



PARCC Accessibility and Accommodations Overview for Massachusetts Educators (Updated: March 19, 2015)

(Note: A new numbering system, plus hyperlinks and other minor clarifications, were added to conform with the [PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual \(Third Edition: November 2014\)](#) and [appendices](#).

BACKGROUND

The accessibility of PARCC tests is enhanced by including

- a range of tools and supports in the **computer-based** test delivery system for use by *all* students;
- [corresponding accessibility features and accommodations for students taking paper-and-pencil PARCC tests](#), where available; and
- test administration policies and procedures that allow all students a broad range of options for adapting the testing environment.

PARCC TEST ADMINISTRATION CONSIDERATIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

Although most students can be tested in their regular classrooms according to the guidelines and schedule intended for all students, **Table A** outlines the test administration considerations that may be provided to **any** student, including non-disabled students and ELLs, *at the discretion of the principal* (or designee) who determines a need to modify the testing environment for a particular student. These considerations may be provided regardless of whether the student has a disability or is an ELL, or is participating in either PARCC computer- or paper-based testing. **It is advisable (though not required) to continue to include these administration considerations in the IEPs or 504 plans of students with disabilities.** This table also lists the corresponding MCAS accommodation (with accommodation numbers in parentheses). For more information on MCAS accommodations, refer to the [Requirements for the Participation of Students with Disabilities in MCAS](#).

Table A. PARCC Test Administration Considerations available to any student, at the principal’s discretion

PARCC Test Administration Consideration	Corresponding MCAS Accommodation for students with disabilities (MCAS accommodation number)
Frequent Breaks	Frequent Breaks (1)
Time of Day	Time of Day (2)
Small Group/Individual	Small Group (3), Individual (5)
Separate or Alternate Location	Separate Setting (4)
Specified Area or Seating	Specified Area (6)
Familiar Test Administrator	Familiar Test Administrator (7)
Student Reads Test Aloud (in separate setting)	Student Reads Test Aloud (21)
Adaptive and Specialized Equipment, Furniture, or Lighting	Other Standard Accommodation (25)

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PARCC AND MCAS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

For districts administering PARCC assessments in 2014-2015, IEP teams should consider the following differences between PARCC and MCAS when developing (or amending) IEPs and 504 plans for the current school year. Most test accommodations that are allowed for MCAS are also allowed for PARCC, either as accessibility features for all students, test administration considerations for all students, or accommodations specifically for students with disabilities. A small number of accommodations allowed for MCAS are either *not* allowed for PARCC, or are administered differently on PARCC tests, as described in **Table B** below.

Table B. Differences Between PARCC and MCAS Accessibility Features, Accommodations, and Test Administration Policies

PARCC Accessibility Feature, Accommodation, or Test Administration Policy	MCAS Accommodation or Test Administration Policy (Accommodation number, if applicable)
Use of individualized graphic organizers, checklists, or reference sheets is unavailable on PARCC tests , including the Department’s pre-approved graphic organizers. These tools should not be provided to students on PARCC tests per the Department’s guidance . (Note that <i>all</i> students are provided with blank paper which may be used to create a graphic organizer from memory; and students in grades 5 and higher are provided with a PARCC standard mathematics reference sheet .) It is not necessary to amend IEPs and 504 plans, but parents should be notified that PARCC testing policies do not allow these and that they could invalidate their child’s test results.	Individualized Graphic Organizer, Checklist, or Reference Sheet, or Abacus (20)
PARCC tests are timed. Extended time (up to the end of the school day) to complete a test session is an accommodation available <u>only</u> to students with disabilities and ELLs. It is not necessary to amend IEPs and 504 plans to reflect <i>extended time</i>. <i>Extended time</i> should be indicated in the Personal Needs Profile (PNP) for students with disabilities who require it; and, no later than spring 2016, listed in the IEPs/504 plans of students who will require it for PARCC. Parents should be notified in cases where students will be provided the <i>extended time</i> accommodation in 2015.	MCAS tests are untimed for all students (up to one school day to complete a test session).
Paper-based tests may be administered as an accommodation, either to a student with a disability who is unable to use a computer, or who is an English learner with little or no prior experience or familiarity with technology.	All MCAS tests are administered using paper-based format.
Students with recently occurring injuries, illnesses, or disabilities may be provided accommodations on PARCC tests once the Emergency Accommodations Form has been completed and kept on file at the school. (Note: A 504 plan is not necessary to receive an emergency accommodation for a temporary disability on PARCC assessments.)	Students with recently occurring injuries or disabilities must have a 504 plan created by the school before MCAS accommodations may be provided.
Additional accommodations are available to ELLs as outlined in Table 5 and Table 6.	Use of word-to-word, bilingual dictionary in student’s native language for ELLs or former ELLs
Text-to-speech/human reader for the PARCC Mathematics test is an <i>accessibility feature</i> available to <i>all</i> students.	Test administrator may read aloud the Mathematics test only to a student with a disability, per the IEP or 504 plan.

