either onscreen (computer-based test) or in the student’s answer booklet (paper-based test), as dictated by the student <i>at the time of testing</i>. The student must be tested in a separate setting. OR</li> <li><b>speech-to-text</b> (A10.2) or other external augmentative communications device (other than a smartphone) to dictate or generate responses, under the direct supervision of a test administrator. The test administrator must transcribe the student’s responses verbatim (either onscreen or in student’s answer booklet) <i>anytime prior to the end of the testing window</i>. The student must be tested in a separate setting.</li> </ul> <p>If the student is unable to use his or her writing hand or arm at the time of testing due to a <b>recent fracture, injury, or recovery from surgery</b>, the scribe accommodation must be</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>listed in a 504 plan or an approved IEP (approval by the Department is not required); OR</li> <li>in cases where a 504 plan is under development, the staff responsible for writing the plan must already have met and agreed upon the need for the scribe accommodation before providing to a student.</li> </ul>	
A11	N/A	<b>Responses recorded by student in test booklet or on special paper</b> , rather than in the answer booklet.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responses must be transcribed by a test administrator into the student’s answer booklet.</li> <li>• If the <b>student transcribes</b> his or her own responses, then transcription must occur <i>during the test session</i> and be completed on the day in which the test session began.</li> </ul> <p>Note: this accommodation is typically provided to students in grades 4–8, since grade 3 students use a combined test and answer booklet.</p>
A12 <i>(PNP)</i>	N/A	<p><b>Typed responses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responses must be printed out, one response per page, and inserted in the student’s answer booklet with all required information on each page (see the <a href="#">Principal’s Administration Manual</a>).</li> <li>• <b>Transcription into the answer booklet is NOT necessary.</b></li> <li>• After printing out, responses must be deleted from word processor or device.</li> </ul>
A13	<b>Student records responses on an external recording device</b> (other than a smartphone) while reading the test aloud, then transcribes responses into the answer booklet while playing back recorded segment(s). Responses must be deleted from the device once transcription is completed.	
A14	<b>Responses signed onto video (for a student who is Deaf or Hard-of Hearing)</b> , then transcribed by the student onscreen or into the answer booklet during playback. The video must be deleted after transcription.	
A15	<b>Monitor placement of responses</b> in the appropriate area onscreen or in the answer booklet by the test administrator	
A16	<b>Refreshable Braille Display/Braille note-taker</b> (specific external device used in conjunction with screen reader. A hard-copy edition of the Braille test should also be ordered.)	<b>Braille note-taker</b> (specific external device used in conjunction with hard-copy Braille test)  Note: Braille notes should be returned with the school’s nonscorable shipment.
A17	<b>Braille writer</b> (specific external device used in conjunction with screen reader and hard-copy Braille test)	<b>Braille writer</b> (specific external device used in conjunction with the hard-copy Braille test)

**Note regarding transcription of student responses:** The process of transcribing a student’s responses onscreen or into his or her answer booklet by a test administrator (e.g., from the large print answer booklet) may occur *anytime* during the testing window, but must be monitored and supervised by the principal, test coordinator, or another test administrator.

## 9. Special Access Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

*Special access* (formerly “nonstandard”) accommodations are intended for use by a *very small number of students* who would not otherwise be able to access the test because of a disability that 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 criteria described for each special access accommodation listed in Table 5 that follows. Test results for a student who took the test using special access accommodation(s) must be interpreted with caution by parents and schools.

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 use of accommodations, including "special access" accommodations;
- review all guidelines with staff for 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 described on the following pages.

