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**2014–2015 Update**

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*Requirements for  
the Participation of  
Students with Disabilities  
in MCAS*

*Including Test Accommodations  
and Alternate Assessment*

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**A Guide for Educators and Parents/Guardians**

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This document was prepared by the  
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## ***Purpose of This Manual***

The 2014-2015 update of the *Requirements for the Participation of Students with Disabilities in MCAS (2014-2015 Update)* provides guidelines for the participation of students with disabilities in MCAS tests and to familiarize educators and parents/guardians with available MCAS test accommodations. Please refer to this manual during IEP team meetings and in the creation of 504 plans throughout the school year for making MCAS assessment decisions.

The appropriate use of accommodations provides students with disabilities greater access to classroom instruction and assessments. Decisions about appropriate test accommodations must be made carefully, based on the requirements outlined in this manual. Staff must be trained annually on the use and selection of accommodations, especially *nonstandard* accommodations. Nonstandard accommodations, such as a test administrator reading aloud the English Language Arts Reading Comprehension test, are intended for use by a very small number of students with disabilities who meet certain criteria. The Department plans to continue to work with schools and districts to support the appropriate use of test accommodations and provide data on the use of nonstandard accommodations to districts on an annual basis.

Schools must obtain approval from the Department to use test accommodations that are not listed in this document before including them in a student's IEP or 504 plan, since their use may invalidate the test results. Also be aware that test accommodations may *not* be provided to non-disabled students.

Please familiarize yourself with the policies and guidelines provided in this publication and contact Student Assessment Services at 781-338-3625 with any questions or suggestions.

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# I. Overview of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS)

## A. Background

The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) is the Commonwealth's statewide assessment program for students educated with public funds. MCAS tests measure the performance of students, schools, and districts on the academic learning standards in the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks, fulfilling the requirements of state and federal laws.

In spring 2015, all students, including students with disabilities, are required to participate in all MCAS or PARCC tests scheduled for 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 purposes of MCAS, a student with a disability is defined as having an approved Individualized Education Program (IEP) provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 and Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 71B, or a plan provided under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

## C. Meeting the High School Competency Determination (CD) Requirements

In order to graduate from high school, all students who are educated with Massachusetts public funds, including students with disabilities, are required to meet the CD standard in English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, and Science and Technology/Engineering (STE), as well as meet all local graduation requirements.

To earn a CD, students must either earn a scaled score of at least 240 on the grade 10 MCAS ELA and Mathematics tests, or earn a scaled score between 220 and 238 on these tests and fulfill the requirements of an Educational Proficiency Plan (EPP). Additional information on the EPP is available on the Department's website at [www.doe.mass.edu/ccr/epp/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ccr/epp/). In addition, students must earn a scaled score of at least 220 on one of the high school MCAS (STE) tests: biology, chemistry, introductory physics, or technology/engineering. Information on the CD graduation requirements is available at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/graduation.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/graduation.html). Students who fail one or more of the required tests will be offered multiple opportunities to take test(s) again, plus the opportunity to file an MCAS Performance Appeal if certain eligibility requirements are met. For additional information on MCAS Performance Appeals, visit [www.doe.mass.edu/mcasappeals/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcasappeals/).

A small number of students with disabilities are able to meet the CD requirement in one or more of the required subject areas through participation in MCAS-Alt. In order to earn a CD through participation in MCAS-Alt, a student must submit a portfolio that

1. demonstrates knowledge and skills at grade-level expectations for a student in grade 10;
2. demonstrates evidence of the student's thinking and problem-solving skills; and
3. demonstrates accurate and independent performance on the work samples that address all required learning standards and strands in the subject being assessed, as described on pages 22–29 of the *2015 Educator's Manual for MCAS-Alt*, available at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html).

**New**

In 2014, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approved extending the use of high school MCAS tests for students to earn the Competency Determination (CD) for high school graduation through the class of 2019. For more information on meeting the graduation requirement, please refer to the Department's website at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/graduation.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/graduation.html).

## II. Participation of Students with Disabilities in MCAS

### A. Background

The Massachusetts Education Reform Law of 1993 mandates that *all* students with disabilities who are educated with Massachusetts public funds participate in annual statewide academic, 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 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).

### B. Determining How Students with Disabilities Will Participate in MCAS

In spring 2015, districts, educational collaboratives, and approved private schools will select either MCAS or PARCC to administer to their students in grades 3–8 in English language arts and literacy, and mathematics. If students will participate in MCAS, rather than PARCC, each student's IEP or 504 team must determine during its annual meeting how the student will participate in MCAS for each subject scheduled for assessment. This information, including any accommodations that a student will use, must be documented in the student's approved IEP or his or her 504 plan. Guidelines for making participation decisions for individual students appear in Sections B, C, and D in this chapter.

#### English Language Learner (ELL) Students with Disabilities

ELL students with disabilities must participate in all MCAS assessments 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, 2014**, are not required to take the MCAS ELA tests in spring 2014, although schools have the *option* of assessing first-year ELL students on ELA tests.

ELL students with disabilities are entitled to receive test accommodations or to participate in the MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt), as determined by their IEP or 504 teams. Additional information on the participation of ELL students with disabilities in MCAS and in the ACCESS for ELLs English proficiency tests can be found in the Department publication entitled *Requirements for the Participation of English Language Learners in ACCESS for ELLs and MCAS*, available on the Department's website at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation/?section=ell](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation/?section=ell).

#### Students Diagnosed with Concussions

The Department has issued guidelines, including MCAS testing policies, for students who are returning to school after being diagnosed with concussions. These guidelines are available on the Department's website at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation/?section=sped](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation/?section=sped). Please refer to this information before making decisions about MCAS testing for a student who has had a concussion.

## C. MCAS Participation Guidelines

This section provides guidelines that IEP and 504 teams should use at annual team meetings to determine how each student with a disability will participate in MCAS.

The student's IEP or 504 team should begin by asking these questions and considering options 1, 2, and 3 in the chart that follows:

- Can the student take the standard MCAS test under routine conditions?
- Can the student take the standard MCAS test with accommodations? If so, which accommodations are necessary in order for the student to participate?
- Does the student require an alternate assessment? (Alternate assessments are intended for a very small number of students with significant disabilities who are unable to take standard MCAS tests, even with accommodations.)

**The student's IEP or 504 team must make a separate decision for each subject scheduled for testing. 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
<b>OPTION 1</b>  <i>If the student is</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>generally able to demonstrate knowledge and skills on a paper-and-pencil test, either with or without test accommodations, <b>and</b> is</li> <li>working on learning standards <b>at or near grade-level expectations</b>, <b>or</b> is</li> <li>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,</li> </ol>	<i>Then</i>  the student should take the <b>standard MCAS test</b> , either with or without accommodations.

Characteristics of Student's Instructional Program and Local Assessment	Recommended Participation in MCAS
<b>OPTION 2</b>  <i>If the student is</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>generally unable</b> to demonstrate knowledge and skills on a paper-and-pencil test, even with accommodations, <b>and</b> is</li> <li>working on learning standards that have been <b>substantially modified</b> due to the nature and severity of his or her disability, <b>and</b> is</li> <li>receiving <b>intensive, individualized instruction</b> in order to acquire, generalize, and demonstrate knowledge and skills,</li> </ol>	<i>Then</i>  the student should take the <b>MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt)</b> in this subject.