Kurzweil editions of PARCC tests will not be available.

MCAS tests are available on a CD in the Kurzweil 3000 read-only format.

PARCC ACCESSIBILITY FEATURES FOR ALL STUDENTS

Table 1 outlines

- the PARCC accessibility features (and feature numbers designated in the *PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual*) available to *all* students participating in the **computer-based** PARCC tests;
- the corresponding accessibility feature (and feature number), if available, for students taking **paper-and-pencil** PARCC tests; and
- the corresponding **MCAS accommodation** (and MCAS accommodation number) for comparison.

Many MCAS accommodations will now be available as onscreen tools on the computer-based PARCC tests, or will be incorporated into the accessible design of PARCC computer- and paper-based assessments. These *accessibility features* will be available to *all* students participating in PARCC, although some may need to be requested during the student data upload prior to testing.

Table 1. PARCC Accessibility Features available to *all* students

PARCC Accessibility Feature		Corresponding MCAS Accommodation for students with disabilities (MCAS accommodation number)
Computer-Based Testing (Feature number)	Paper-Based Testing	
Answer Masking/Eliminate Answer Choices (1a)	Place Marker, Masking Device	Place Marker (13)
Audio Amplification (1b)	Auditory Aids	Amplification (15)
Color Contrast (Background/Font Color) (1c)	Colored Overlays	Magnification or Overlays (9)
Blank Paper (1d)	Blank Paper	Student Records Answers Using Special Paper (24)
Eliminate Answer choices (1e)	Eliminate Answer choices	N/A
Flag Items for Review (1f)	N/A	N/A
General Administration Directions Clarified (1g)	Clarify General Administration Directions	Test Directions (10)
General Administration Directions Read Aloud and/or Repeated, as needed (1h)	General Administration Directions Read Aloud and/or Repeated, as needed	Test Directions (10)
Highlight Tool (1i)	Students may use highlighters of any color in test booklets (taking care not to highlight the response areas of the booklet)	Highlight in test booklet only (not answer booklet) for any student in grade 4 or higher
Headphones (1j)	N/A	N/A
Noise Buffers (1j)	Noise Buffers	Noise Buffers (8)
Line Reader (masks area around each line read by student) (1k)	Place Marker	Place Marker (13)

Table 1 (continued). PARCC Accessibility Features available to *all* students

PARCC Accessibility Feature		Corresponding MCAS Accommodation for students with disabilities (MCAS accommodation number)
Computer-Based Testing (Feature number)	Paper-Based Testing	
Magnification/Screen Enlargement/Zoom Tool (1l)	Magnification/Enlargement (External Device)	Magnification or Overlays (9)
NotePad (1m)	All students given blank paper	Student uses special paper for drafts or computation (24)
Pop-up Glossary (1n)	Footnotes provided in test	Footnotes provided in test
Redirect Student to the Test (1o)	Redirect Student to the Test	Redirect Student’s Attention to the Test (14)
Spell Checker (1p) (Use external device for 2015)	Spell Checker	Nonstandard Accommodation: Spell- or Grammar-Checking Function on Word Processor, Spell-Checking Device, or Word Prediction Software for the ELA Composition (31)
Text-to-Speech for the Mathematics assessments (1q)	Human Reader/Human Signer for the Mathematics assessments (refer to Test Administration Protocol for Human Reader)	Use of Human Reader (16) or Electronic Text Reader (18) for the ELA Composition, Mathematics, and/or Science and Technology/Engineering tests
Writing Tools (e.g., copy, cut-and-paste, bold, underline) (1s)	N/A	N/A

PARCC ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Tables 2, 3, and 4 on the following pages indicate the PARCC accommodations for students with disabilities grouped into three categories: **Test Presentation, Test Responses, and Timing and Scheduling of Tests**. For each table, the following is included:

- PARCC accommodations on the **computer-based** tests that are available to students with disabilities who have the accommodation listed in their IEP or 504 plan;
- comparable PARCC **paper-based** test accommodation (if available); and
- corresponding **MCAS accommodation**.

