Introduction to the MCAS Portal: Tasks for Technology Coordinators

The Office of Student Assessment Services

October 31, 2024

dese MASSACHUSETTS Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Presenters

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Logistics for This Session

- Use the Q&A feature to ask a question.
  - We will answer some questions aloud at specified times during this training session, and we will email the Q&A afterwards.
  - Type your questions anytime, but we may not answer them in real time as some questions may be covered during the presentation.
  - Use the thumbs-up icon to "upvote" someone else's question.
  - Email student-specific questions to mcas@mass.gov instead of asking here.
- This session is being recorded and will be available in about a week in the MCAS Resource Center, along with the slides.
  - Slides were also emailed out beforehand, and are being posted in the chat.
- Closed captioning has been enabled for participants who need it.

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Slides for This Session

- Slides were emailed to participants before this session from MCASEvents@cognia.org.

- Slides are now being posted in the chat.

  - If you cannot access the slides in the chat, ask in the Q&A.

- After the session, we will send the slides again to participants, and they will be posted in the MCAS Resource Center along with the recording.

Today's Agenda

1. Overview of New Systems
2. Introduction to the New MCAS Resource Center
3. Introduction to the MCAS Portal
4. Technology Guidelines and Downloading the MCAS Student Kiosk
5. Conducting Site Readiness
6. Additional Information for Technology Coordinators
7. Resources and Next Steps
8. Live "Sandbox" Time with Additional Demonstrations

Note: Agenda topics 1–3 will cover similar material as discussed in the October 28 training. Additional trainings on other technology-related topics will be provided later this school year.

Poll Question

What is your role? (Check all that apply)

A. District test coordinator
B. School test coordinator
C. Principal
D. Guidance counselor
E. Technology staff
F. Other district staff
G. Other school staff

Poll Question

How many years have you been involved in MCAS test administration?

A. 0–This is my first year

B. 1 year

C. 2–3 years

D. 4–5 years

E. 6+ years

1. Overview of New Systems

Crosswalk of Terminology

Old Terminology	New Terminology	Description
PearsonAccess Next (PAN)	MCAS Portal	Test administration and management website for district test coordinators, technology coordinators, principals/school test coordinators, test administrators, and other staff as needed
TestNav	MCAS Student Kiosk/iTester (Apple app store only)	Student testing platform
MCAS Resource Center	Same term – MCAS Resource Center	Website with guides and other resources on administering MCAS computer-based tests

Crosswalk of Terminology

Old Terminology	New Terminology	Description
MCAS Service Center	Same site – MCAS Service Center	Website that principals and test coordinators use to access tasks related to test administration and reporting (e.g., the Principal's Certification of Proper Test Administration form [PCPA], order additional materials, schedule UPS pickup, report discrepancies in results)
PAN Training Site	MCAS Training Site	Website where test coordinators, principals, technology coordinators, and test administrators can practice the tasks required in the MCAS Portal
App Check/Preliminary System Test	Site Readiness	Tool used to verify that testing devices meet the minimum requirements and have been properly configured
Student testing tickets	Student logins	Tickets that contain student usernames and passwords that they need to sign in to the MCAS Student Kiosk