Characteristics of Student's Instructional Program and Local Assessment	Recommended Participation in MCAS
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### OPTION 3

<p><b><i>If the student is</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) working on learning standards <b>at or near grade-level expectations</b> <b><i>and</i></b> is</li><li>b) <b>sometimes able</b> to take a paper-and-pencil test, either without or with one or more test accommodation(s) <b><i>but</i></b></li><li>c) has a <b>complex and significant disability</b> that does not allow the student to fully demonstrate knowledge and skills on a test of this format and duration,</li></ul> <p>(Examples of complex and significant disabilities for which the student may require an alternate assessment are provided on the following page.)</p>	<p><b><i>Then</i></b> the student should take the <b>standard MCAS test</b>, if possible, with necessary accommodations.</p> <p><b><i>However,</i></b> the team may recommend the <b>MCAS-Alt</b> when the severity and complexity of the disability prevent the student from fully demonstrating knowledge and skills on the standard test, even with the use of accommodations. In this case, the MCAS-Alt grade-level portfolio should be compiled and submitted.</p>
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## **D. Complex and Significant Disabilities for Which a Student May Require an Alternate Assessment**

While the majority of students who take alternate assessments have significant *cognitive* disabilities, participation in the MCAS-Alt is not limited to these students. When the nature and complexity of a student's disability present significant barriers or challenges to standardized 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 or 504 team may determine that the student should participate in MCAS-Alt in one or more subjects.

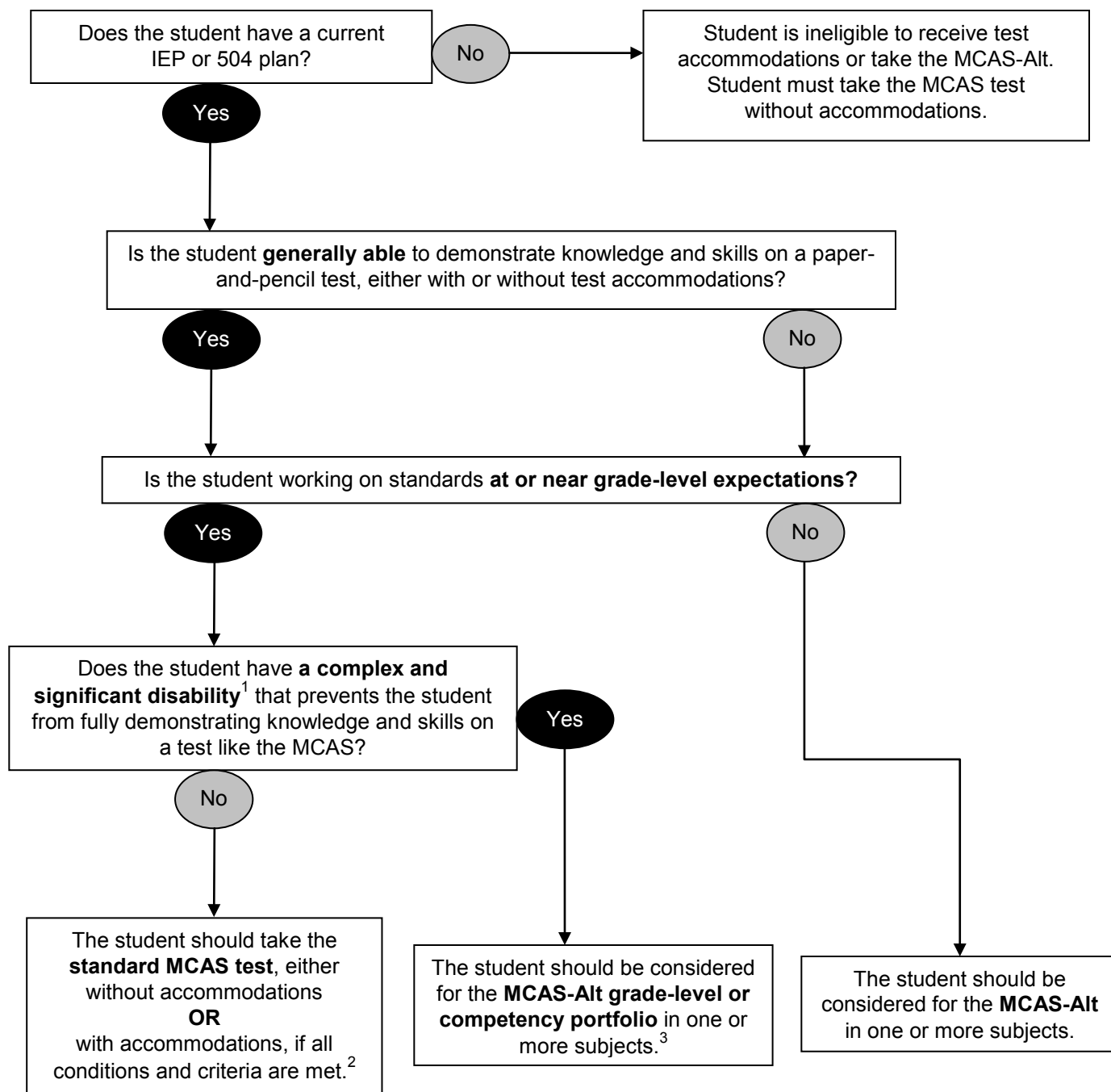
In addition to the criteria outlined in options 2 and 3 on the preceding page, the following examples of unique circumstances are provided to expand the team's understanding of the appropriate use of alternate assessments. An alternate assessment may be administered, for example, in each of the following situations:

- A student with a severe emotional, behavioral, or other disability is unable to maintain sufficient concentration to participate in standard testing, even with test accommodations.
- A student with a severe health-related disability, neurological disorder, or other complex disability cannot meet the demands of a prolonged test administration.
- A student with a significant motor, communication, or other disability requires more time than is reasonable or available for testing, even with the allowance of extended time (i.e., the student cannot complete one full test session in a school day).

**High school students who participate in the MCAS-Alt may use this assessment to satisfy the CD requirement** if they can demonstrate in their portfolio a level of achievement comparable to that of a student who has met the CD requirements by taking the standard grade 10 test or retest in that subject. Students who meet these requirements on the MCAS-Alt will be eligible to earn a CD. More information is available in the *2014 Educator's Manual for MCAS-Alt* available at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html).

## E. MCAS Participation Guidelines for IEP/504 Team Decision Making

This decision tree may be used by IEP and 504 teams to make decisions annually 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 5 of this manual.

<sup>2</sup> Refer to Chapter III of this manual for eligibility and requirements regarding test accommodations.

<sup>3</sup> See the *Educator's Manual for MCAS-Alt* available at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html)

Please use the information in this chapter as a general guide for IEP and 504 team decision making. Only a

student's IEP or 504 team can make decisions regarding test accommodations. The principal is responsible for ensuring that each student is provided with all test accommodations listed in his or her IEP or 504 plan.

## A. Definition and Purpose of Test Accommodations

A test accommodation is a change in the way a test is administered or in the way a student responds to test questions. Similar to instructional accommodations, test accommodations are intended to offset the effects of the disability and to provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and skills on statewide assessments.

See Section C for guidelines on allowable accommodations.

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

## B. Eligibility for Test Accommodations

### ***ELIGIBLE: students with disabilities served by an approved IEP or a 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. The IEP must be signed by the parent/guardian before an accommodation may be given. A student's 504 plan must be in place; however, in cases where a 504 plan is under development, the school personnel responsible for writing the plan must have already met and agreed upon the necessary MCAS accommodation(s) before a student may be provided the accommodation(s).

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

A student who does not have a documented disability and is **not served by 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.

## C. 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:

- 1) The student **has a disability** (non-disabled students may **not** use test accommodations) that is **documented** in an IEP or 504 plan.  
**AND**
- 2) The **accommodation is clearly described** 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**
- 3) 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. However, use of an accommodation during instruction does not necessarily qualify a student to receive the same accommodation during MCAS testing; for example, the student must meet

additional eligibility requirements to receive a **nonstandard** accommodation on an MCAS test.

**AND**

- 4) The student **requires the accommodation** in order to participate in MCAS testing.

**AND**

- 5) The **accommodation is listed as an approved accommodation** in Sections K or L of this chapter (or, prior to testing, the district or school has consulted with the Department and received approval to use an accommodation not included in this document).