Table 2. PARCC Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Test Presentation

PARCC Test Presentation Accommodations		Corresponding MCAS Accommodation (Accommodation number)
PARCC Computer-Based Testing (Accommodation number)	PARCC Paper-Based Testing	
Assistive Technology (AT) device or software ¹ (2a)	Assistive technology device or software (used in conjunction with paper-based test)	Assistive technology device with prior Department approval (18, 28, or 25)
Screen Reader Version for Mathematics (intended for students who are blind) (2b)	Braille (contracted) edition of ELA/Literacy and Mathematics assessments	Braille (12)
Refreshable Braille Display and screen reader for ELA/Literacy (2c)	Braille edition for ELA/Literacy and Mathematics assessments	Braille (12)
N/A	Braille Edition (Hard copy) (2d)	Braille (12)
Tactile Graphics only (2e) (A student with a visual impairment who uses a screen reader will require a tactile graphics booklet consisting only of the graphic portions of the test)	N/A	N/A
N/A	Large Print edition (Font size will be 18-point on 11x17-inch paper)	Large Print (11)
N/A	Paper-Based Edition of the ELA/Literacy or Mathematics assessments for student with a disability who is unable to use a computer	Not Applicable
Closed Captioning of Multimedia on the ELA/Literacy assessments (intended for students who are deaf or hard of hearing) (2h)	N/A	N/A

¹ AT devices for use on PARCC computer-based tests must either be compatible with TestNav 8.0, or used with an external computer or device, with answers transcribed into the student's answer booklet or onscreen. Compatibility of all devices should be determined by the school through an **Infrastructure Trial**. More information will be available prior to PARCC test administration.

Table 2 (continued). PARCC Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Test Presentation

PARCC Test Presentation Accommodations		Corresponding MCAS Accommodation (Accommodation number)
PARCC Computer-Based Testing (Accommodation number)	PARCC Paper-Based Testing	
<p><i>Text-to-Speech</i> for the ELA/Literacy assessments, including items, response options, and passages² (2i)</p> <p><i>Screen Reader</i> version ELA/Literacy assessments, including items, response options, and passages (intended for students who are blind)² (2j)</p> <p><i>ASL Video</i> for the ELA/Literacy assessments, including items, response options, and passages (2k)²</p> <p><i>Human Reader/Human Signer</i> for the computer-based ELA/Literacy assessments, including items, response options, and passages (2l)²</p>	<p><i>Human Reader/Human Signer</i> for the ELA/Literacy Assessments, including items, response options, and passages (2l)</p> <p>(Note: Intended for students who are severely limited or prevented from decoding, as documented in diagnostic evaluations; and for whom interventions are already in place; or who are blind and do not read Braille fluently)</p> <p>Students must be tested in a separate setting if this accommodation is used.</p>	<p><i>Nonstandard accommodations:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test Administrator Reads the ELA Reading Comprehension Test to the Student (26) • Test Administrator Signs the ELA Reading Comprehension Test for a Student Who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing (27) • Electronic Text Reader for the ELA Reading Comprehension Test (28)
<p>Embedded ASL Video of the Mathematics assessments for a student who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing (2m)</p>	<p><i>Accessibility feature: Human Signer</i> for the Mathematics Assessments, including items, response options, and passages (1r)</p>	<p>Test Administrator Signs Mathematics Test to a Student Who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing (17)</p>
<p>Human Signer for Test Directions for Student Who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing (2n)</p>	<p>Human Signer for Test Directions for Student Who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing</p>	<p>Test Directions signed to student (10)</p>
<p>Student Reads Assessment Aloud to Themselves (2o)</p>	<p>Student Reads Assessment Aloud to Themselves (2o)</p>	<p>Student Signs or Reads Test Aloud (21)</p>

² The TestNav 8 test platform includes text-to-speech and embedded ASL video features for students who meet the PARCC guidelines to receive this accommodation on ELA/Literacy tests. See pages 34-36 of the [PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual](#) for guidelines on which students should receive this accommodation.