IEP and 504 teams are encouraged to make consistent, appropriate, and defensible decisions for each student based on locally administered diagnostic assessments, and to amend the IEPs and 504 plans of students 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
<p>SA1.1 (PNP) and SA1.2 (PNP)</p>	<p><b>Text-to-speech (SA1.1) or Human read-aloud (SA1.2) for the ELA test</b>, including oral presentation of test questions, response options, and passages, using either</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• text-to-speech (embedded in the grades 3–8 computer-based ELA tests), with or without headphones;</li> <li>OR</li> <li>• a human reader (for which the test administrator either reads aloud 1) the <b>computer-based test</b> either logged in to a nearby computer or sitting next to the student; or 2) reads aloud the <b>paper-based test</b> to the student; or 3) reads aloud the test to a group of up to five students.</li> </ul> <p>This accommodation is intended for a small number of students with documented disabilities that <b>severely limit or prevent them from reading</b>, as documented in locally administered diagnostic evaluations.</p> <p>The student must meet all of the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be <b>virtually unable to read</b>, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so (i.e., the student is at the very beginning stages of learning to read, and not simply reading below grade level), as determined by locally administered diagnostic evaluations; and</li> <li>• uses this accommodation routinely (except during reading instruction); and</li> <li>• receives ongoing intervention to learn the skill.</li> </ul> <p>This accommodation may also be provided to a student who is blind or has a visual impairment and uses a <b>screen reader</b> and/or has not yet learned (or is unable to use) Braille. If the student will use a screen reader, a separate hard copy Braille test edition should be ordered by the school to allow the student to access appropriate Braille graphics (see accommodation A3.1).</p> <p>The student</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• may be tested in a typical-sized group if using text-to-speech with headphones;</li> <li>• must be tested individually, in a separate setting, if text-to-speech will be used <i>without</i> headphones; and</li> <li>• may be tested in a group of up to 5 students if a human reader will be used.</li> </ul>
<p>SA2 (PNP)</p>	<p><b>Human Signer for ELA test</b>, including reading passages, questions, and answer options, for a student who is Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing</p> <p>This accommodation is intended for students who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing, and who are <b>severely limited or prevented from reading</b>, as documented in locally-administered diagnostic evaluations.</p> <p>The student must meet all of the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be <b>virtually unable to read</b>, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so (i.e., the student is at the 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</li> <li>• uses this accommodation routinely, except during reading instruction; and</li> <li>• receives ongoing intervention to learn the skill.</li> </ul> <p>The student must be tested in a group of no more than five students, unless approval is obtained</p>

