Part I

MCAS Test Security Requirements

MCAS Test Security Requirements

The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests are designed to elicit students' work in order to assess their comprehension of the subject being tested. The purpose of the MCAS Test Security Requirements is to protect the validity of MCAS results.

Section A describes responsibilities of principals and designees (i.e., individuals authorized by the principal to assist in coordinating test administration).

Section B describes shared responsibilities of all individuals who have access to secure test materials.

Section C describes responsibilities of test administrators.

Section D provides instructions for reporting testing irregularities and describes the process the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education ("the Department") follows for investigation.

> **Principals and school personnel authorized to have access to secure materials and test content must follow the requirements listed below and may not participate in, direct, assist in, encourage, or fail to report any testing irregularity or act of misconduct.**

Principals are responsible for ensuring that all test administrators and school personnel authorized to have access to secure test materials comply with the requirements and instructions contained in this part of the *Principal's Administration Manual* (PAM) and in the *Test Administrator's Manuals* (TAMs).

Principals in schools that are conducting the MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt) are also responsible for ensuring that educators submitting MCAS-Alt portfolios comply with the requirements and instructions contained in the *2018 Educator's Manual for MCAS-Alt* and the *Principal's Manual for MCAS-Alt*. Principals must monitor the alternate assessment process to ensure that students' work is not duplicated, altered, or fabricated in any way that is false or portrays the students' performance inaccurately.

Please note the following definitions for the purposes of this section and this manual:

- **"Secure"** materials and items include the following, except for certain materials listed below after they are securely destroyed as directed in this manual:
    - test questions not publicly released by the Department
    - student responses to test questions
    - computer-based test content on-screen
    - student testing tickets for computer-based testing (CBT)
    - test booklets for paper-based testing (PBT), including Braille test materials and large-print test materials
    - answer booklets for PBT
    - used scratch paper
- **"Access"** refers to handling test materials, but does not include reviewing tests or individual questions, which is prohibited. Students may never transport secure test materials, including from their initial testing room to a test completion room.
- **"Locked storage area"** refers to the central locked area that must be used to store all MCAS test materials **at all times** when materials are not in use. Principals must restrict access to the locked storage area to only those school personnel authorized by

the principal to handle secure materials. For example, custodial or cleaning staff may not enter the locked area where the principal stores secure materials.

Each principal must complete the Principal's Certification of Proper Test Administration (PCPA) to certify that the school has followed proper MCAS test security requirements and test administration protocols. See Appendix E for the certification statements to which the principal must attest.

A. Responsibilities of the Principal and Designee

1. **Before testing, review your plans for maintaining test security with your superintendent so that he or she is comfortable with the procedures in the school building.**

   - As part of your review, your superintendent may ask you to use the optional Superintendent's Assurance of Proper Test Administration form in Appendix E to document your preparations.

2. **Authorize specific personnel to serve as test administrators, and train them to properly administer MCAS tests. Designate other school personnel as necessary to maintain a secure test administration (e.g., personnel permitted to access secure test materials, personnel to serve as hallway or restroom monitors, technology coordinators) and train them in MCAS security requirements.**

   - Before the training session, distribute
     - o a copy of the appropriate TAM to every test administrator, and
     - o a copy of the test security requirements to all school personnel who have access to secure materials (available at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/manual/PAM-g3-8TestSecurityReqs.pdf).
   - Document that all test administrators have received TAMs and that school personnel who have access to secure materials have received the test security requirements (see sample form in Appendix E).
   - Train test administrators prior to test administration. The PAM and TAMs describe the protocols necessary to conduct a proper MCAS test administration.
   - For test administrators who provide accommodations to students with disabilities, or English learners (EL students), provide training in the implementation of accommodations in accordance with Appendices A and B and the *Accessibility and Accommodations Manual for the Spring 2018 MCAS Grades 3–8 Tests* (available at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/accessibility).

