

Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

PRE-ADMINISTRATION GUIDE

Tasks for the November 2024 MCAS Retests



This document was prepared by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Russell D. Johnston Acting Commissioner

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Important Contact Information and Resources

Contact	MCAS Service Center	
For questions on:	 general test administration support PearsonAccess^{next} and TestNav such as user accounts technology support and readiness Infrastructure Trials and ProctorCache viewing student records and organizations the SR/PNP process and loading files logistical support, including filling out the Materials Summary and the PCPA locating resources shipments of materials 	
Hours	7:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday–Friday	
Web	mcas.pearsonsupport.com Use this website to access training modules and other materials to support test administration, including a link to the MCAS Service Center website (<u>mcasservicecenter.com</u>) where schools will access the PCPA and order additional materials.	
Email	mcas@cognia.org	
Telephone	1-800-737-5103	

Contact	DESE Office of Student Assessment Services	
For questions on:	 policy, such as assigning accessibility features and accommodations student participation testing irregularities, including test security incidents and technology irregularities/failures voiding a test 	
	 student data and SIMS, call your district SIMS contact (Go to profiles.doe.mass.edu/search/search.aspx?leftNavID=11239, select SIMS Contact from the Function menu, and click Get Results.) 	
	 unsubmitting a test, call your district MCAS test coordinator (Go to profiles.doe.mass.edu/search/search.aspx?leftNavID=11239, select MCASTest Coordinator from the Function menu, and click Get Results.) 	
Hours	8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday–Friday	
	Schools that need logistical support between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. should call the MCAS Service Center at 1-800-737-5103.	
Web	www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/retest	
Email	mcas@mass.gov	
Telephone	781-338-3625	

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A. Using This Document

This document provides instructions and roles/responsibilities for the tasks that schools need to complete prior to the MCAS November retest administration. This document is meant to supplement the manuals and resources posted on the Department's website at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/retest.

Tasks in this document are organized by timeframe and are listed first for the principal/test coordinator in sections A–F, followed by tasks for the technology coordinator in sections G and H. Principals/test coordinators are encouraged to review the entire document, and then meet with the technology coordinator for their school to discuss the steps in sections G and H.

The list below contains acronyms that are used in this document and other November retest administration resources.

- **CBT:** Computer-based testing
- **PBT:** Paper-based testing
- **PAN:** PearsonAccess Next
- SR/PNP: Student Registration/Personal Needs Profile
- SIMS: Student Information Management System
- **SIF:** School Interoperability Framework
- EL: English learner
- ELA: English Language Arts

B. General Timelines of Tasks

The table below describes the tasks for principals and test coordinators to complete prior to test administration.

Early September 2024	Mid- to Late-September 2024	At least 2 weeks before testing
 (Ongoing) Read bi-weekly Student Assessment Updates. Become familiar with CBT components. Identify the school test administration team. Establish a communication plan with the test administration team. Update contact information with the Department. 	 Update contact information in PAN and create additional accounts. View online modules and participate in training sessions. Meet with the technology coordinator, who will review the tech specs and prepare the school's infrastructure. Plan for accessibility features and accommodations. Complete the SR/PNP. 	 Run App Check and conduct an Infrastructure Trial and/or Preliminary System Test (recommended). Train test administrators in protocols and security requirements. Prepare devices and materials. Prepare students for online testing. Review instructions in the November Retest Principal's Administration Manual. (See section F.2 of this document for details.)

General Timeline for MCAS CBT Pre-Administration Tasks

The following table describes the general timeline for tasks to be completed in PearsonAccess Next (PAN) by all staff. (A description of PAN can be found on page 4.)

Timeline	Tasks	Staff Responsible
September 16–27, 2024	 Submit the Student Registration/Personal Needs Profile (SR/PNP) 	Principals/test coordinators
After September 27 (after the initial SR/PNP submission, through the testing window as needed)	 Continue to update student information in PAN (SR/PNP) Enrollment Transfer Work Requests (as needed) 	Principals/test coordinators
At least 2 weeks before testing	Run App Check and conduct a Preliminary System Test and/or an Infrastructure Trial	Principals/test coordinators and technology coordinators
2 weeks before testing	 Create PAN Sessions and add students Verify accommodations in PAN 	Principals/test coordinators (recommended), but can also be done by district or school test coordinator or technology coordinator

Timeline of Tasks in PearsonAccess Next (PAN)