	from the Department to increase group size in rare circumstances.
SA3.1 (PNP) and SA3.2 (PNP)	<p><b>Scribe responses on the ELA test</b>, using either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a <b>human scribe</b> (SA3.1) who records the student’s responses verbatim during testing OR</li> <li>• <b>speech-to-text</b> (SA3.2) or other external augmentative communications device (other than a smartphone) used by student to dictate or generate responses, under the direct supervision of a test administrator. The test administrator must transcribe the student’s responses verbatim (either onscreen or in the student’s answer booklet) at any time <i>prior to the end of the testing window</i>.</li> </ul> <p>This accommodation is intended for a student who either:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. has a <b>language-processing disability</b> and requires the dictation of virtually all written responses to a scribe or an electronic speech-to-text conversion device to generate responses. OR</li> <li>2. who is unable to use his or her writing hand or arm at the time of testing due to a <b>fracture, severe injury, or recovery from surgery</b>. In this case, the accommodation must either be       <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. listed in a 504 plan or an approved IEP (<b>no additional approval by the Department is required</b>); OR</li> <li>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).</li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p>Clarification on the <b>role of a scribe</b> for the ELA test:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The test must be administered individually in a separate setting.</li> <li>• The scribe may enter student responses either onscreen (computer-based test) or in the student’s answer booklet (paper-based test) at the time of testing.</li> <li>• The scribe must write exactly what the student dictates. The scribe may not edit or alter the student’s dictation in any way. 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.</li> <li>• After the student has finished dictating his or her response(s), the scribe must ask the student to do the following:       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the draft and make any necessary edits, including capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and paragraph breaks. The student may make edits independently or may direct the scribe to make the edits. The scribe must not assist the student in making decisions during the editing process.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
SA4 (PNP)	<p><b>Calculation device or other mathematics tool</b> (e.g., addition/subtraction or multiplication/division tables; or manipulatives) on the <i>non-calculator session</i> of the Mathematics test or for use on the grades 5 and 8 STE tests.</p> <p>This accommodation is intended for a small number of students with documented disabilities that <b>severely limit or prevent them from performing basic calculations</b> without a calculation device or other mathematics tool, as documented in locally-administered diagnostic evaluations, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so.</p> <p>The student must meet all of the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be <b>virtually unable to calculate</b> (i.e., unable to perform single-digit addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division without a calculation device or other mathematics tool); and</li> <li>• uses the calculation device or tool during routine instruction in mathematics; and</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>receives ongoing intervention to learn the skill.</li> </ul> <p>The student’s IEP or 504 plan must specify which calculation device or tool will be used.</p> <p>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 <a href="mailto:mcas@doe.mass.edu">mcas@doe.mass.edu</a> to request approval.</p> <p><b>(Note:</b> Calculators are allowed for <i>all</i> students and will be provided on designated calculator sessions of the computer-based Mathematics test. Schools must provide a calculator to students receiving this accommodation for the non-calculator session.)</p>
<p>SA5 (PNP)</p>	<p><b>Spell-checker for the ELA test</b>, including an external spell-checking device for the paper-based test; or in conjunction with the typed response accommodation for the paper-based test</p> <p>This accommodation is intended for a small number of students with disabilities that <b>severely limit or prevent them from spelling correctly</b>, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so.</p> <p>The student must meet all of the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>be <b>virtually unable to spell simple words</b> (i.e., at the beginning stages of learning how to spell), as documented by locally-administered diagnostic evaluations; and</li> <li>produces understandable written work only when provided this accommodation, which the student uses during routine instruction; and</li> <li>receives ongoing intervention to learn the skill.</li> </ul> <p>The student may <i>not</i> use grammar check or access the internet.</p>
<p>SA6 (PNP)</p>	<p><b>Word prediction for the ELA test</b>, using an external device, application, or software compatible with the computer based test platform (Word prediction provides student with a bank of frequently or recently used words after the student keyboards the first few letters of a word.</p> <p>A list of assistive technology devices compatibility with TestNav is described in the <a href="#">Guidelines for Using Assistive Technology as an MCAS Test Accommodation</a></p> <p>This accommodation is intended for a small number of students who:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>have disabilities that <b>severely limit or prevent them from recalling and processing language</b> to write or keyboard responses without the use of a word prediction device, application, or software; AND</li> <li>can access written expression only through the use of word prediction software that they use routinely to generate written responses.</li> </ol> <p>A test administrator should facilitate the transfer of information from the external device or application to the answer booklet or onscreen. Written responses must either be transcribed by the student at the time of testing or be transcribed by an adult prior to the end of the testing window.</p> <p>During testing, internet access must be turned off/restricted; and the “predict-ahead” and “predict online” functions must be turned off, since these functions automatically select words for the student.</p>

## V. MCAS Participation Requirements for Students Who Are English Language Learners (ELLs)

ELL students must participate in all MCAS tests scheduled for their grades, regardless of the language program and services they are receiving or the amount of time they have been in the United States.

The one **exception** applies to first-year ELL students who enrolled in U.S. schools **after March 1, 2017** and who were not reported in the March 2017 SIMS report, for whom ELA testing is *optional*. Schools may elect to administer the MCAS ELA tests to first-year ELLs, and *must* administer the ACCESS for ELLs test to first-year and all other ELL students. Students who enter a U.S. school for the first time *after* ACCESS for ELLs testing is completed are not required to participate in ELA testing.) **First-year ELL students must 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.

**ELL Participation Requirements for Spring 2018 Grades 3–8 MCAS Tests**

	Content Area Test		
	ELA	Mathematics	Science and Tech/Eng
<b>First-Year ELL Students<sup>1</sup></b>	<i>Optional<sup>2</sup></i>	Required	Required
<b>All Other Students</b>	Required	Required	Required

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

<sup>2</sup> Optional, provided that the student has participated in ACCESS for ELLs testing.

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

### Foreign Exchange Students

Foreign exchange students who are coded as #11 under “Reason for Enrollment” in SIMS in grades 3–8 and 10 are required to participate in the MCAS tests specified for the grade in which they are reported, unless they are already considered English proficient.

## VI. MCAS Accessibility and Accommodations for ELL Students

In addition to the universal and designated accessibility features listed elsewhere in this manual that are available to ELLs, several additional accommodations are also available to ELLs. Table 6 describes which accommodations may be used by ELLs, while Table 7 describes the relative suitability of each accommodation for students at beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels of English proficiency.