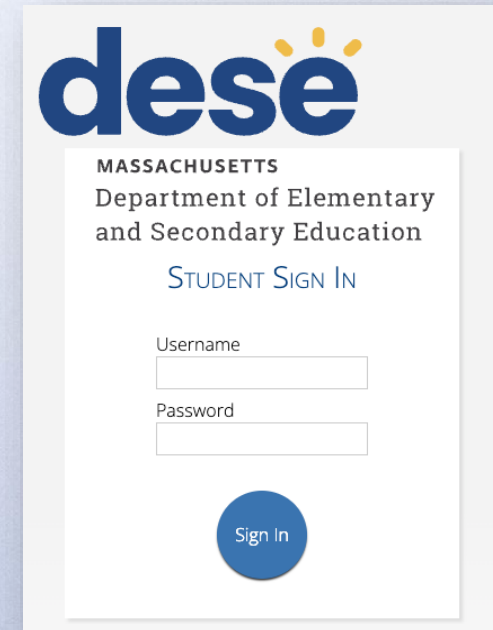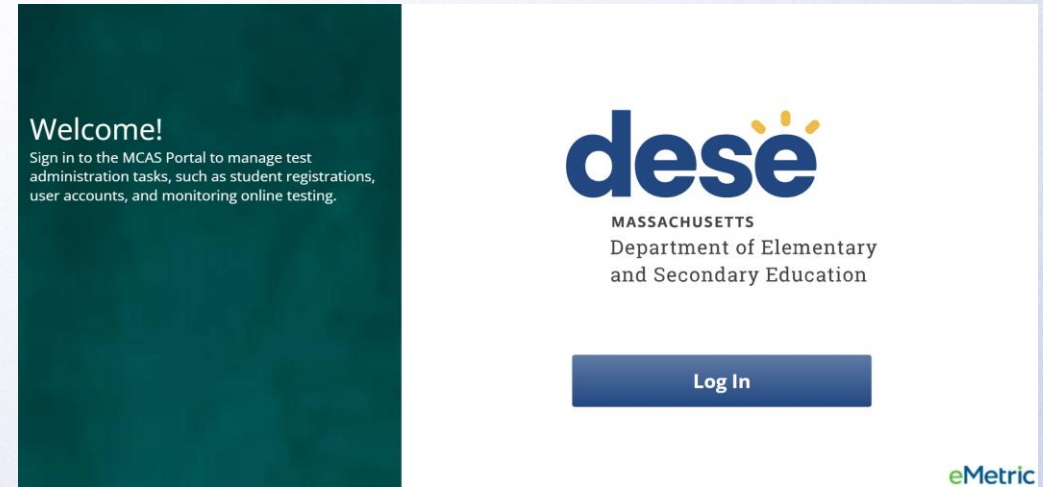# MCAS Portal and the MCAS Student Kiosk

- **MCAS Portal**
  - Online test management system for principals, test coordinators, technology coordinators, and test administrators
    - https://mcas.cognia.org/

- **MCAS Student Kiosk**
  - Online testing platform used by students to take the computer-based MCAS assessments
    - mcas.onlinehelp.cognia.org/technology-setup

Tasks to Complete in Fall 2024

Task	Person responsible	Recommended Deadline
Create and edit MCAS Portal user accounts	Test coordinators	**November 15** for test coordinator and technology coordinator accounts; **Three weeks before test administration** for test administrator accounts
Download and install the MCAS Student Kiosk on student testing devices	Technology coordinator 🖥	**November 15** for high schools; **December 13** for grades 3–8
Conduct Site Readiness to certify that technology infrastructure is ready for testing	Technology coordinator 🖥	**November 15** for high schools; **December 13** for grades 3–8

Note: The 🖥 icon is used to denote areas of focus for technology coordinators on slides where there is also information for test coordinators.

2. Introduction to the New MCAS Resource Center

MCAS Resource Center

- Can be accessed at mcas.onlinehelp.cognia.org

- This website provides access to test administration information, training, practice tests, and other resources to help schools and districts prepare for and administer the MCAS tests.

- Contains links to download the MCAS Student Kiosk to student devices.

Search bar at the top of each page

MCAS Resource Center

Welcome to the MCAS Resource Center. This website provides access to test administration information, training, practice tests, and other resources to help schools and districts prepare for and administer the MCAS tests. Select the logo to the left for test administration manuals and policy guidance.

MCAS Portal

Sign in to the MCAS Portal to manage test administration tasks, such as student registrations, user accounts, and monitoring online testing.

MCAS Portal

Technology Setup

Access technology requirements and user guides.