3. **Instruct students in MCAS test security requirements (see Part III, section N).**

4. **Develop local policies and procedures to ensure proper test security at all times.**

   - Schedule tests to avoid conflicts with recess or lunch (see Part III, section B for more information about scheduling test sessions).
   - Ensure that tests are administered within the prescribed window and in the prescribed order.
   - Ensure that hallways are properly monitored during testing so that students are supervised at all times when they leave testing rooms (e.g., to use the restroom or transition to a test completion room).
   - Ensure that test administrators administer tests according to section C on the following pages.

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5. **Keep MCAS test materials in locked central storage when MCAS tests are not being administered.**

   - Account for all secure test materials at the end of each test session and keep them in the locked storage area when not in use.
   - Restrict access to the locked storage area to only those school personnel authorized to have access to secure materials.

6. **Monitor printing, distribution, and collection of materials for computer-based testing.**

   - Student testing tickets must be printed, distributed, and collected after testing.

7. **Monitor the receipt and return of all paper-based test materials.**

   - Inventory paper-based materials immediately upon receipt and investigate any discrepancies in counts of materials as described in this manual.
   - Return all paper-based materials to the testing contractor according to the prescribed packing instructions and the deadlines in this manual.

8. **Securely destroy the following materials after testing.**

   - CBT student testing tickets and proctor testing tickets, and used scratch paper (i.e., written on by students) must be securely destroyed (e.g., shredded) following testing.

B. Shared Responsibilities of Principals, Test Administrators, Technology Staff, and Other School Personnel Authorized to Have Access to Secure Materials

1. **Receive training in test security requirements and test administration protocols.**

   - Principals are expected to participate in one of the Department's training sessions on MCAS test security and test administration protocols in February 2018.
   - Test administrators, test coordinators, and other school personnel authorized to have access to secure test materials must attend the school training session. Appendix E contains a sample form that principals may use to document participation.

2. **Document the location of secure materials at all times.**

   - Track secure materials using the sample Test Materials Internal Tracking Form in Appendix E or a similar document (principals keep these forms on file for three years). See Part III, section Q.3 for more information about requirements for internal tracking forms.

3. **Ensure the security of the testing location.**

   - Do not allow unauthorized persons to enter the testing room. This includes parents, researchers, reporters, students not scheduled to be testing at the time, and any school personnel (including teachers) not assigned to the room as test administrators.
   - School administrators, district personnel, and Department observers may enter testing rooms to monitor and observe testing procedures.
   - Technology staff may enter testing rooms to troubleshoot problems with computer-based testing, but like other school personnel, are not permitted to photograph or otherwise duplicate secure test content on-screen.

4. **Ensure the security of test questions, test booklets, and other secure materials.**

    -   Do not leave secure MCAS materials unattended at any time unless they are locked in the secure storage area.

    -   For CBT, do not view computer-based test questions before, during, or after testing (see TAM for exceptions).

    -   For PBT, do not view the contents of test booklets or answer booklets before, during, or after a test administration (see TAMs for exceptions).

    -   Do not discuss or in any way reveal the contents of test booklets, answer booklets, CBT test questions, or student responses to CBT questions before, during, or after test administration (see TAMs for exceptions). Because MCAS test questions are secure and confidential until the Department releases them publicly, school personnel should not discuss or review test questions with students or adults even after testing has been completed.

    -   Do not duplicate any portion of test or answer booklets, or computer-based tests, including but not limited to audiotaping, videotaping, photographing, photocopying, typing, or copying by hand.[4]

    -   Do not remove test materials from the school. For example, do not share test booklets or answer booklets with another school or program housed in your building.[5]

    -   For PBT, do not allow any portion of test booklets or answer booklets to be retained, discarded, recycled, removed, or destroyed.[6]

    -   Do not allow scratch paper to be retained, discarded, or otherwise removed by students.

    -   Be sure that CBT testing tickets and used scratch paper for CBT and PBT have been destroyed after testing.

    -   Do not allow students access to secure test questions prior to testing.

    -   Do not read or view any student responses.

    -   Do not change any student responses.

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[4] The only exceptions are for test administrators who must transcribe student responses into answer booklets for students with disabilities receiving certain accommodations or for students who did some or all of their work in damaged, defective, or void booklets.