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

Decisions about universal and designated features, and accommodations for ELL students should be made by an informal group of educators familiar with the student; the group will identify the appropriate features and accommodations for each ELL student. The decisions of the informal decision-making team should be documented using either the sample form for **Documentation of MCAS Accommodations for an ELL 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 him- or herself
- 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 and assign features and accommodations to ELL 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. Appropriate features and accommodations are intended to allow ELL students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills more effectively.

### B. Guidelines for Selecting Appropriate Accessibility Features and Accommodations for ELL 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 ELL student makes progress toward English proficiency.

#### 1. Decision-Making Procedures

The following procedures can be used to make appropriate decisions regarding selection of features and accommodations for ELL students:

1. While examining the range of supports allowed on MCAS tests that may help the ELL student access the curriculum and take assessments more effectively, the student's classroom teacher should ask him- or herself the following questions:
  - *Has a particular feature and/or accommodation been used successfully in the past to assist*

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*students in similar situations and at similar English proficiency levels?*

2. While trying out the selected supports during routine instruction to determine whether they meet the student's needs, the teacher should ask him- or herself the following questions:
  - *Does the feature and/or accommodation help the student overcome the barrier posed by his or her developing English language proficiency?*
  - *Is the student comfortable using the feature or accommodation?*
3. The teacher should observe the student in the classroom (or if possible, across different classrooms and school settings) using the feature or accommodation and inform members of the decision-making team which features or accommodations seem most appropriate and effective.

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

4. The teacher should document the final decisions either on the sample form provided in Appendix B, or use a similar locally designed form, and maintain this information in the student's file.

## **2. Involving Students in Selecting and Using Accommodations**

The more an ELL student is involved in the accommodation selection process, the more likely the accommodations are to be accepted and used by the student. Also, as students' English proficiency increases, and especially as students reach adolescence and the desire to be more independent increases, students will help determine when the support is no longer useful. Students are likely to increase their self-advocacy abilities over time and ensure that the selected supports are provided during testing. Teachers and other adults can 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 never be provided for the first time on an assessment.

## **3. Process for Evaluating the Effectiveness of Accessibility Features and Accommodations**

Accessibility features and accommodations should be evaluated over time for their effectiveness. Observations conducted during test administration, interviews with test administrators, and talking with students after testing is likely to yield data that can be useful in guiding the evaluation of the use of features and accommodations at the school, district, and student levels.

The following questions can guide decision-making regarding the effectiveness of the selected accessibility features and accommodations.

- Was the student familiar with the feature or accommodation prior to testing?
- Does the student use the feature or accommodation routinely?
- Was the student comfortable using the feature or accommodation?
- Does the student's performance on the assessment improve when the feature or accommodation is used?

## C. Accommodations for Students Who Are English Language Learners (ELLs)

In addition to universal features and designated features available to all students, the following accommodations are available to ELLs, either with or without disabilities, on MCAS tests.

**Table 6. Accommodations for Students Who Are ELLs**

#	Accommodations for ELL Students
EL1 (PNP)	<p><b>Paper-based editions</b> of the grades 3–8 Mathematics or Science and Technology/Engineering tests may be administered to a first-year ELL 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 who has little or no familiarity with technology.</p> <p>(Note: Administering the ELA test to a first-year ELL student is <i>optional</i>)</p>
EL2	<p><b>Approved Bilingual Word-to-Word Dictionary and Glossary</b> (English/Native language)</p> <p>(Note: this accommodation is also available to former ELLs)</p>
EL3.1 (PNP) and EL3.2 (PNP)	<p><b>Text-to-speech (TTS)</b> (EL3.1) for Mathematics and/or Science and Technology/Engineering tests; or</p> <p><b>Human read-aloud</b> (EL 3.2) for Mathematics and/or Science and Technology/Engineering tests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• If a human reader is used, the test must be administered in a separate setting either <b>individually</b> or to a <b>group of 2–5 students</b> all of whom are receiving the human reader accommodation.</li> <li>• If the TTS-enabled English-only edition of the computer-based test is read aloud to a student using headphones, students may be tested in a typical-size group. If not using headphones, then student must be tested in a separate setting.</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> Reading aloud <b>selected words</b> on the Mathematics and/or Science and Technology/Engineering tests is a universal accessibility feature (UF10). See Table 1.</p>
EL4.1 (PNP) and EL4.2 (PNP)	<p><b>Scribe</b> for the Mathematics and/or STE tests, using either</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a <b>human scribe</b> records student’s responses verbatim <i>at the time of testing</i> (EL4.1); or</li> <li>• student dictates responses using <b>speech-to-text</b> or other external communication device, with subsequent transcription by an adult, either onscreen or in the student’s answer booklet (EL4.2)</li> </ul>
EL5	<b>Read aloud/repeat/clarify general administration directions in English</b>
EL6	<b>Read aloud/repeat/clarify general administration directions in student’s native language</b> (if native language speaker is available)