Table 3. PARCC Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Test Responses

PARCC Test Response Accommodations		Corresponding MCAS Accommodation (Accommodation number)
PARCC Computer-Based Testing (Accommodation number)	PARCC Paper-Based Testing	
Assistive Technology Device or Software ³ (3a)	Assistive Technology Device or Software	Assistive Technology device, with prior Department approval
N/A	Student Uses a Word Processor to Respond to Test Questions (answers must be transcribed)	Typed responses (23)
N/A	Student Records Answers on Blank Paper (unlined, lined, or graph), rather than in answer booklet (Note: answers must be transcribed)	Answers Recorded in Test Booklet (24)
N/A	Test Administrator Monitors Placement of Student Responses	Monitor Placement of Responses (22)
Braille Notetaker (3b) (External device used in conjunction with Braille test or Screen Reader)	Braille Note-Taker (External device used in conjunction with Braille test or Screen Reader)	Braille Note-Taker
Braille Writer (3c) (External device used in conjunction with Braille test or Screen Reader)	Braille Writer (External device used in conjunction with Braille test or Screen Reader)	Typed Responses (23) using Braille Writer
Calculation Device or Other Mathematics Tool (e.g., arithmetic table, manipulatives) on non-calculator session of the Mathematics assessment (3e) ⁴ (Note: Intended for students who are severely limited or prevented from performing basic calculations (i.e., addition, subtraction, multiplication or division) without a calculation device or other mathematics tool, as documented in locally-administered diagnostic evaluations; and for whom interventions are already in place).	Calculation Device and Mathematics Tools (e.g., arithmetic table, manipulatives) on non-calculator session of the Mathematics assessment (3e) ⁴	Nonstandard Accommodation: Calculation Devices (30)

³ AT devices for use on PARCC computer-based tests must either be compatible with TestNav 8.0, or used with an external computer or device, with answers transcribed into the student's answer booklet or onscreen. Compatibility of all devices should be determined by the school prior to testing.

⁴ See pages 34-36 of the [PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual](#) for guidelines on which students should receive this accommodation.

Table 3 (continued). PARCC Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Test Responses

PARCC Test Response Accommodations		Corresponding MCAS Accommodation (Accommodation number)
PARCC Computer-Based Testing (Accommodation number)	PARCC Paper-Based Testing	
<p>For <u>Selected Responses</u> (i.e., multiple choice) on ELA/Literacy assessments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech-to-Text (3f) • Human Scribe (3g) • Human Signer (3h) • External Assistive Technology Device (3i) (i.e., Student dictates responses on external communication or augmentative/assistive communication device.) <p>For <u>Selected and Constructed Responses</u> on Mathematics assessments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech-to-Text (3j) • Human Scribe (3k) • Human Signer (3l) • External Assistive Technology Device (3m) (i.e., Student dictates responses on external communication or augmentative/assistive communication device.) <p>Student must be tested in separate setting if this accommodation is used.</p>	<p>For <u>Selected Responses</u> (i.e., multiple choice) on ELA/Literacy assessments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech-to-Text (3f) • Human Scribe (3g) • Human Signer (3h) • External Assistive Technology Device (3i) (i.e., Student dictates responses on external communication or augmentative/assistive communication device.) <p>For <u>Selected and Constructed Responses</u> on Mathematics assessments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech-to-Text (3j) • Human Scribe (3k) • Human Signer (3l) • External Assistive Technology Device (3m) (i.e., Student dictates responses on external communication or augmentative/assistive communication device.) <p>Student must be tested in separate setting if this accommodation is used.</p>	<p>Test Administrator Scribes the ELA Reading Comprehension or Mathematics Tests, or Student Uses a Speech-to-Text Conversion Device (19)</p>

Table 3 (continued). PARCC Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Test Responses

PARCC Test Response Accommodations		Corresponding MCAS Accommodation (Accommodation number)
PARCC Computer-Based Testing (Accommodation number)	PARCC Paper-Based Testing	
<p>For Constructed Responses (Performance-based Assessment) on the ELA/Literacy assessments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech-to-Text (3n) • Human Scribe (3o) • Human Signer (3p) • External Speech-to-Text Assistive Technology Device (3q) (i.e., Student dictates response on external communication or augmentative/assistive communication device.) <p>(Note: Intended for students who are severely limited or prevented from writing due to either a physical disability that severely limits or prevents the student from keyboarding, or from expressing written language, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so.)⁵</p> <p>Students must be tested in a separate setting if this accommodation is used.</p>	<p>For Constructed Responses (Performance-based Assessment) on the ELA/Literacy assessments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech-to-Text (3n) • Human Scribe (3o) • Human Signer (3p) • External Speech-to-Text Assistive Technology Device (3q) (i.e., Student dictates response on external communication or augmentative/assistive communication device.) <p>(Note: Intended for students who are severely limited or prevented from writing due to either a physical disability that severely limits or prevents the student from keyboarding, or from expressing written language, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so.)⁶</p> <p>Students must be tested in a separate setting if this accommodation is used.</p>	<p>The student dictates the ELA Composition to a scribe or uses a speech-to-text conversion device to record the ELA Composition (29)</p>
<p>Word Prediction on External Device (3r) (Note: No internet access)</p>	<p>Word Prediction on External Device</p>	<p>Word prediction device or software (31)</p>

⁵ See pages 40-41 of the [PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual](#) for guidelines on which students should receive this accommodation.

