Decision-Making Tool for MCAS Participation by Students with Disabilities

The decision chart shown below may be used by IEP teams and 504 plan coordinators to make annual decisions regarding appropriate student participation in MCAS. Make separate decisions in each content area being assessed: ELA, mathematics, and science and technology/engineering.

Does the student have an IEP or 504 plan?

- Yes
  - Can the student fully or partially demonstrate knowledge and skills on a standardized computer- or paper-based test, either with or without accommodations?
    - Yes
      - Does the student have a complex and significant disability\(^1\) that would prevent him or her from fully or partially demonstrating knowledge and skills on the MCAS test, even with the use of accommodations? (for example, a significant emotional, behavioral, health-related, neurological, motor, or communication disability)
        - AND
          - The student is working at or near grade-level expectations.
          - The student should take either the computer- or paper-based MCAS test in the content area, with appropriate accessibility features and accommodations.
    - No
      - Student is ineligible to receive test accommodations or take the MCAS-Alt.
      - Student must take the standard MCAS test using universal accessibility features, as needed.
  - No
    - Does the student have a significant cognitive disability? AND
    - Is working on academic standards that have been modified substantially below grade-level expectations; AND
    - Is receiving intensive, individualized instruction to acquire and demonstrate knowledge and skills; AND
    - Is unable to fully or partially demonstrate knowledge and skills on a standardized test, even with the use of accommodations?

Can the student fully or partially demonstrate knowledge and skills on a standardized computer- or paper-based test, either with or without accommodations?

- No
  - Does the student have a significant cognitive disability? AND
  - Is working on academic standards that have been modified substantially below grade-level expectations; AND
  - Is receiving intensive, individualized instruction to acquire and demonstrate knowledge and skills; AND
  - Is unable to fully or partially demonstrate knowledge and skills on a standardized test, even with the use of accommodations?

- Yes
  - The student should take either the computer- or paper-based MCAS test, with or without accommodations; or may be considered for the “grade-level” or “competency” portfolio.\(^2\)
  - If all criteria above are met, the student should be considered for the MCAS-Alt in the content area.\(^3\)

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1. See the *Educator’s Manual for MCAS-Alt* under Guidelines for IEP Team Decision-making for additional details on “complex and significant disabilities.”
2. See the *Educator’s Manual for MCAS-Alt* for details on submission of “grade-level” and “competency” portfolios.
3. Students who take the MCAS-Alt in high school will not earn a Competency Determination in the assessed subject and therefore will not be eligible to earn a high school diploma.

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education