**AND**

- 6) If a **nonstandard accommodation** will be provided, the student meets **all** of the eligibility criteria for that accommodation listed in Section L of this chapter.

IEP teams must reconvene annually to determine which accommodations are needed and to document any changes to accommodations. If an IEP or 504 team believes that a test accommodation listed in a student's IEP or 504 plan should be removed because it is no longer necessary and appropriate for the student, the **team must amend the plan** accordingly prior to testing. In the case of an IEP, the amended plan must be signed by the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) before any changes can be implemented.

It is acceptable for teams to list an accommodation in the plan with the notation "as requested by the student," signifying that the student may require the accommodation only periodically during testing; for example, a student who tires easily may need a scribe only during the latter part of a test session.

Accommodations **may not**

- alter, explain, simplify, paraphrase, or eliminate any test question, reading passage, writing prompt, or multiple-choice answer option;
- provide verbal or other clues or suggestions that hint at or give away the correct response to the student; or
- contradict test administration requirements or result in the violation of test security; e.g.,
  - test items may not be modified, reordered, or reformatted in any way for any student;
  - tests may not be photocopied, enlarged, altered, or duplicated;
  - English language dictionaries are not allowed for any student on any test except the ELA Composition test.

If the above conditions have been met and the IEP or 504 team determines an accommodation is necessary, the accommodation(s) **must be listed on the State or District-wide Assessment page of an approved IEP, or as a designated accommodation for MCAS testing in the 504 plan, and 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**.

**If a student refuses an accommodation listed in his or her plan, the accommodation must be offered and remain available to the student during testing.** The school may want to document in writing that the student refused the accommodation and keep this documentation on file at the school. An optional sample form to document a student's refusal can be found in Appendix C. Students should *never* be asked to sign an agreement waiving their right to receive an accommodation.

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**.

## **D. Process for Selecting Appropriate MCAS Test Accommodations**

Assessment accommodations are intended to provide access to MCAS tests. When selecting each testing accommodation, educators should consider the following:

- *“What learning challenges is the student experiencing?”*
  - Look at the student's classroom performance, not just the type of disability.
- *“Does the accommodation address the problem?”*
  - Try various accommodations in different assessment settings and evaluate whether the accommodation addresses the student's need; if not, revise accommodation(s) as needed.
  - Determine whether the accommodation is allowed for MCAS testing in the subject (see decision tree on page 11).
  - Develop or amend the IEP or 504 plan accordingly, listing accommodations separately for each MCAS assessment.

## **E. Definition of Standard Accommodations**

For the purposes of MCAS, a **standard accommodation** is defined as a change in the routine conditions under which students take MCAS tests that does not alter what the test is intended to measure. Standard accommodations are grouped into the following four categories:

- changes in timing or scheduling of the test; for example, administering the test in short intervals or at a specific time of day
- changes in test setting; for example, administering the test in a small group or a separate setting
- changes in test presentation; for example, using a large-print or Braille edition of the test
- changes in how the student responds to test questions; for example, dictating responses to a scribe

A list of standard test accommodations can be found in Section K of this chapter.

## **F. Definition of Nonstandard Accommodations**

For MCAS, a **nonstandard accommodation** is defined as an accommodation that

- changes the way an MCAS test is presented;  
**OR**
- changes the way a student responds to test questions;  
**AND**
- alters a portion of what the test is intended to measure.

**A list of nonstandard accommodations and the conditions under which they may be used appears in Section L of this chapter.**

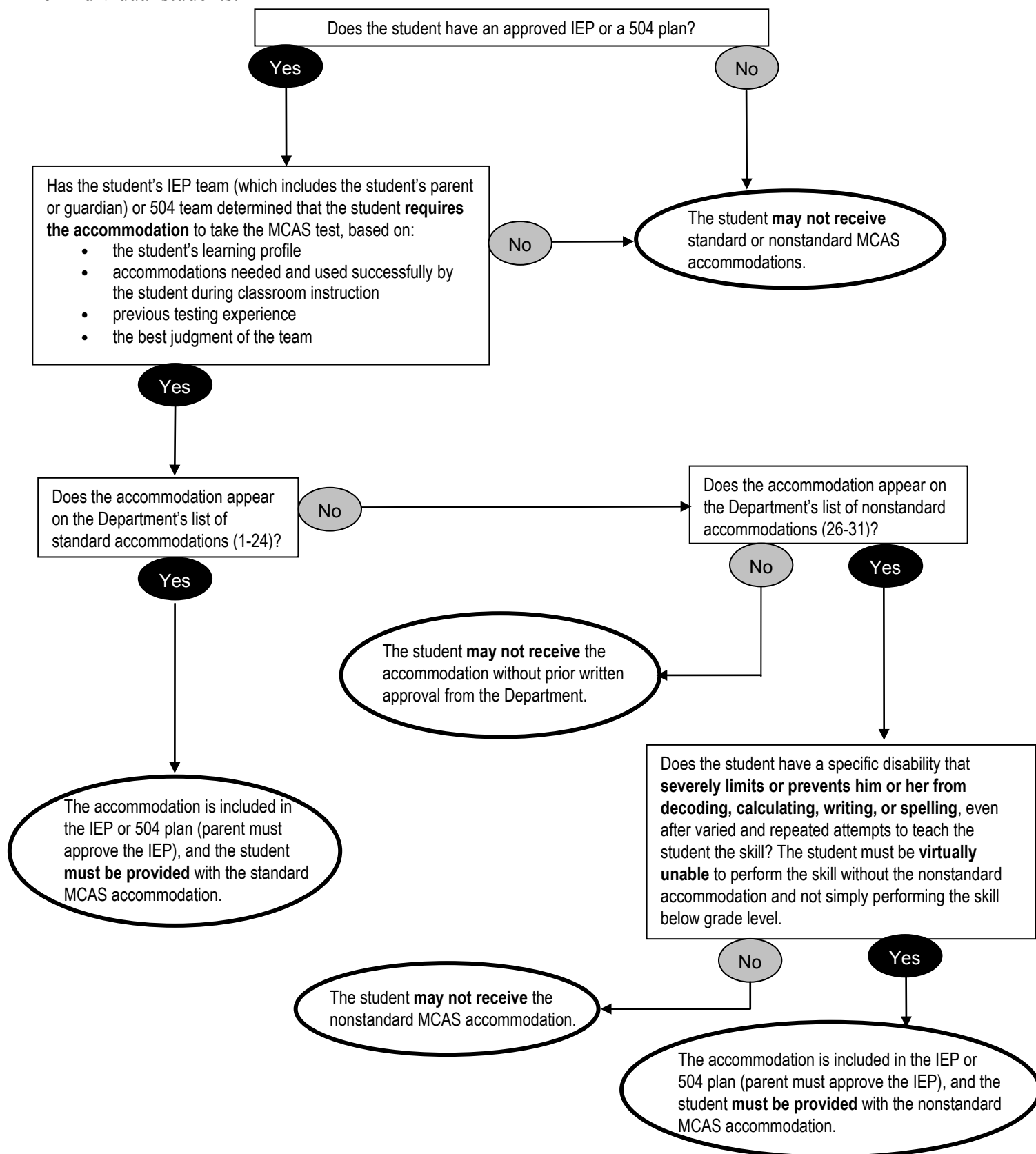
Nonstandard accommodations are intended for use by a very small number of students who would not otherwise be able to access the test. Teams must exercise caution, therefore, in considering whether a student requires a nonstandard accommodation, and must carefully review the criteria described for each nonstandard accommodation on the list. Test results for a student who took the test using nonstandard accommodation(s) must be interpreted with caution by parents and schools.