Table 4. PARCC Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Timing and Scheduling of the Tests

PARCC Timing and Scheduling Accommodation for Computer- and Paper-Based Testing (Accommodation number)	Corresponding MCAS Accommodation
<p>Extended time (4a) (See Table B for guidance on amending IEPs to indicate this accommodation)</p> <p>Students with disabilities and English language learners (ELLs) may have up to the end of a school day to complete a test unit (session). PARCC tests are timed for all other students and include additional time in each unit.</p>	<p>MCAS tests are untimed for all students. Students may have up to the end of a school day to complete a test session.</p>

PARCC ACCOMMODATIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELLs)

Tables 5 and 6 list the accommodations available to students who are ELLs. Table 5 lists the specific accommodations for ELLs, while Table 6 describes guidance for selecting accommodations for English Language learners. Knowledge of the individual student’s learning and language profile and preferences should also guide the selection process.

Table 5. PARCC Accommodations for Students Who Are English Language Learners (ELLs)

PARCC Accommodations for English Learners (Accommodation number)
Extended time to complete a test session (up to the end of a school day) (6a)
Approved Bilingual Word-to-Word Dictionary (English/Native Language) (6b)
Speech-to-text (6c) or Human Scribe (6d) for responses (dictated in English only) for PARCC Mathematics assessments.
General Administration Directions Read Aloud (6e) and/or Clarified (6f) in Student’s Native Language, if native speaker is available.
Paper-based edition of PARCC assessment, if an English learner recently entered the school with little or no prior experience or familiarity with technology.

NOTE: Spanish translations of PARCC tests are available only for ELLs taking the grades 9 and 11 Mathematics tests.

Table 6. Guidance on Selection of Accommodations for English Language Learners

PARCC Accommodations for Computer- and Paper-Based Testing	Recommendation by Level of English Language Acquisition		
	Beginning	Intermediate	Advanced
Extended time	Yes	Yes	Yes
Word-to-word Dictionary	--	Yes	Yes
Speech-to-text/Human Scribe for Mathematics only	Yes	Yes	--
Directions Read Aloud and/or Clarified	Yes	Yes	--
Large Print Edition	Yes	Yes	--

SPECIAL PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS FOR SELECTED GROUPS OF STUDENTS

A small number of students in selected groups listed in Table 7 will not participate in PARCC even when the district has elected to administer PARCC, according to the following participation requirements.

Table 7. Participation Requirements for Selected Groups of Students

Group of Students	Participation Requirements
Students with disabilities designated for participation in the MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt)	Students designated for alternate assessments will continue to participate in the MCAS-Alt, which is now fully aligned with the 2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks (incorporating the Common Core State Standards).
English learners in their first year of enrollment in a U.S. school (i.e., enrolled <i>after</i> the SIMS submission of March 1, 2014)	These students will participate in PARCC or MCAS ELA/Literacy tests (according to the district’s selection) at the principal’s discretion (i.e., testing is optional). These students <i>must</i> participate either in PARCC or MCAS Mathematics (according to the district’s selection) and MCAS Science and Technology/Engineering tests (i.e., testing is required). The participation of grade 9 students in MCAS high school STE tests is optional.

STUDENT ACCOMMODATION REFUSAL

If a student refuses an accommodation that is included in an IEP or 504 plan, the school may wish to document the refusal using the optional [Student Accommodation Refusal Form](#). Regardless of whether this form is used or not, the school should always document the refusal in writing, and retain this information in the student’s assessment record.

UNIQUE ACCOMMODATIONS REQUEST

If a student with a disability or an English learner requires an accommodation that is not listed in the [PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual](#) (i.e., a “unique accommodation”), and that does not fundamentally change the test or the construct being measured by the test, the school may request approval for use of the accommodation by completing the [Unique Accommodation Request Form](#) and submitting it to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education at parcc@doe.mass.edu or by fax at 781-338-3630 at least two weeks prior to testing. If approved by the Department, the accommodation must be listed in the IEP or 504 plan of a student with a disability.