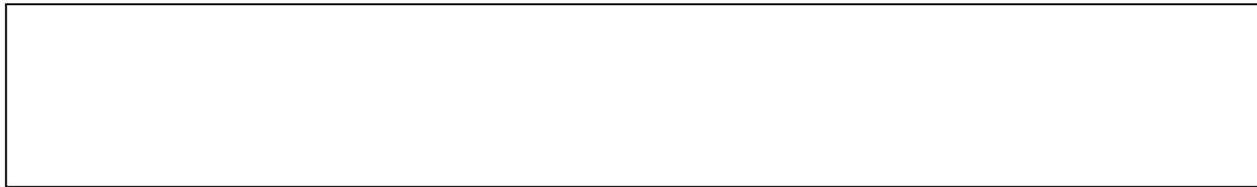
**Highly recommended** for use by English learners at this ELP level

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

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

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

**Table 7. Guidance on Selecting Accommodations for English Learners**



#	Accommodation	Most Likely to Benefit English Learners at the Following English Proficiency Levels		
		Beginning	Intermediate	Advanced
EL1	Paper-based edition of the grades 3–8 Mathematics or STE tests for a first-year ELL with a low level of English proficiency or who is unfamiliar with technology	⊙	○	○
EL2	Approved bilingual word-to-word dictionary and glossary (English/Native Language)	○	●	●
EL3.1 and EL3.2	Text-to-speech or Human read-aloud for the Mathematics or Science and Technology/Engineering tests (in English)	●	⊙	○
EL4.1 and EL4.2	Human scribe or speech-to-text for Mathematics or STE responses	●	⊙	○
EL5	Read aloud/repeat/clarify general administration directions in English (by test administrator)	●	⊙	○
EL6	Read aloud/repeat/clarify general administration directions in student’s native language (by test administrator)	●	⊙	○

## APPENDIX A

### Comparison of New and Previous MCAS Accommodations and Accessibility Features (Grades 3–8)

The following table provides a comparison of the current and previous MCAS supports, including the numerical designation of each. For 2018 MCAS and beyond, the *Universal Accessibility Features* (labeled UF) and *Designated Accessibility Features* (labeled DF, and available at the discretion of the principal or designee) are available to *all* students in grades 3–8, while these had been available previously *only* to students with disabilities. It should also be noted that the next generation grades 3–8 MCAS tests will be administered in both computer- *and* paper-based formats, while previous MCAS tests were administered only on paper, limiting the availability of a small number of the new features and accommodations on the paper-based tests.

#	Previous MCAS Accommodations	#	MCAS Accessibility Features and Accommodations (Grades 3–8 only)
1	Frequent Breaks	DF3	Frequent supervised breaks
2	Time of Day	DF10	Specific time of day
3	Small Group	DF1	Small group test administration
4	Separate Setting	DF4	Separate or alternate test location
5	Individual	DF2	Individual (one-to-one) test administration
6	Specified Area	DF5	Seating in a specific area of the testing room
7	Familiar Test Administrator	DF8	Familiar test administrator
8	Noise Buffers	DF7	Noise buffer or noise cancelling headphones
9	Magnification or Overlays	UF2, UF3	Colored overlays or tinted lens(es); Magnification tool
10	Test Directions	UF12, EL5	Read aloud, repeat, or clarify general administration directions
11	Large Print	A2	Large print edition
12	Braille	A3	Braille edition
13	Place Marker	UF7	Use a blank place marker to mark a question for return later
14	Track Test Items	A8	Track test items (move from one test question to the next)
14	Test Administrator Redirects Student’s Attention to the Test	UF11	Test administrator redirects student’s attention to the test
15	Amplification	UF8	Audio aids
16	Test Administrator Reads Aloud ELA Composition, Mathematics, or STE tests	A5, EL3.2	Human read-aloud for the Mathematics and/or STE tests
17	Test Administrator Signs the Math, STE tests, or ELA Composition	A6	Human signer for the Mathematics, STE, and test questions only for ELA
18	Use of Electronic Text Reader (Kurzweil 3000) for the ELA Composition, Mathematics, or STE	A4, EL3.1	Text-to-speech for computer-based Mathematics tests or STE tests