The Department will continue to review the rates of nonstandard accommodations use among districts. Districts must ensure that IEP and 504 teams are applying appropriate criteria for use of nonstandard accommodations by carefully reviewing all eligibility requirements for the nonstandard accommodations listed in Section L and revising the IEPs and 504 plans of students with disabilities accordingly.

Please call the Student Assessment office at 781-338-3625 with any questions about accommodations.

## G. Decision Tree for Use in Making Accommodations Decisions

This decision tree may be used by IEP and 504 teams to help make decisions about the use of accommodations for individual students.



## H. Untimed Test Sessions

**All MCAS test administrations are untimed.** Since any student may be given additional time beyond the scheduled test administration session, additional time is not considered an MCAS accommodation. However, no single test session may extend beyond the end of the regular school day, and any single test session must be completed on the same day in which it begins. Students taking the ELA Composition test must complete two sessions (Session A and B) in one day.

To ensure equivalent testing conditions in schools across the state and that all students are afforded an equal opportunity to benefit from untimed tests, it is particularly important for all testing to occur during regular school days. If testing must occur on an “early release” day, arrangements must be made for staff to stay with students who have not finished their work until the time at which school would end on a regular school day.

## I. Use of Dictionaries on MCAS Tests

The use of English language dictionaries is prohibited for all MCAS tests *except* for the ELA Composition. Students who are reported as English language learners (ELL), or who have been reported as ELL at anytime in the past, may use authorized word-to-word bilingual dictionaries on all MCAS tests. A list of authorized word-to-word dictionaries is available at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/lep\\_bilingual\\_dictionary.pdf](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/lep_bilingual_dictionary.pdf).

## J. Determining School Resources and Other Testing Needs

Prior to MCAS testing, designated staff (e.g., special educator or special education supervisor) should provide information to the principal or MCAS coordinator regarding each student who will require test accommodations, including the specific accommodation(s), resources, and/or space required for each student. Special test editions, including Braille, large-print, American Sign Language DVD, and Kurzweil 3000 CD, must be ordered online by the principal or designee during the MCAS Enrollment Verification period. **Test administrators who will be providing accommodations to students with disabilities should receive additional training prior to MCAS testing to ensure the proper provision of MCAS accommodations.**



## K. List of Standard Accommodations

This section contains a list of standard test accommodations for students with disabilities. Specific information regarding test administration for students using accommodations, including instructions for administering accommodations and for returning accommodation materials after test administration, is available in the *Principal's Administration Manual*.

**Note:** If your district uses customized IEP software with predetermined dropdown menus for MCAS accommodations, please ensure that the menus match the descriptions below.

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### *Changes in Timing or Scheduling of the Test*

1. **Frequent Breaks:** The test is administered in short periods with frequent breaks.
2. **Time of Day:** The test is administered at a time of day that takes into account the student's medical or learning needs. The IEP or 504 plan must specify time of day. Consideration should be given to the requirement that each test session must be completed on the same school day in which it begins.

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### *Changes in Test Setting*

3. **Small Group:** The test is administered in a small group (no more than 10 students).  
**Note:** If students will also have the test read aloud or signed, no more than 5 students may be in the small group (except for the ELA Composition test, which may be read aloud to groups up to 10). If this accommodation will be provided outside the student's classroom, the student's IEP or 504 plan must also include accommodation 4 (separate setting).
4. **Separate Setting:** The test is administered in a room other than the one used by the rest of the class.
5. **Individual:** The test is administered to the student individually. If this accommodation will be provided outside the student's classroom, the student's IEP or 504 plan must also include accommodation 4 (separate setting). **Note:** Principals are encouraged to monitor individual testing environments frequently to ensure that proper test administration protocols are being followed.
6. **Specified Area:** The test is administered with the student seated at the front or in another specified area of the room, in a study carrel, or in an enclosed area (the student's IEP or 504 plan must specify location and any specialized equipment needed).

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### *Changes in Test Presentation*

7. **Familiar Test Administrator:** The test is administered by a test administrator familiar to the student.
8. **Noise Buffers:** The student wears noise buffers after test administration instructions have been read (music may *not* be played on headphones worn during MCAS testing).
9. **Magnification or Overlays:** The student uses magnifying equipment, enlargement devices, colored visual overlays, or specially tinted lenses (the student's IEP or 504 plan must specify which).
10. **Test Directions:** The test administrator reads and/or clarifies general administration instructions only. No portion of the test itself (including items, reading selections, or introduction to reading selections) may be read or signed unless the student's IEP or 504 plan also includes the read-aloud accommodation for the specific MCAS test being administered.

11. **Large Print:** The student uses a large-print (18-point font) edition of the test. All responses must be transcribed verbatim from the large-print answer booklet to the student's standard answer booklet. Responses may not be typed unless the student also has accommodation 23 (typed responses).

**Note:** Students using the large-print edition of the test are not required to use the large-print answer booklet. Students who do not require the large-print answer booklet may record their answers in a **standard** answer booklet. IEP teams and 504 plans should indicate which students taking the large-print test also require the large-print answer booklet.

12. **Braille:** The student uses a Braille edition of the test. All answers must be either scribed or transcribed verbatim into the student's answer booklet; responses may not be typed unless the student also has accommodation 23 (typed responses).

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

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

14. **Track Test Items:** The test administrator assists the student in tracking test items (e.g., moving from one test question to the next) or by redirecting the student's attention to the test. Phrases such as, "Please pay attention to the test" and "Keep working until you are finished" are acceptable. It is not permissible to say things such as, "Add more to your response" and "Make sure you have answered all of the questions."

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

16. **Test Administrator Reads Aloud the ELA Composition, Mathematics, and/or Science and Technology/Engineering test(s) to the Student** (**Note:** Reading aloud the ELA Reading Comprehension test is nonstandard accommodation 26.)

- Test session(s) must be read word for word, exactly as written. The test administrator may not provide assistance to the student regarding the meanings of words, intent of any test item, or responses to test items. The test administrator should read with emphasis only when indicated by bold or italicized text. The test can be read aloud in one of the following ways, which **must be specified** in the IEP or 504 plan:
  - The test administrator reads the entire test session word-for-word exactly as written.
- OR**
- The test administrator reads selected words, phrases, and/or sentences as directed by the student. The student points to the word, phrase, or sentence that he or she needs read aloud.
- The test must be administered in a **separate setting** (accommodation 4), either **individually** (accommodation 5) or to a **small group** (2–5 students) (accommodation 3). For reading aloud to a small group, follow the procedures outlined in Appendix A of this document. **Note:** Reading aloud the ELA Composition test may occur in groups of up to 10 students.
- No portion of the ELA Reading Comprehension test may be read aloud unless accommodation 26 is listed in the student's IEP or 504 plan.

**17. Test Administrator Signs the ELA Composition, Mathematics, and/or Science and Technology/Engineering test(s) to a Student who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing (Note: Signing the ELA Reading Comprehension test is nonstandard accommodation 27.)**

- The test session(s) must be signed exactly as written, except in cases when doing so would reveal an answer to a test question. When use of a sign would visually define the concept being tested (e.g., using the sign for parallel lines that demonstrates this concept visually), the term or concept must be finger-spelled. Interpreters may not provide assistance to the student regarding the meanings of words, intent of any test question, or responses to test items.
- The test must be administered in a separate setting (accommodation 4), either **individually** (accommodation 5) or to a **small group** (2–5 students) (accommodation 3). For signing the test to a small group, follow the procedures outlined in Appendix A.

**Notes:**

- Under secure conditions supervised by the principal, interpreters may review test materials up to four days prior to test administration. Test materials may not be removed from the school.
- American Sign Language DVDs of the grade 10 Mathematics test are available.
- Signing the ELA Composition test may occur in groups of up to 10 students.

