

Spring 2018 MCAS Test Administration Protocols

2. Meetings

General Meeting with Students

Feedback from principals and teachers indicates that a serious, yet supportive, testing environment has a positive impact on student performance. The Department recommends that the principal or test administrators should meet with students before each test administration to give them information about testing procedures at the school.

The Department suggests that principals distribute a document describing test security requirements for students in advance of the meeting. Also, principals may want to include an explanation of appropriate activities that students can do when they finish testing and turn in their test materials.

During the meeting, provide students with the following information:

- They will need to come to school on the scheduled test days.
- Most students should not need extra time and will be able to finish within the suggested time limits. However, students will be allowed additional time to finish their work beyond the end of the regularly scheduled test session if they need it and are working productively. **No test session may extend past the end of the regular school day.**
- For CBT, students should be familiar with the tools available to them during testing and navigating through the test because they will be taking practice tests and given a student tutorial. They can ask questions during testing if they have trouble using the computer interface.
- Students should be aware that they have limited space for their open responses. Just as students doing PBT have a certain amount of space in their answer booklets, students doing CBT should be aware that there are character limits to their responses (1200 characters). A character counter on the computer screen will count down as students type, so that they will know when they are nearing the limit. (The only exception to this is the AT/Screen Reader forms, which do not use the same text editor for responses.)
- Students will have scratch paper available to them.
- They should read questions carefully, be thorough in their responses, and be sure to answer all parts of multipart questions. They should also try their best to answer all the questions on the test.
- Their test administrators cannot give them any help, or answer any question that relates to the content of the test, with the exceptions of assisting students with questions about the computer interface and during Mathematics and STE testing, reading aloud a word at the student's request (UF10).
- **Their test results may be invalidated** if they engage in any of the following activities during a test session (including after turning in their test materials, during a break, or during the transition to a test completion area):
 - duplicating any portion of the test or answer booklets or secure test content on screen (e.g., photographing, copying)
 - accessing prohibited materials such as cell phones or other electronic devices (see lists in section K) for any purpose

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- o communicating with other students (e.g., talking, whispering, writing notes)
- o looking at any other student’s test booklet, answer booklet, or computer screen
- o consulting notes, books, or instructional materials during testing
- o for paper-based testing, working in a test session other than the one being administered, looking at questions or test pages beyond the stop sign, or going back to a previous test session
- o for paper-based testing, damaging their test materials or removing any part of them from the testing room
- **Their test results may also be invalidated** if they discuss the content of test booklets or their responses to questions with anyone, including teachers.
- Students may bring a book to each test session to read in the event they finish a test session early.
- **For Mathematics only:**
 - o Students in grades 7 and 8 will need at least a four-function calculator with a square-root key for Session 2 of the Mathematics test. Such a calculator will be provided to any student who does not have one for paper-based testing. For computer-based testing, calculators will be provided in the interface for students, but they may use a handheld calculator if they want.

Meeting with EL Students

If there are significant numbers of EL students in the school, it is also important to meet with the students, in small groups if possible, to explain the participation guidelines (see Appendix A).

During the meeting with EL students, communicate the following to them:

- They will be participating in tests that they may find difficult because they are still learning English.
- The purpose of having them participate is to establish a starting point from which their progress over time can be measured, and because they are required to participate.
- Current and former EL students may use printed copies of authorized bilingual word-to-word dictionaries and glossaries or other EL accommodations (see Appendix A for more information).

Meeting with Parents/Guardians

In addition, the principal or designee may want to meet with parents/guardians (e.g., hold an open house) before testing to explain testing procedures, the testing schedule, participation requirements, and the student questionnaire in grades 5 and 8.

Alternately, principals may include MCAS testing information for parents/guardians in their regular communications (e.g., parent newsletter).

Principals may wish to direct parents/guardians to www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/parents for more information about the next-generation tests.