[5] The only exception is for principals who receive prior written permission from the Department to test a student in an alternate setting. Alternate setting requests must be resubmitted to the Department for approval for each test administration, even if approved for a previous administration.

[6] The only exception is for PBT test materials that have become contaminated; see page 46 for procedures.

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C. Responsibilities of Test Administrators

1. Receive training from the principal/designee in administering test sessions properly and securely.

- Review the TAMs and all relevant test security requirements before administering test sessions.

- Attend the training session led by the principal/designee before test administration. Appendix E contains a sample form that principals may use to document participation in training and receipt of TAMs.

- Understand and follow the protocols related to administering tests to students with disabilities and EL students and protocols related to administering accessibility features.

2. Administer all tests according to appropriate protocols.

- Administer tests during the prescribed testing window, and in the prescribed order.

- Follow the directions and read the scripts in the TAMs (and in any subsequent updates provided to principals by the Department) verbatim to students.

- Remove or cover any classroom displays that provide information related to the content being assessed or to test-taking strategies (see page 27).

- Provide students with all required test materials as listed in the TAMs.

- Prevent the use of prohibited materials (see pages 28–33 for lists of required/permitted and prohibited materials). Note that results will be invalidated for students who use cell phones or other prohibited electronic devices during a test session, including after a student turns in his or her test materials, during a break, and during the transition to a test completion area.

3. Focus full attention on the testing environment at all times.

- Monitor the testing process by circulating around the room frequently. When not circulating around the room, test administrators should maintain a clear view of the students and keep their attention focused on them.

- Ensure that students are not left unsupervised during testing, including during breaks and during transitions to test completion locations.

- For computer-based testing, a test administrator may view students' tests on-screen only for the purpose of reading aloud selected words during the Mathematics or Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) tests as part of Universal Accessibility Feature 10 (UF10), or in order to assist a student who is having difficulty with the computer interface. See Part III, section N.2 for more information about assisting students with the computer interface.

- For paper-based testing, a test administrator may view students' test booklets only for the purposes of confirming that students are working in the correct test session, or in order to read aloud selected words during the Mathematics or STE tests as part of UF10.

- Students must work only on the test session being administered. For paper-based testing, if a test administrator observes a student working in the incorrect test session

of the answer booklet or reviewing the incorrect test session of the answer booklet or test booklet, this is a testing irregularity that must be reported immediately to the principal. The principal must then report the irregularity to the Department. (For CBT, a student cannot review a prior test session or go ahead to the next test session without the test session being unlocked by a test administrator.)

4. **Ensure that students provide answers that are strictly their own and do not participate in any form of cheating.**

   - Ensure that students do not consult notes, textbooks, or other teaching materials; do not access the Internet (with the exception of computer-based testing); do not share test questions with other students; and do not consult other students, school personnel, or anyone else during testing.

   - For CBT, also ensure that students do not access the Internet outside of the TestNav application (the student testing online platform).

5. **Do not give students any assistance or make suggestions for responding to any test question.**

   - Test administrators must not coach a student during testing or alter or interfere with a student's response in any way. Examples of coaching include, but are not limited to,

     o   providing answers to a student

     o   indicating that a student has answered a question incorrectly or left a question blank

     o   defining words or providing synonyms

     o   spelling words

     o   influencing a student's responses by offering hints, clues, cues, gestures, facial expressions, nods, or changes in voice inflection

     o   altering, explaining, simplifying, or paraphrasing any test question, reading passage, writing prompt, or multiple-choice answer option

     o   providing any manner of assistance that could impact a student's answers, including testing strategies

     o   suggesting that a student write more on a question, check his or her work, or review or reconsider a question

   - At any time during a test session, a test administrator may repeat a portion of the TAM script if necessary for clarification.

6. **Do not read, view, or change student responses.**

7. **Follow proper procedures for administering accommodations to students with disabilities and EL students.**

   - Ensure that students are **only** provided accommodations that are listed specifically for use during MCAS testing in an approved IEP or a 504 plan, or that were specifically chosen as accommodations for EL students.