**18. Use of an Electronic Text Reader for the ELA Composition, Mathematics, and/or Science and Technology/Engineering test(s) (Note: Use of an electronic text reader for the ELA Reading Comprehension test is nonstandard accommodation 28.)**

All MCAS tests are available on a CD in the Kurzweil 3000 read-only format. Responses to all test questions must be submitted in the student's standard answer booklet. Responses cannot be typed directly into the Kurzweil test. However, responses may be typed into a word-processing program if the student has accommodation 23 (typed responses).

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***Changes in How the Student Responds to Test Questions***

**19. Test Administrator Scribes the ELA Reading Comprehension, Mathematics, and/or Science and Technology/Engineering Test(s); or Student Uses a Speech-to-Text Conversion Device (Note: Use of a scribe or speech-to-text conversion for the ELA Composition test is nonstandard accommodation 29.):** The student dictates or signs responses to a scribe or uses a speech-to-text conversion device to record responses.

- The test must be administered **individually** (accommodation 5) in a **separate setting** (accommodation 4).
- The scribe must record the student's responses **exactly as dictated** into the student's answer booklet and may not edit or alter the student's responses in any way. Scribes may assume correct spelling and punctuation.
- The scribe must provide the student with an opportunity to review and edit what has been scribed.
- When a student uses an electronic speech-to-text conversion device, the test administrator must follow the instructions for submitting typed responses described in the *Principal's Administration Manual*.

Scribes may not type student responses. The typed response accommodation is intended for student use only. The only exception is if the student cannot read the scribe's writing in order to review/edit the response; in that case, the scribe may type the response.

20. **Organizer, Checklist, Reference Sheet, or Abacus:** The student uses a graphic organizer or checklist; an individualized mathematics or science and technology/engineering reference sheet; or an abacus on the Mathematics tests.

a) **General instructions for submitting materials to the Department for approval**

- All customized graphic organizers, checklists, and reference sheets submitted for approval **must** be accompanied by a completed **MCAS Accommodation 20 Cover Sheet** (see Appendix E).
- **High school** individualized mathematics reference sheets approved prior to the **2013–2014** school year must be resubmitted for review for use on the 2014–2015 MCAS tests.
- All other materials approved prior to the **2012–2013** school year must be resubmitted for review for use on the 2014–2015 MCAS tests.

**Submission deadlines** are as follows:

Test Administration Date	Content Area MCAS Test	Materials Submission Deadline
November 2014	ELA and Mathematics (Retest)	<b>October 10, 2014</b>
February 2015	High School Biology	<b>January 7, 2015</b>
March 2015	ELA and Mathematics (Retest)	<b>February 6, 2015</b>
March–April 2015	ELA (grades 3–8, 10)	<b>February 6, 2015</b>
May 2015	Mathematics (grades 3–8, 10) STE (grades 5 and 8)	<b>April 2, 2015</b>
June 2015	High School STE	<b>May 1, 2015</b>

- Graphic organizers, checklists, and reference sheets submitted after these deadlines may not be reviewed in time for testing.
- Do not submit multiple copies of identical graphic organizers or reference sheets for approval.
- Submit all materials to the Department by fax to 781-338-3630 or by email (in MS Word or PDF only) to [mcas@doe.mass.edu](mailto:mcas@doe.mass.edu).
- Notice of approval will be sent to the school approximately 10 business days from the time the materials are received at the Department.

b) **English language arts (ELA) materials:** A student generates a draft ELA open-response or composition using a graphic organizer, or uses a checklist to check the steps in the writing process and/or recall reading comprehension strategies.

Pre-approved sample ELA graphic organizers are posted at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation/?section=sped](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation/?section=sped) for use on ELA open-response questions and ELA compositions by students who have accommodation 20 listed in their IEP or 504 plan.

Pre-approved sample organizers are intended to clarify the difference between, and assist students to prepare, ELA open responses (on the ELA Reading Comprehension tests) and ELA compositions (on the ELA Composition tests).

The following options are available to schools that wish to use ELA graphic organizers or checklists with eligible students who have this accommodation listed in an IEP or 504 plan:

- Use a posted, pre-approved sample ELA graphic organizer or checklist, which is strongly encouraged and does **not** require submission to the Department for approval prior to MCAS testing;
- Adapt a pre-approved sample ELA graphic organizer, which must be submitted to the Department for approval prior to MCAS testing only if text has been added;
- Create a graphic organizer, which must be submitted to the Department for approval prior to MCAS testing, if it contains text.

**Notes on ELA materials:**

- The student may use no more than two different pre-approved graphic organizers per test.
- Generic graphic organizers without text do not require submission to the Department for approval.
- Graphic organizers and checklists may not include
  - definitions (of words or terms);
  - specific examples (e.g., examples of adjectives or synonyms);
  - sentence starters or lists of key words;
  - guiding questions (e.g., “Who are the main characters?” or “Where does the story take place?”).

- c) **Mathematics and science and technology/engineering (STE) materials:** A student uses an **individualized reference sheet** or **checklist** to provide memory prompts, mnemonic devices, formulas, word banks, and/or generic steps in solving a problem. Students may use approved graphic organizers for open-response questions; graph paper used as a graphic organizer does not need to be approved by the Department. (**Note:** The use of calculators, arithmetic tables, and manipulatives on the non-calculator test sessions of the mathematics tests is nonstandard accommodation 30.)

Approval guidelines and sample materials for mathematics and science and technology/engineering reference sheets are posted at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation/?section=sped](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation/?section=sped). (**Note:** A **revised** pre-approved Biology reference sheet has been posted. Please use this in place of the previously posted Biology reference sheet.)

The checklist or reference sheet **must be**

- developed in response to the individual student’s learning needs;
- no more than 3 pages in length;
- specific to the student’s grade.

- d) **Abacus:** A student who is visually impaired may use an abacus during all sessions of the Mathematics test, if this accommodation is listed in the IEP or 504 plan.

**21. Student Signs or Reads Test Aloud:** The student may

- read the test aloud to him- or herself;
- read the test and record answers on a recording device (including video for a student who is deaf or hard of hearing) and then write responses to test items while playing back the recorded segment(s);
- type responses and then use text-to-speech software to play back and review the typed responses (student must also have accommodation 23 on his or her IEP or 504 plan); **or**
- sign test items/responses onto video and then write answers while playing back the video (for a student who is deaf or hard of hearing).

**Notes:**

- The test must be administered **individually** (accommodation 5) in a **separate setting** (accommodation 4).
- Any video and audio CDs, DVDs, and tapes must be returned with other nonscorable materials. Any electronic files must be deleted. No copies may be retained.
- Text-to-speech software may **not** be used to listen to test items or passages.

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

23. **Typed Responses:** The student uses a word processing program or an Alpha-Smart (or similar electronic keyboard) to type the ELA Composition, or answers to open-response or short-answer questions on any MCAS test.

**Notes:**

- The test administrator is responsible for ensuring that a student using this accommodation does not access the Internet or other files on the computer during testing.
- When typing responses, students may only use the spell- or grammar-checking functions if they have nonstandard accommodation 31 listed in their IEP or 504 plan. Test administrators are responsible for ensuring that students do not use spell- or grammar-checking functions except in cases where the student receives accommodation 31. Any auto-correct functions must be turned off during testing.
- The test administrator must follow the instructions for submitting typed responses described in the *Test Administrator's Manual* and the *Principal's Administration Manual*.
- If a student will be using an **electronic tablet**, please contact the Department at 781-338-3625 for additional instructions.

24. **Answers Recorded in Test Booklet:** The student records answers directly in the test booklet or uses special paper for drafts or computation (e.g., lined or graph paper). Answers are then transcribed verbatim into the student's standard answer booklet.

**Note:** If the student transcribes his or her own responses, the transcription must be done during the test session and completed on the day in which the test session began. The student may type responses only if the student has accommodation 23 (typed responses) listed in his or her IEP or 504 plan. A test administrator may transcribe responses at any time during the testing window.