C. Tasks for <u>New</u> Principals/Test Coordinators

Early September 2024

1. Familiarize yourself with these resources and bookmark these web pages.

• General resources

- **<u>Student Assessment Update newsletter</u>**, sent biweekly throughout the school year.
 - Principals, MCAS test coordinators, special education directors, and EL program directors automatically receive the Update based on contact information submitted to the Department. See the instructions at the top of the newsletter page (linked above) to change your email address, add another staff member who serves in one of these roles, and subscribe.
- **Test designs** (underneath the "Simplified Review Process of an MCAS Question" infographic, click on the subject area, and then click on "Test Design," or use these direct links for the test design for the <u>ELA retest</u> and the <u>Mathematics retest</u>).
- **Test administration resources**, for a running list of updates for the school year, and for each test administration window, links to manuals, sample forms, training resources, and other guidance documents, which will be posted as available.
- MCAS Resource Center, which provides a link to PAN and PAN guidance documents, training modules and recordings of previous trainings, a link to the MCAS Service Center, resources for the technology coordinator for technology set-up, the student tutorial and subject-specific practice tests, test administration guidance, and released test items.
- Secure websites

Note: These websites provide access to confidential student data, so be sure to file the MCAS Service Center password memorandum and other passwords in a secure location.

- MCAS Service Center secure website, used during test administration to order additional materials, complete the Principal's Certification of Proper Test Administration (PCPA), schedule a UPS pickup request (for paper-based testing), and report discrepancies in results.
 - If your predecessor did not leave the password for you, call the MCAS Service Center at 800-737-5103 to request it. You will need to provide your school's name and your 8-digit school code (found on your <u>School and District Profile</u>).

• PearsonAccess Next

- New principals and school test coordinators should contact their district test coordinator to create a new account.
- District test coordinators can contact another district test coordinator within their district in order to create a new account.
- If you are the only district test coordinator in your district and need a PAN account, please contact the MCAS Service Center at 800-737-5103. Prior to calling, please be sure your contact information has been updated in <u>School</u> and <u>District Profiles</u>.
- Edwin Analytics, which provides authorized district and school personnel with access to students' test results, information, and reports that support improvements in teaching, learning, and educational outcomes. New users can review these resources to ensure they have <u>Security Portal</u> access and the security role needed to view student data.

2. Find contact information for certain district/school staff members and save for later use.

You should know how to contact the following people:

- the <u>district-level Directory Administrator</u>
 - Confirm with your district-level Directory Administrator whether you are listed in the Department's Directory Administration application in your new role, and confirm whether your school's mailing address and email address are correct.
 - Test sites, adult education programs, out-of-state schools, SEIS-DYS programs: Email your updates to <u>ESEDirectoryAdministrator@mass.gov</u> (be sure to include your 8- digit school code and school name).
- the district test coordinator (found at <u>profiles.doe.mass.edu</u>; submit any updates to your district-level Directory Administrator)
- the district technology coordinator (found at <u>profiles.doe.mass.edu</u>; submit any updates to your district-level Directory Administrator)
- the district-level SIMS contact, who submits data for the entire district to the Department's Student Information Management System (SIMS)
 - To find your district's SIMS contact, go to the <u>School and District Profiles</u> <u>people search page</u>, select **SIMS Contact** from the **Function** menu, and click **Get Results**.

Component	What is it used for? Resources	
PearsonAccess Next (PAN):The online test managementsystem for principals, testcoordinators, technologycoordinators, and testadministratorsTestNav: The online testingplatform used by students	 Managing user accounts Completing the student registration (SR/PNP) Managing computer-based test sessions Used by students for taking computer- based MCAS tests 	 <u>PAN overview video</u> <u>PAN online support</u> <u>User Role Matrix</u> (Click on the "PearsonAccess Next" drop-down) <u>TestNav8</u> <u>Online Support</u> <u>Set up and Use TestNav</u> <u>Troubleshooting</u>
App Check: Confirms that the student device can connect to TestNav and will start TestNav in kiosk mode.	 Ensures that student devices and networks are set up correctly. Technology coordinators should run App Check on student devices. All schools should run App Check. 	 Infrastructure Trial Readiness Guide (Click on the "PearsonAccess Next" drop-down) Infrastructure Trial for Test Coordinators and Test
Preliminary System Test: A small-scale infrastructure trial during which staff members log in and click through practice tests (instead of students doing so).	 Ensures that test content can be accessed on student devices on the school network. Schools that do not conduct an Infrastructure Trial are strongly recommended to conduct a Preliminary System Test. 	Administrators module • Recordings of previous Infrastructure Trial training sessions
Infrastructure Trial: An opportunity for schools to prepare for computer-based testing by simulating test-day network use If your organization has previously successfully administered school-wide CBT, and you are able to confirm the five bulleted items in the second column, your organization may not need to conduct an Infrastructure Trial. If one or more items in this list cannot be confirmed, or if your technology set-up has significantly changed since the last CBT administration (including using Bring Your Own Device for the first time), an Infrastructure Trial is recommended.	 This "dress rehearsal" will help to confirm the following: If TestNav is configured correctly If precaching, if the ProctorCache machine is properly configured to deliver test content to devices If devices can successfully run TestNav If participating staff know how to monitor and manage a computer-based MCAS test If students are familiar with the computer-based tools and format 	TestNav User Guide: <u>Set up and</u> <u>use TestNav</u>