   - Follow guidelines on proper provision of MCAS accommodations as prescribed in Appendices A and B and in the *Accessibility and Accommodations Manual for the Spring 2018 MCAS Grades 3–8 Tests*.

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- Test administrators for students who will be provided certain accommodations must sign an MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment prior to their receipt of secure test materials. Principals must keep signed Nondisclosure Acknowledgments in the school files for three years. See Appendix B for more information about which test administrators this requirement applies to, and see Appendix E for the MCAS Nondisclosure Acknowledgment.

D. Testing Irregularities

Testing irregularities are incidents that represent a deviation from prescribed testing procedures. Testing irregularities may include student impropriety, errors in providing accommodations, educator misconduct, or the mishandling of secure test materials.

1. School Observations

In order to ensure the security and proper administration of the MCAS program, the Department conducts announced and unannounced monitoring visits to schools to observe the procedures followed during test administration. This may include entering testing rooms to observe students and test administrators directly. The principal or designee should prepare to meet the observers upon their arrival and also be available during the observation to answer any questions. School staff may contact the Department's Student Assessment Services Unit at 781-338-3625 to verify the identity of Department observers.

Department observers will confirm that all test security requirements in Part I of the PAM are being met, including the following:

- Materials are stored properly.
- Staff have been trained.
- Test administrators are administering tests appropriately.
- The testing environment is secure.

2. Mandatory Reporting of Irregularities by All Personnel

Principals must contact their superintendent and the Department at 781-338-3625 immediately after an irregularity occurs. Test administrators and other school personnel must contact their principal or superintendent and the Department. If any school or district employee with knowledge of a test irregularity has questions about his or her reporting obligations, the Department can be consulted at 781-338-3625. Failure to report irregularities may result in sanctions.

It is recommended that parents/guardians be informed when a student-specific irregularity is reported to the Department.

When reporting an irregularity to the Department, the following information should be provided:

- a description of the alleged incident and the date it occurred
- the name of the school involved, along with the district and school code
- the name(s) of the individual(s) involved in the incident
- the specific test(s) and specific session(s) affected
- in student-specific reports: the student's name, date of birth, grade, and State-Assigned Student Identifier (SASID)

3.   Anonymous Reporting of Testing Irregularities

On occasion, individuals contact the Department anonymously to allege that testing irregularities have taken place. These allegations are investigated if sufficient information is provided. Testing irregularities can be reported anonymously in the following ways:

- calling the Student Assessment Services office at 781-338-3625

- emailing information about the irregularity to mcas@doe.mass.edu

- accessing the contact form on the Department's website at www.doe.mass.edu/contact/qanda.aspx and choosing either "MCAS" or "Student Assessment" from the dropdown menu

- mailing information about the irregularity to the following address:
Student Assessment Services
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street
Malden, MA 02148

Always provide as much information as possible when reporting a testing irregularity.

4.   Investigations into Irregularities

In response to a report of a serious irregularity, the Department may contact the school principal or district superintendent, ask that he or she conduct a local fact-finding investigation into the alleged irregularity, and require that he or she report back to the Department in writing, within an established time frame, regarding the results of the investigation. The Department may also perform its own independent investigation. Once the Department determines whether an irregularity has taken place, the Department will notify the school and district about any potential consequences which may follow from this determination.

5.   Investigations Based on Statewide Data Analysis

In order to ensure the validity of MCAS data and the integrity of the assessment system, the Department performs statewide data analysis on all schools' and districts' MCAS test results. Anomalous results are examined more closely and may be investigated. A school's MCAS test results may be placed temporarily under review until the investigation is concluded.

6.   Consequences

Testing irregularities or misconduct may result in any or all of the following:

- delay in reporting of district, school, or student results

- invalidation of district, school, or student results

- prohibition of school personnel from participating in a future MCAS test administration

- licensure sanctions for licensed educators

- criminal sanctions

Consequences imposed by the Department or law enforcement do not limit a local district's authority to impose its own sanctions up to and including termination.