Technology Setup

Training

Access short training modules that provide step-by-step instructions to computer-based testing and using the MCAS Portal, and view recordings of previous training sessions.

Training

Practice Tests

Access resources to prepare students for computer-based testing, including the tutorial, practice tests, equation editor guides, and other resources.

Practice Tests

Released Items

Access released items from the computer-based and paper-based MCAS tests.

Released Items

MCAS Service Center

Access the MCAS Service Center website for test administration and reporting tasks (e.g., completing the Principal's Certification of Proper Test Administration, ordering additional materials, scheduling UPS pickup, reporting discrepancies in results).

MCAS Service Center

Link to live chat at the bottom of each page

MCAS Service Center

Live Chat
mcas@cognia.org
800-737-5103
TTY: 888-222-1671
Monday - Friday 7:00 am - 5:00 pm (Eastern)

Demonstration

- MCAS Resource Center

Available Resources

- **MCAS Portal page**
  - Live links to the MCAS Portal and MCAS Training Site
  - MCAS Portal User Management Guide

- **Technology Setup page**
  - Technology Guidelines for MCAS Computer-Based Testing
  - Guide to Installing the MCAS Student Kiosk and Conducting Site Readiness

- **Training page**
 - MCAS Content Area Informational Webinars on Constructed Responses and Essays from winter 2024

Available Resources (continued)

- **Practice Tests page**
  - Links to paper-based practice tests

- **Released Items page**
  - A link to paper-based released items on the DESE website
  - A link to sample-student work on the DESE website

- **Service Center page**
 - A link to the MCAS Service Center website, which is used during test administration

Resources Expected to be Available

Projected Availability	Resources

Early- to Mid-November	• Modules for the following topics:
	   • Creating and editing user accounts in the MCAS Portal
	   • Conducting Site Readiness
	• Guides for the MCAS Portal and MCAS Training Site
	• Guides and modules on Student Registration
	• Guides and modules on student tools and accommodations

Late Fall/Early Winter	• Guides and modules on completing other pre-administration tasks • Student Tutorial • CBT Practice Tests •High school science practice tests expected to be available first
Summer 2025	Reporting pages will become available.

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Questions & Answers
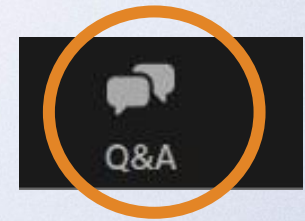
Use the "Q&A" feature to ask questions.
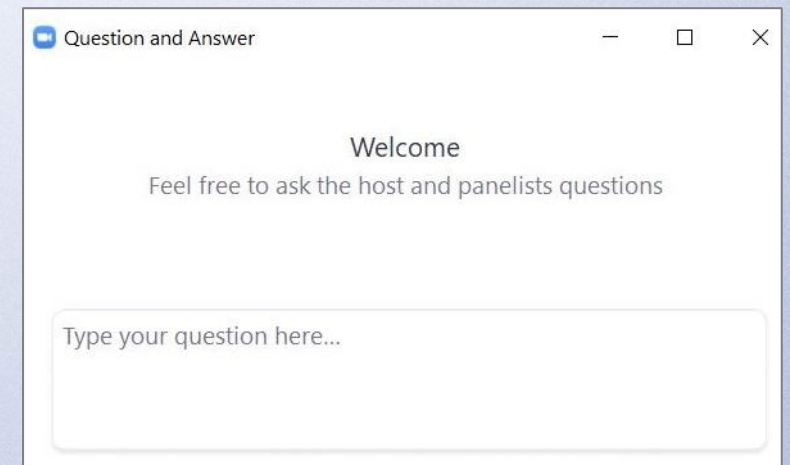
3. Introduction to the MCAS Portal

MCAS Portal and MCAS Training Site

- **MCAS Portal**: the test administration and management website for district test coordinators, technology coordinators, principals/school test coordinators, test administrators, and other staff as needed

- **MCAS Training Site**: where test coordinators, principals, technology coordinators, and test administrators can practice the tasks required in the MCAS Portal

- Accounts for each site are created separately.