3. Become familiar with the components of computer-based testing (CBT).

Become familiar with the components of computer-based testing (CBT) (continued).

Component	What is it used for?	Resources
ProctorCache: Software that precaches (i.e., loads) test content onto a designated machine in the school In schools with lower bandwidth, ProctorCache can reduce test delays and can provide students with a more seamless testing	To reduce bandwidth requirements, reduce test content load times, and provide a more seamless experience for students	 ProctorCache Recommendation for MCAS Computer- Based Testing (Click on the "PearsonAccess Next" drop-down) Set Up and Use ProctorCache
experience in the event of disruptions to internet connectivity.		 <u>ProctorCache</u> <u>System</u> <u>Requirements</u> <u>Features and Demos</u>

D. Tasks for Principals/Test Coordinator

Early September 2024

- 1. Begin determining local responsibilities, and identify which staff members will be part of your test administration team to help with the planning and management of CBT tasks including the following:
 - Coordinating test administration, including who will create and manage the school's test administration schedule
 - Identifying which students will use accessibility features (available to all students), reviewing IEPs and 504 plans for accommodations for students with disabilities, and reviewing which accommodations are needed for English learners (ELs)
 - Completing tasks in PAN, including updating contact information and providing student information in the SR/PNP
 - Setting up the school's technology, including configuring devices and the network for testing (see tasks for technology coordinators beginning on page 9 of this document)
 - Creating a communication plan, including determining how information from the <u>Student Assessment Update</u> biweekly newsletter will be shared across the team (whether to sign up multiple individuals, or if one person will have the responsibility of communicating information across the team)

2. Provide the Department with the school's correct contact information to receive important notices via email during test administration.

The Department provides important program updates, timely test administration-related deadlines, and links to register for trainings via the Student Assessment Update. Confirm whether you receive the update by following the instructions in step C.1.

Review your <u>School and District Profile</u>, and click on the "people" tab to confirm whether the names and contact information are correct for the principal, district and school-level test coordinator(s), and the district technology director. Make sure your school's main profile page lists the principal's name and email address correctly.

3. Review participation guidelines for the high school retests, and determine which students in grades 11 and 12 still need to meet their <u>MCAS Competency</u> <u>Determination (CD) graduation requirements</u>.

Participation guidelines are posted on the <u>Test Administration web page</u> for the November retests.

Principals should review the Student CD Roster (report PE618 in Edwin Analytics) to confirm that students who need to earn their CD will participate in MCAS testing as appropriate. The report will be updated in mid-September with spring 2024 MCAS results.

4. Review accessibility features (for all students) and accommodations for students with disabilities and ELs, and begin planning which ones students will use during MCAS testing. Review the *Accessibility and Accommodations Manual for the November 2024 Retest*. *Administration* and the *Accessibility and Accommodations module*.

Accommodations need to be listed in students' IEPs and 504 plans and noted in local records for EL students. Selected accessibility features and accommodations need to be included in PAN.

Test administrators who will administer accommodations to students with disabilities or EL students should receive additional training beyond that offered at the school-wide test administrator training to ensure that accommodations are correctly provided. Additional information will be provided in the *November Retest Principal's Administration Manual*.

A small number of accommodations must be designated in students' SR/PNP and require school staff to set up the student's test correctly to ensure that the student receives the correct accommodation(s). Details are provided in the *Accessibility and Accommodations Manual*; principals should designate staff to complete the SR/PNP with students' accessibility features and accommodations as well as to set up students' devices before testing so that students will receive the correct edition of their test (e.g., so that students can access the text-to-speech edition, which needs to be ordered via the SR/PNP). See section E.4 below for more information.