25. **Other Standard Accommodation:** The student uses another standard accommodation during routine instruction that the IEP or 504 team identifies for use by the student on MCAS tests.

The accommodation must meet the criteria described in the *General Requirements for Use of Test Accommodations* in Section C of this chapter. Each year the accommodation is required, the principal or designee must request written permission from the Department **at least two weeks prior** to test administration when a standard accommodation not on the preceding list to a student during MCAS testing. The student's IEP or 504 plan team must reconvene in order to document any changes to accommodations listed in the plan. If the student is on an IEP, the plan must be signed by the parent before the accommodation may be used. Call 781-338-3625, email [mcas@doe.mass.edu](mailto:mcas@doe.mass.edu), or fax requests to 781-338-3630.

## L. Requirements for the Use of Nonstandard Accommodations

IEP and 504 teams may allow the use of one or more of the following nonstandard MCAS test accommodations **only when all of the criteria are met**, as described next to each nonstandard accommodation. The accommodation can only be provided to a student with a disability on an MCAS test when it is documented on the State or District-Wide Assessment page in an approved IEP or listed in the student's 504 plan specifically as an MCAS accommodation. Please also review section F for additional information. **Use of an accommodation during instruction does not necessarily qualify a student to receive the same accommodation on an MCAS test.**

The Department will continue to review the number of students with disabilities who receive nonstandard accommodations in each district. IEP and 504 teams are encouraged to make consistent, defensible, and appropriate decisions for each student, and to amend the IEPs and 504 plans of students who do not meet the criteria listed below.

#	Accommodation	Criteria Required for Use
26.	<p><b>Test Administrator Reads Aloud the ELA Reading Comprehension Test</b></p> <p><b>Note:</b> Reading aloud the ELA Composition writing prompt, the Mathematics test, and/or the Science and Technology/Engineering test is standard accommodation 16. The decision to use nonstandard accommodation 26 must be made separately from the decision to use standard accommodation 16.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The student has a specific disability that <b>severely limits or prevents him or her from decoding text</b>, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so. The student must be a <b>virtual non-reader</b> (i.e., at the beginning stages of learning to decode), not simply reading below grade level. <b>AND</b></li> <li>2. The student has access to printed materials <b>only</b> through a reader and/or is provided with spoken text on audiotape, CD, video, or other electronic format <b>during routine instruction</b>, except while the student is actually being taught to decode.</li> </ol>
	<p><b>Special Instructions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All passages and test items must be read word for word, exactly as written. The test administrator may <b>not</b> 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>• If the test is read aloud, it must be administered in a <b>separate setting</b> (accommodation 4), either <b>individually</b> (accommodation 5) or to a <b>small group (2–5 students)</b> (accommodation 3). When reading aloud to a small group of students, follow the procedures outlined in Appendix A.</li> </ul>	

<p><b>27. Test Administrator Signs the ELA Reading Comprehension Test for a Student Who Is Deaf or Hard of Hearing</b></p> <p><b>Note:</b> Signing the ELA Composition writing prompt, the Mathematics test, and/or the Science and Technology/Engineering test is standard accommodation 17. The decision to use accommodation 27 must be made separately from the decision to use standard accommodation 17.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The student has a specific disability that <b>severely limits or prevents him or her from decoding text</b>, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so. The student must be a <b>virtual non-reader</b> (i.e., at the beginning stages of learning to decode), not simply reading below grade level. <b>AND</b></li> <li>2. The student has access to printed materials <b>only</b> through a sign language interpreter or is provided with signed text on video or other electronic format <b>during routine instruction</b>, except while the student is actually being taught to decode.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Special Instructions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All passages and test items must be signed exactly as written, except in cases when doing so would reveal an answer to a test question. When use of a sign would visually define the concept being tested, the term or concept must be <b>finger-spelled</b>. Interpreters may not provide assistance to the student regarding the meanings of words, intent of any test question, or responses to test items.</li> <li>• If the test is signed, it must be administered in a separate setting (accommodation 4), either individually (accommodation 5) or to a small group (2–5 students) (accommodation 3). When signing a test to a small group of students, follow the procedures outlined in Appendix A.</li> <li>• Under secure conditions supervised by the principal, sign interpreters may review test materials up to four days prior to test administration. Test materials may not be removed from the school.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>28. Electronic Text Reader for the ELA Reading Comprehension Test:</b> The student uses an electronic text reader (i.e., Kurzweil 3000) for the ELA Reading Comprehension test.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Using an electronic text reader for the ELA Composition writing prompt, the Mathematics test, and/or the Science and Technology/Engineering test is standard accommodation 18. The decision to use accommodation 28 must be made separately from the decision to use standard accommodation 18.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The student has a specific disability that <b>severely limits or prevents him or her from decoding text</b>, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so. The student must be a <b>virtual non-reader</b> (i.e., at the beginning stages of learning to decode), not simply reading below grade level. <b>AND</b></li> <li>2. The student has access to printed materials <b>only</b> through an electronic text reader and is provided this accommodation <b>during routine instruction</b>, except while the student is actually being taught to decode.</li> </ol> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Continued...</i></p>



	<p><b>Special Instructions:</b></p> <p>Kurzweil edition MCAS tests are <b>read only</b>. Answers to all test questions must be submitted in the student’s standard answer booklet. Responses cannot be typed directly into the Kurzweil test. If the student has accommodation 23 (typed responses), answers may be typed into a word processing program.</p>
<p><b>29.</b></p>	<p><b>Scribe the ELA Composition:</b> The student dictates the ELA Composition to a scribe or uses a speech-to-text conversion device to record the ELA Composition.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> The Department encourages IEP teams to consider alternatives to the use of a scribe for students who are deaf and taking the ELA Composition test. One such alternative is accommodation 21, which would permit a deaf student to sign his or her draft composition onto video and then transcribe the signed composition into written English while viewing the video.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>1. The student has a significant disability which requires the dictation of <b>all written compositions</b> to a scribe or use of an electronic speech-to-text conversion device for all compositions.</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>2. The student is unable to use his or her writing hand or arm at the time of testing due to a <b>broken bone or fracture</b> (see Section B in this chapter for additional information on using a scribe for a student who is not yet on an IEP or 504 plan).</p> </div> <div style="width: 50%;"></div> </div>
	<p><b>Special Instructions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The test must be administered individually (accommodation 5) in a separate setting (accommodation 4).</li> <li>• Clarification on the role of a scribe for the ELA Composition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ During <b>session A</b>, the scribe must write exactly what the student dictates in the student’s test booklet. The scribe may not edit or alter the student’s dictation in any way. When scribing the draft composition, the scribe may assume that each sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a period. All other capitalization, punctuation, and paragraph breaks are the responsibility of the student.</li> <li>○ After the student has finished dictating his or her draft composition, the scribe must ask the student to do the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Spell key words. Key words include proper nouns, multi-syllable words, and other words pertinent to the composition.</li> <li>- Review the draft composition and make any necessary edits, including edits to capital letters, punctuation, and paragraph breaks. The student may make edits independently or 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> <li>○ During <b>session B</b>, the scribe copies the final draft, including the student’s edits, into the student’s answer booklet.</li> <li>○ Scribes may <i>not</i> type student responses; only students with accommodation 23 may submit typed responses. The only exception is if the student cannot read the scribe’s writing in order to review/edit the response; in that case, the scribe may type the response.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Continued...</i></p> </li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When a student uses an electronic speech-to-text conversion device, the test administrator</li> </ul>