- Unlike PAN, passwords for each site are *set separately*, but DESE recommends using the *same password* for both the MCAS Portal and the MCAS Training Site.

MCAS Portal and MCAS Training Site User Accounts

- DESE created an initial set of user accounts for the MCAS Portal and MCAS Training Site on October 21–23.
  - The initial list of users was created based on information in PearsonAccess Next and School and District Profiles.
  - For details on how DESE created the initial accounts, refer to the October 18 Student Assessment Update.
- Users received two emails from mcas@cognia.org for the MCAS Portal: one with their username, and one with their password.
  - Usernames will be your email address.
- Users also received two emails from mcas@cognia.org for the MCAS Training Site.

Instructions for Obtaining User Login Credentials

- If you did not receive automated emails containing your username and password, first check all your email folders (including spam and junk folders).
  - Recommended to add mcas@cognia.org as "Trusted" email sender
  - If you know your username but not your password, you can use the "Forgot Password" link on the Sign In page.

- Then, users may request support as follows:

Role	Who to contact for support
Test administrators and school-level technology coordinators	Their principal or school test coordinator
Principals, school test coordinators, and district-level technology coordinators	Their district test coordinator
District test coordinators	MCAS Service Center

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Getting Started: Logging In

- Browser specifications for the MCAS Portal*:
  - **Chrome™** 130 or newer
  - Firefox® 131 or newer
  - **Microsoft Edge** 130 or newer
  - Safari® 18 or newer

  *Refer to the [Technology Guidelines for MCAS Computer-Based Testing](#) posted on the MCAS Resource Center for latest updates.

- When you log in for the first time with your initial password, you will be prompted to update your password.
  - Passwords are valid for 365 days.

Annual Tasks to Complete in the MCAS Portal

| Who's responsible	Task	Timeframe for completing task
District and school test coordinators	Creating/assigning user accounts	Recommended deadlines: • **November 15** for test coordinators, principals, and technology coordinators • **At least three weeks** prior to test administration for test administrators
Technology coordinators	Downloading/installing the MCAS Student Kiosk Conducting Site Readiness to ensure devices and network are configured for testing	Recommended deadlines: • **November 15** for high schools • **December 13** for grades 3–8

Sections Currently Available in the MCAS Portal

| MCAS Portal Section	Tasks to Complete in this Section	Who will complete these tasks?
Users	Create, edit, and manage user accounts	School and district test coordinators
Administration	• Access links to download the MCAS Student Kiosk • Access Site Readiness credentials	School and district technology coordinators
Additional sections and features will be released as we approach test administration.		

Demonstrations

- Signing in to the MCAS Portal
- Overview of the MCAS Portal
- MCAS Portal vs. MCAS Training Site

Questions & Answers
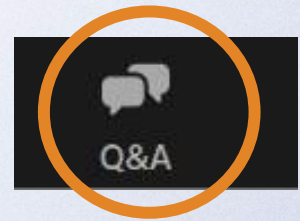
Use the "Q&A" feature
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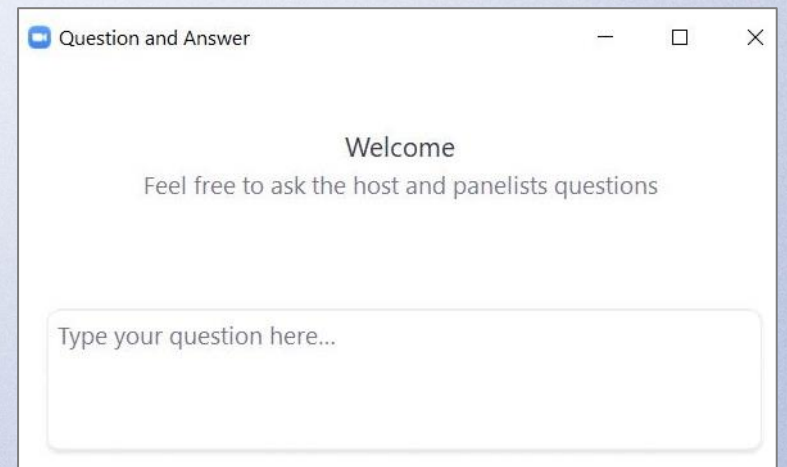
4. Technology Guidelines and Downloading the MCAS Student Kiosk