5. By October 1, 2024: Provide student information to your district SIMS contact.

Notify your district's SIMS contact to update any student demographic information, such as name change, grade change, enrollment status, EL status, and IEP status, since the last SIMS collection in June 2024. Outplacement organizations such as collaboratives and special education schools should report updated demographic information to the student's sending district. See step C.2 for instructions on finding your district's SIMS contact.

E. Tasks for Principals/Test Coordinators

1. *Returning principals/test coordinators:* Confirm whether your PearsonAccess Next account is still active.

School and district staff who had access to PAN during the previous school year should <u>sign in to</u> PAN to confirm whether their accounts are still active. If you are able to sign in to your account successfully, no further action is needed at this time. If you are unable to sign in, you should first attempt to reset your password. If you are still unable to sign in after attempting to reset your password, your account may have been disabled due to inactivity, and you will need to contact the MCAS Service Center to reinstate your account.

2. Confirm whether appropriate staff members have PearsonAccess Next accounts.

Principals should review the <u>User Role Matrix</u> to confirm that school and district staff have the appropriate PAN accounts. Principals should designate a member of their team to add/remove accounts for the November retest administration. This task can be done manually or by uploading a file (the latter is best for creating large numbers of new accounts). For support, refer to the <u>Guide to Managing User Accounts in</u> <u>PearsonAccess Next</u>. Contact the MCAS Service Center with questions.

3. Participate in training sessions on MCAS test administration and test security topics, view online training modules, and plan to train test administrators.

Principals and test coordinators are encouraged to review the test security requirements portion of the recording of the <u>MCAS Test Administration and Security Protocols for New Staff training</u> from February 2, 2024. The section on test security requirements begins at approximately 42:00. In addition, a November retest training session will be offered on September 9; it will include topics such as the SR/PNP process and an overview of computer-based testing. Registration is available <u>on the Department's website</u>.

Online training modules providing guidance on completing tasks before, during, and after testing are <u>available</u>. In addition, an administration-specific slide template that principals are encouraged to use to train their test administrators will be posted (the availability of the slides will be announced in future Student Assessment Updates). New principals, test coordinators, and test administrators may also find the <u>PAN overview video</u> to be helpful.

4. Provide student information in PAN during the Student Registration/Personal Needs Profile (SR/PNP) window.

The SR/PNP is a collection of student-level data that includes student demographic data, test registration information, and information on selected accessibility features and/or accommodations that a student will use during testing. The accuracy of the SR/PNP is important because it provides a record after testing of certain accessibility features and accommodations used by students. In addition, for CBT, the SR/PNP determines the test form that students will take (e.g., text-to-speech). Form-dependent accommodations **must** be assigned correctly in the SR/PNP before testing for CBT. If not assigned correctly, a student's test will need to be stopped, a new test will need to be set up, and the student may need to retake a portion of the test. See Appendix A of the <u>Guide to the SR/PNP Process</u> for a list of form-dependent accommodations.

For PBT, the SR/PNP provides the basis for the initial shipment of test materials to schools (e.g., Student ID Labels, test booklets, answer booklets, large-print booklets). The SR/PNP process is also the basis for schools' orders for test administration manuals for both CBT and PBT.

Mid- to Late-September 2024

On the first day of the November retest SR/PNP window, the Department will post a prepopulated file in DropBox Central in the Department's <u>Security Portal</u> containing information on students, based on the most recent SIMS or SIF data.

Review the dates for the November retest SR/PNP window (see <u>the schedule for testing and</u> <u>administration deadlines</u>) and add them to your calendar. Designate an individual to complete the SR/PNP during this timeframe.

An SR/PNP training session from January 2024 is available on the <u>MCAS Resource Center</u>. An updated Guide to the SR/PNP Process covering the November 2024 retest administration is available on the <u>MCAS Resource Center</u> (under PearsonAccess Next Guidance). For additional support, view the <u>SR/PNP module</u>.

5. *If your school has extenuating circumstances*: Request a waiver from the MCAS CBT expectation.

Schools are expected to administer the MCAS tests on a computer (except for students who meet the criteria in the <u>Accessibility and Accommodations Manual</u> for a paper-based test). Schools with unique, extenuating circumstances may apply to administer paper-based testing instead if technology constraints or related issues make computer-based testing unfeasible. Instructions on how to apply for a waiver are provided in the August 27, 2024, <u>Student Assessment Update</u>. Requests will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

6. Prepare students for online testing.

Ensure the curriculum incorporates digital learning; review the <u>DLCS Curriculum Framework</u>.