	must follow the instructions for submitting typed responses described in the <i>Principal's Administration Manual</i> .	
30.	<p><b>Calculation Devices:</b> The student uses a calculator, arithmetic table (including addition/subtraction and multiplication/division charts), or manipulatives (IEP or 504 plan must specify which) on the non-calculator session of the Mathematics test and/or the grades 5 and 8 Science and Technology/Engineering test. (Note: Calculators are allowed for <b>all</b> students on the high school STE tests.)</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Manipulatives must be approved by the Department prior to 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>.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The student has a specific disability that <b>severely limits or prevents him or her from calculating mathematically</b>. The student must be <b>virtually unable to perform calculation</b> (i.e., at the beginning stages of learning how to calculate) without the use of a calculator or arithmetic table, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so. <b>AND</b></li> <li>2. The student has access to mathematical calculation only through the use of a calculator, arithmetic table, or manipulatives, which the student uses <b>during routine instruction</b>, except while the student is actually being taught to calculate.</li> </ol>
31.	<p><b>Spell- or Grammar-Checking Function on Word Processor, Spell-Checking Device, or Word Prediction Software for the ELA Composition:</b> The student uses a spell- or grammar-checking function, spell-checking device (including hand-held electronic spellers), or word prediction software (IEP or 504 plan must specify which function or device) for the ELA Composition.</p>	<p>For spell-checker:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The student has a specific documented disability that <b>severely limits or prevents him or her from spelling correctly</b>, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so. The student must be <b>virtually unable to spell simple words</b> (i.e., at the beginning stages of learning how to spell); <b>AND</b></li> <li>2. The student can produce understandable written work only when provided this accommodation, which the student uses <b>during routine instruction</b>.</li> </ol> <p>For word prediction:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The student has either a specific physical disability or a documented disability in recalling and processing language that <b>severely limits or prevents him or her from writing or keyboarding written responses</b> without the use of word prediction software; <b>AND</b></li> <li>2. the student has access to written expression only through the use of word prediction software <b>during routine instruction</b></li> </ol> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Continued...</i></p>
	<b>Special Instructions:</b>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When word prediction software is used, the “predict-ahead” and “predict online” software functions must be turned off.</li> <li>• Students with accommodation 31 can use spell- or grammar-checking functions or devices on all MCAS tests, if required.</li> </ul>
32.	<p><b>Other Nonstandard Accommodation:</b> The student uses another nonstandard accommodation during routine instruction that the IEP or 504 team identifies as being necessary for the student to participate in MCAS tests.</p> <p>The accommodation must meet the General Requirements for Use of Test Accommodations in Section C of this chapter.</p> <p>Each year the accommodation is required, the principal or designee must request written permission from the Department <b>at least two weeks</b> prior to test administration when a nonstandard accommodation not on the preceding list is being considered by the student’s IEP or 504 team for use during MCAS testing.</p> <p>The student’s IEP or 504 team must reconvene in order to document any changes to accommodations listed in the plan. If the student is on an IEP, the plan must be signed by the parent before the accommodation may be used.</p> <p>Please call 781-338-3625, email <a href="mailto:mcas@doe.mass.edu">mcas@doe.mass.edu</a>, or fax requests to 781-338-3630.</p>

## IV. MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt)

### A. Overview

The MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt) is intended for the relatively small number of students with significant disabilities who are unable to participate in regular statewide assessments, even when accommodations are provided. The MCAS-Alt measures the student's achievement of the academic learning standards in the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks.

For each student scheduled to participate in MCAS-Alt in one or more subjects, the student, the student's teacher, and other adults who work with the student will develop a portfolio over the course of the school year. The student's portfolio must include data and other evidence of the student's performance in the subject being assessed.

To assist teachers in providing instruction in the general curriculum to students with significant disabilities, the Department has developed the *Resource Guide to the 2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for Students with Disabilities*. In addition, the *2015 Educator's Manual for MCAS-Alt* includes important forms and information on the requirements of the MCAS-Alt. To view and download copies of these documents or to order printed copies, visit the Department's MCAS-Alt website at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html).

**Teachers who are conducting alternate assessments are strongly encouraged to participate in an MCAS-Alt training session or to view the Department's training presentations available at the website listed above.** Training sessions are conducted annually in October, January, and March. Since requirements are updated annually, teachers who have not attended a recent training session or reviewed updated materials may place their students at a disadvantage. MCAS-Alt training specialists are available to assist teachers in conducting the MCAS-Alt. Please call Student Assessment Services at 781-338-3625 for additional information.

### B. Participation Guidelines

After reviewing the participation guidelines in Chapter II, Section C, of this document, IEP and 504 teams must determine annually which students will take alternate assessments in each subject. **A student may be designated to take the standard MCAS test in one subject and the alternate assessment in another.** Since the MCAS-Alt portfolio includes data and samples of student work collected during the school year, it is advisable to start this process early in the school year. The Department will monitor the use of alternate assessments statewide to ensure that they are being conducted appropriately and that participation decisions are made in accordance with the law.

### C. Obtaining Portfolio Binders and Submission Materials

In January, principals must order MCAS test materials using the online MCAS Enrollment Verification form. As part of this process, principals also indicate the number of students participating in MCAS-Alt. The Department uses this information to determine the number of three-ring portfolio binders, student information booklets, and pre-paid mailing materials to send principals in February 2014. Additional materials may be ordered by calling the MCAS Service Center at 800-737-5103.

## D. Submitting MCAS-Alt Portfolios

Completed MCAS-Alt student portfolios must be submitted to the Department in three-ring binders provided to the school by the Department for that purpose (as described in Section C in this chapter) and postmarked no later than **Thursday, April 2, 2015**.

Submitted MCAS-Alt portfolios will be returned to schools in fall 2015 and must be kept on file at the school in a secure location. Information about the secure storage and maintenance of returned MCAS-Alt portfolios is included in the *2015 Educator's Manual for MCAS-Alt* posted to [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html) and in the Student Record Regulations posted to [www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/advisory/cmr23qanda.html?section=summary](http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/advisory/cmr23qanda.html?section=summary).

## V. Reporting MCAS Results for Students with Disabilities

MCAS results are reported to parents/guardians, schools, and districts according to four performance levels: *Advanced*, *Proficient*, *Needs Improvement*, and *Warning* (*Failing* for grade 10 ELA and mathematics and high school STE). Results for the MCAS-Alt typically are reported as *Awareness*, *Emerging*, *Progressing*, or *Incomplete*, which are within the *Warning/Failing* level. Each year a small number of students taking the MCAS-Alt earn scores of *Needs Improvement* or higher by demonstrating that they have mastered grade-level standards. A score of *Needs Improvement* or higher on the high school MCAS-Alt is necessary to meet the state's graduation requirements.

Performance level results for students with disabilities—whether they take the standard tests with standard or nonstandard accommodations, or without accommodations, or participate through the MCAS-Alt—are included in MCAS reports along with the results of non-disabled students. Scaled score results for students who participated in testing with either standard or nonstandard accommodations are included in MCAS reports with the scores of students who participated in testing without accommodations. MCAS-Alt portfolios receive performance levels, but do not receive scaled scores.

In school and district reports, the results for students with disabilities are disaggregated and reported separately, and also include results for ELL students with disabilities.

### Notations for Nonstandard Accommodations

Confidential reports of student results, including the *Parent/Guardian Report* and school and district rosters, will include a notation in cases where a nonstandard accommodation was used. In order to protect the confidentiality of students with disabilities, however, notations will *not* appear on reports that include the results of fewer than ten students per school for school reports and per district for district reports. Rates of use of nonstandard accommodations will also be reported at the school and district levels.

### Students in Out-of-District Placements

Test results for students who attend out-of-district placements are reported to the school or collaborative where the student took the test(s) and are included with the scores of the student's sending district, regardless of whether the student took standard MCAS test(s) or the MCAS-Alt. Out-of-district placements include approved and unapproved private special education schools, educational collaboratives, and other publicly funded special education placements outside the student's home (i.e., sending) school district.