Technology Guidelines for MCAS Computer-Based Testing

- Available on the MCAS Resource Center on the Technology Setup page

- Outlines the operating systems (OS) versions supported for testing, student kiosk device specifications, and MCAS Portal browser specifications

- OS support
  - As new OS versions and subversions are released throughout the school year, eMetric conducts testing to confirm that they will be supported for testing.
  - Technology coordinators should check the Technology Guidelines for MCAS Computer-Based Testing prior to each test administration.
  - Schools should not update device OS versions during spring testing windows. If schools update device OS versions after running Site Readiness this fall, they should run Site Readiness again prior to spring testing.

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Student Device Specifications

System Requirements – All Hardware	
Connectivity	Student devices must be able to connect to the internet via wired or wireless networks.
Screen Size	9.7" screen size or larger/"10-inch class" tablets or larger
Screen Resolution	1024 x 768 or larger
Browser Requirements	
Browsers *(used for practice tests only)*	Chrome 130 or newer Firefox 131 or newer Microsoft Edge 130 or newer Safari 18 or newer
Desktop and Laptop Specific Requirements	
CPU	1.3 GHz
Memory	2 GB (4GB is strongly recommended for best performance)

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ChromeOS Support Plan

- eMetric supports the latest three versions of ChromeOS that are released on the Stable channel and the latest versions on the LTS channel.

- Schools are **not recommended** to use beta versions of ChromeOS, as this may result in errors.

Operating System	Version	Version Release Date	End of Support Date	MCAS Administrations Supported
ChromeOS™	130	October 2024	February 2025	2025 February High School Science only
	131	December 2024	March 2025	
	132	January 2025	June 2025	2025 February High School Science and March Retests and Spring
	133	February 2025	June 2025	
	134	March 2025	June 2025	
	126 LTS	October 2024	April 2025	2025 February Science and March Retests and Spring
	132 LTS	April 2025	October 2025	2025 Spring

Red box above indicates end of support before spring 2025 testing.
See pages 2–3 of the Technology Guidelines for MCAS Computer-Based Testing.

iPadOS Support Plan

- eMetric supports the latest three major versions that are supported by Apple.
- The latest subversion will be specified in the Technology Guidelines after being fully tested.

Operating System	Version	Version Release Date	End of Support Date
iPadOS®	16.X Currently confirmed up to 16.7	May 2024	End of 2024–25 school year
	17.X Currently confirmed up to 17.6	May 2024	End of 2025–26 school year
	18.x	Expected fall 2024	End of 2026–27 school year

See pages 2–3 of the Technology Guidelines for MCAS Computer-Based Testing.

Support for Linux, macOS, and Windows

Operating System	Version	Version Release Date	End of Support Date	eMetric Support Policy
Linux®, Fedora™	40	April 2024	End of 2024–25 school year	eMetric supports the latest version of Fedora.
macOS®	13.x	January 2023	End of 2024–25 school year	eMetric supports the latest three major versions that are supported by Apple. The latest subversion will be specified in the table below after being fully tested.
	14.x	September 2023	End of 2025–26 school year	
	15.x	Expected fall 2024	End of 2026–27 school year	
Windows®	10 (21H2, 22H2)	July 2015	October 2025	eMetric supports major versions of Windows that are supported by Microsoft. The latest supported minor versions of Windows are supported.
	11 (22H2, 23H2)	October 2021	October 2031	

See pages 2–3 of the Technology Guidelines for MCAS Computer-Based Testing.