- Resources for preparing students for computer-based testing:
 - o Student Tutorial
 - Demonstration of the navigation, tools, and features for CBT
 - Students complete it independently (no audio).
 - o <u>Practice tests</u>
 - Simulation of the tools and features for CBT
 - Tests include accessibility features and special edition text-to-speech accommodated test forms
- Additional resources for students
 - Sample student work and scoring guides
 - o <u>Released items</u>
 - o <u>Answer keys and scoring rubrics</u> for practice tests
 - Click on the subject, and then click on the grade.
 - o Equation editor guides and symbol keys for Math
 - <u>Reference sheets for Math</u> (for all students)
- <u>Resources for parents/guardians</u>

F. Tasks for Principals/Test Coordinators

October 2024

1. Plan for the receipt of test administration manuals.

Paper copies of the spring *Principal's Administration Manual* (PAM) and *Test Administrator's Manuals* (separate manuals for CBT and PBT) are scheduled to arrive in schools on October 30. In addition, the manuals are planned for posting on the <u>Department's website</u> prior to the delivery of manuals. PDFs will be provided of the full manuals, as well as excerpts of different portions, which may be distributed to different staff members as appropriate (e.g., ELA scripts

for an ELA test administrator, the security requirements for a hallway monitor).

Each school receives one copy of the *Principal's Administration Manual*. Each school also receives one copy of each *Test Administrator's Manual* for every 15 students, based on the school's SR/PNP. Additional copies of manuals can be downloaded from the website linked above or, alternatively, a school may contact the MCAS Service Center to request additional copies.

G. Tasks for Technology Coordinators

1. Review the technology specifications and prepare the school's infrastructure.

- The <u>CBT technology specifications</u> provide security requirements, minimum and recommended specifications for computer hardware and devices, and suggest recommended levels of bandwidth that will support schools' instructional and assessment needs. Schools should review the system requirements linked above and update operating systems as necessary.
- The <u>Network Requirements and Guidelines</u> provide instructions for configuring the school network to allow for student devices to access secure test content through TestNav.
- Identify any gaps in technology capacity (e.g., test-taking devices that do not meet technology specifications, potentially insufficient bandwidth), and address those gaps.
- If the school will use Chromebooks, review these special instructions.
- Plan to have enough devices for test administrators and students, including back-up devices that can be used if needed.
 - Schools may want to use this <u>device planner</u> to determine the number of devices needed at a time.

2. Review cybersecurity guidance and establish a cybersecurity plan for your school.

Technology teams are encouraged to review resources for cybersecurity planning to avoid issues that could arise during MCAS testing. Districts are highly suggested to review the <u>Massachusetts Municipal Cybersecurity Roadmap</u> in its entirety to take full advantage of all of the embedded resources. Additional resources include:

- <u>Protecting Our Future: Partnering to Safeguard K–12 Organizations from Cybersecurity</u> <u>Threats</u>
- National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Cybersecurity Framework
- K12 SIX Essentials Series

Schools and districts should consider information as it relates to their technology infrastructure for MCAS testing and overall district plans, and email the Department's Center for School and District Partnership team at <u>k12edtech@mass.gov</u> with any questions.

3. Determine whether your school will participate in "Bring Your Own Device" (BYOD) for MCAS testing.

A BYOD policy allows students to use their own devices for instruction. Schools with students using their own devices for instruction that would also like to use these devices for MCAS testing will need to inform the Department of this decision because there may be additional steps to complete in preparation for MCAS testing. Look for an announcement in the August 27 <u>Student Assessment Update</u> for more information.

Early Fall 2024

H. Tasks for Technology Coordinators

September 2024

- 1. Verify access to <u>PearsonAccess Next</u> and the <u>PearsonAccess Next training site</u>. If you are new to your role, or if you are unable to sign in to your account, contact your principal or test coordinator.
- 2. Ensure that all testing devices have been updated to version 1.13 of the TestNav app and familiarize yourself with updates to TestNav and PAN.
 - a. The latest annual TestNav release became available in summer 2024. Districts that did not install this version of TestNav over the summer must install it prior to testing. Once complete, schools will not need to update TestNav again prior to testing.
- **3. View online training modules and training sessions from winter 2024.** The ones below will be particularly helpful for technology coordinators.
 - a. Module: Infrastructure Trial for Technology Coordinators
 - b. Training sessions:
 - i. Pre-Administration Tasks for Technology Staff
 - ii. Overview of Infrastructure Trials for Technology Coordinators

<u>Notes</u>