## VI. Preparing Students with Disabilities for MCAS Testing

### A. Role of Educators

Educators of students with disabilities are expected to implement an instructional program that has all of the following characteristics:

- The program is based on the learning standards in the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks.
- The program uses varied and individualized approaches to instruction that enable each student to demonstrate his or her knowledge and skills.
- The program provides students with disabilities access to all the necessary resources, materials, and opportunities to learn that are provided to students without disabilities.
- The program provides necessary and appropriate supports and instructional accommodations to ensure access to the general curriculum.

### B. Role of Parents/Guardians

Parents and guardians of students with disabilities play a key role in preparing their child(ren) for MCAS. Some suggestions follow:

- Make sure your child attends school regularly.
- Review class assignments and make sure that adequate time is set aside for homework.
- Set aside time for your child to read.
- Meet regularly with your child's teacher(s) to discuss how you can support your child's education.
- Review your child's MCAS or MCAS-Alt *Parent/Guardian Report*, and use it to identify your child's strengths and areas of weakness.
- Inquire about the use of appropriate MCAS accommodations at IEP or 504 team meetings and whether the MCAS-Alt or the standard MCAS test is most appropriate for your child.
- Review released MCAS test questions with your son or daughter. Released test items are posted on the Department's website at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testitems.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testitems.html).
- Ask whether the school offers an MCAS support program that would benefit your child.
- If your child is participating in the MCAS-Alt, ask to view your child's MCAS-Alt portfolio.
- Become familiar with the standards in the *2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks*, available at [www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html).

## C. Available Resources

The following publications are available on the Department's website at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas). Many are also available in Massachusetts public libraries:

- *Resource Guide to the 2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for Students with Disabilities*
- *2015 Educator's Manual for MCAS-Alt*
- release of spring test items (available for 2008–2014)
- release of retest items (available for 2008–2014)
- MCAS scoring guides and sample student work (available for 2007–2013)
- *Requirements for the Participation of English Language Learners in ACCESS for ELLs and MCAS*

In addition, released test items are available in the following specialized test formats to schools serving students with disabilities:

- release of test items in Braille, available for 1999–2014, by calling the Accessible Instructional Materials Library at 781-562-0461
- release of test items in Kurzweil 3000 electronic text reader format, available for 2004–2008, at [www.kurzweiled.com/proof\\_educator\\_sampletest\\_mcas.html](http://www.kurzweiled.com/proof_educator_sampletest_mcas.html)

## APPENDIX A

### Procedures for Using Test Accommodations 16 and 26: Reading MCAS Tests Aloud to a Small Group of Students

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The test administrator may read the test aloud to a small group of students, provided that each student has an IEP or 504 plan that includes either standard accommodation 16 (for the ELA Composition, Mathematics, and/or Science and Technology/Engineering tests) or nonstandard accommodation 26 (for the ELA Reading Comprehension test). In addition, these students must have the accommodation for small group testing (accommodation 3) and the accommodation for testing in a separate setting (accommodation 4) listed in their IEPs or 504 plans. **The following procedures must be followed:**

- **No more than five students** may be grouped together for reading tests aloud, since students typically proceed through the test at different rates (for the ELA Composition test, up to 10 students can be grouped together).
- The principal or designee must supervise the assignment of students to groups that will have test questions read aloud to them. Student test booklets may not be opened or reviewed by students or test administrators prior to testing.
- Students grouped together must have the **same test form number**, since all questions in a given test form are identical. Test form numbers appear in the upper right-hand corner of each student test booklet.

### Procedures for Using Test Accommodations 17 and 27: Signing MCAS Tests to a Small Group of Deaf Students

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The test administrator may sign the test to a small group of students, provided that each student has an IEP or 504 plan that includes either standard accommodation 17 (for the ELA Composition, Mathematics, and/or Science and Technology/Engineering tests) or nonstandard accommodation 27 (for the ELA Reading Comprehension test). In addition, these students must have the accommodation for small group testing (accommodation 3) and the accommodation for testing in a separate setting (accommodation 4) listed in their IEPs or 504 plans. **The following procedures must be followed:**

- **No more than five students** may be grouped together for signing the tests, since students may proceed through the test at different rates, although up to 10 students can be grouped together for the ELA Composition test.
- Students grouped together must have the **same test form number**, since all questions in a given test form are identical. Test form numbers appear in the upper right-hand corner of each student test booklet.
- Student test booklets may not be opened or reviewed by students prior to testing.
- Under secure conditions supervised by the principal, sign interpreters may review test materials up to four days prior to test administration. Test materials must be reviewed in a secure location supervised by the principal and may not be removed from the school.

### Ordering Test Booklets for Accommodations 16, 17, 26, and/or 27

The principal or designee may order packets of six (6) of the same test form online through the MCAS Enrollment Verification form. Each packet includes six test booklets (one each for a group of up to five students and one for the test administrator to read or sign from during testing).



## APPENDIX B



### MCAS Accommodation 20 Cover Sheet

#### Request for Permission to Use Customized Materials for MCAS Accommodation 20

**Instructions:** This cover sheet must accompany all requests for approval to use customized materials for accommodation 20 (i.e., customized graphic organizer, checklist, or reference sheet). Please complete this form and submit to the Department's Student Assessment Services Unit by email to [mcas@doe.mass.edu](mailto:mcas@doe.mass.edu) or fax to **781-338-3630**.

Please submit a **separate cover sheet for each content area** (English language arts, mathematics, or science and technology/engineering). See *Requirements for the Participation of Students with Disabilities in MCAS* for additional submission guidelines.

See below for a list of submission deadlines for each testing window. **Materials submitted after the deadline may not be reviewed before the testing window begins.**

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

#### Contact Information

Name: _____	Date: _____
School name: _____	District name: _____
Telephone number: _____	Fax number: _____
Email: _____	Is this a resubmittal? ( <i>Check one.</i> ) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

#### Accommodation 20 Customized Materials Being Submitted

*Place a check mark next to each material being submitted for approval.*

<input type="checkbox"/> Graphic organizer	<input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics reference sheet
<input type="checkbox"/> Checklist	<input type="checkbox"/> STE reference sheet

#### MCAS Test Administration

*Circle the grade and place a check mark next to each test administration the material will be used for.*

**Grade:**    3        4        5        6        7        8        9        high school

**Test Administration (submission deadlines in parentheses):**

<input type="checkbox"/> November retests (10/10/14)	<input type="checkbox"/> February Biology test (1/7/15)	<input type="checkbox"/> March retests (2/6/15)
<input type="checkbox"/> March–April ELA test (2/6/15)	<input type="checkbox"/> May Math & STE tests (4/2/15)	<input type="checkbox"/> June STE tests (5/1/15)

*For Mathematics reference sheets, place a check mark in this box if the student also uses accommodation 30:* ☐

#### Principal or Designee Statement

**The principal or designee of the school must sign below to acknowledge the following:**

- I have reviewed the Department's policy for administering accommodation 20.
- **For Mathematics and STE materials:** I have reviewed the approval guidelines and examples posted at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation/?section=sped](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation/?section=sped).
- **For ELA graphic organizers:** I have reviewed the pre-approved ELA graphic organizers posted at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation/?section=sped](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation/?section=sped). The reason one of the pre-approved ELA graphic organizers cannot be used is as follows: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Approval/Denial of Request – For Department Use Only

Database record number: _____	Date received: _____	Date of response: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Fax <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
<input type="checkbox"/> Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved with Changes	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Approved	Date Reviewed: _____

## APPENDIX C

### *Sample Form*

#### **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 and 504 plan teams should consider this information when making future MCAS accommodations decisions for the student. This is not a required form.

<b>Student Name:</b> _____		<b>Date:</b> _____
<b>Grade:</b> _____	<b>SASID:</b> _____	
<b>School Name:</b> _____		
<b>District:</b> _____		
<b>MCAS Test:</b> _____		
<b>Test Administrator:</b> _____		
<b>Accommodation(s) refused:</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.**