#	Previous MCAS Accommodations	#	MCAS Accessibility Features and Accommodations (Grades 3–8 only)
19	Test Administrator Scribes the ELA Reading Comprehension, Mathematics, or STE test(s); or Speech-to-Text	A10.1; EL4.1  A10.2; EL4.2	Scribe responses for the Mathematics or STE tests only; OR  Speech-to-text
20	Organizer, Checklist, Reference Sheet, or Abacus	A9	Use a Department pre-approved graphic organizer, checklist, or supplemental reference sheet
21	Student Signs or Reads Test Aloud	DF9	Student reads test aloud to self
22	Monitor Placement of Responses	A15	Monitor placement of responses
23	Typed Responses	A12	Typed or word-processed responses
24	Answers Recorded in Test Booklet	A11	Responses recorded in test booklet
25	Other Standard Accommodation	N/A	Unique accommodations request
26	Test Administrator Reads Aloud ELA Reading Comprehension Test	SA1.2	Human read-aloud for ELA test
27	Test Administrator Signs the ELA Reading Comprehension Test	SA2	Sign the ELA reading passages
28	Electronic Text Reader (Kurzweil 3000) for the ELA Reading Comprehension Test	SA1.1	Text-to-speech for computer-based grades 3–8 ELA tests
29	Test Administrator Scribes the ELA Composition	SA3.1	Scribe responses on the ELA test (grades 3–8) and grade 10 ELA Composition test
30	Calculation Devices	SA4	Calculation device or mathematics tool
31	Spell- or Grammar-Checking; or Word Prediction for ELA Composition	SA5 SA6	Spell-checker for the ELA test or grade 10 ELA composition test  Word prediction for the grades 3–8 ELA test or grade 10 ELA composition test
32	Other Nonstandard Accommodation	N/A	Unique accommodation request
N/A	Approved Bilingual Word-to-Word Dictionary and Glossary	EL2	Approved Bilingual Word-to-Word Dictionary and Glossary

**APPENDIX B**  
*Sample Form (Optional)*

**Documentation of MCAS Accommodations  
for an ELL Student**

Use this form to document the selection of **MCAS accessibility features and accommodations** for each ELL student. Available accessibility features and accommodations are listed in the *Accessibility and Accommodations Manual for the Spring 2018 Grades 3–8 MCAS Tests*. This form should be completed within 60 days of the start of school year or student’s date of enrollment, and must be **updated annually**. Accommodations decisions for ELL 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.

<b>Accessibility Feature or Accommodation Needed by the ELL Student for Testing</b>	<b>Notes/Comments</b>
(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 ELLs should consider this information when making future accommodations decisions for the student. Use of this form is encouraged, but not required.

<b>Student Name:</b> _____	<b>Date:</b> _____
<b>Grade:</b> _____	<b>SASID:</b> _____
<b>School:</b> _____	
<b>District:</b> _____	
<b>MCAS Test:</b> _____	
<b>Test Administrator:</b> _____	
<b>Accommodation(s) refused by student</b> _____	
_____	
<b>Reason for refusal:</b> _____	
_____	
_____	
<b>Comments:</b>	
_____	
_____	

**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 (UEB) from English Braille American Edition (EBAE) and Nemeth Code will occur according to the calendar shown below.

School Year:	2017–2018	2018–2019	2019–2020 (and future years)
Braille format for each MCAS test:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• UEB for all grade 3–5 tests;</li><li>• EBAE with Nemeth Code for grades 6 and above.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• UEB for all grade 3–8 tests;</li><li>• EBAE with Nemeth Code for high school tests</li></ul>	UEB for all grades and tests