Network Requirements and Guidelines

Firewalls

- Allow traffic through ports 80 and 443

Proxy and Content Filter Servers

- List of URLs to allow on ports 80 and 443 available on page 2 of the *Guide to Installing the MCAS Student Kiosk and Conducting Site Readiness.*
  https://mcas.onlinehelp.cognia.org/technology-setup/

Sandboxing Applications

- Choose network folder or local folder that is not touched by the sandboxing applications
- Applicable for both stored response and kiosk installation folders
- See pages 2–3 of the *Guide to Installing the MCAS Student Kiosk and Conducting Site Readiness.*
  https://mcas.onlinehelp.cognia.org/technology-setup/

Turn off operating system auto-updates

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Download and Install MCAS Student Kiosks

- Available for download from the MCAS Portal for Chromebook, iPad, Linux, Mac, and Windows
    - Use the direct links to access the apps on the Apple App Store and Chrome Web Store.
    - Be sure to download the correct MCAS Student Kiosk for each device type.
- Scripted installations and other methods of installation are provided in the Guide to Installing the MCAS Student Kiosk and Conducting Site Readiness (pages 4–31).

Questions & Answers
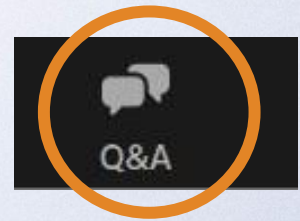
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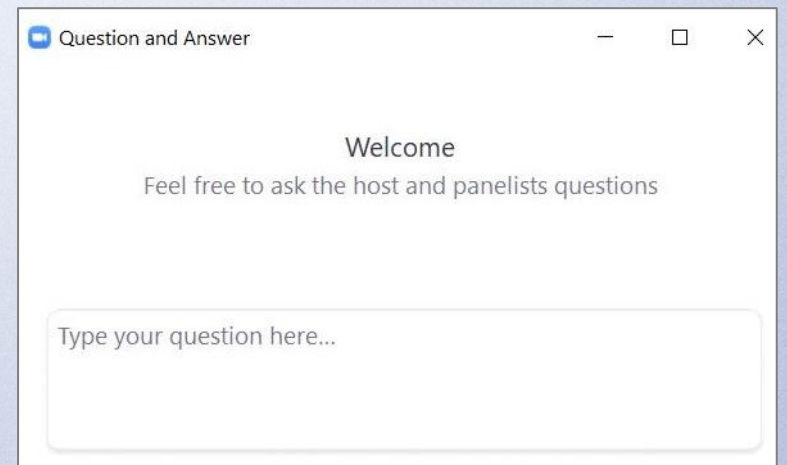
5. Conducting Site Readiness

Overview of Site Readiness

What are the purposes of conducting Site Readiness and Site Certification?

- For technology coordinators to:
  - Confirm that installation of the MCAS Student Kiosk was done correctly on student devices
  - Confirm that testing devices meet the minimum requirements and have been properly configured
  - Confirm that test content reaches student devices without issue
  - Identify any potential technology-related issues before testing begins

- For communication of these steps to district and school test coordinators that testing devices are ready

When is Site Readiness conducted?

- After installing the MCAS Student Kiosk on testing devices; recommended deadlines:
  - **November 15** for high schools
  - **December 13** for grades 3–8

Overview of Site Readiness (continued)

What are the general steps involved?

1. Technology coordinators will sign in to the MCAS Portal to retrieve their Site Readiness credentials (i.e., username and password).

   - Credentials are school-specific. District technology coordinators will need to select the school from their drop-down to see a location's credentials.

2. Technology coordinators launch the MCAS Student Kiosk on each student testing device configuration (i.e., each device type and operating system).

   - Use the Site Readiness credentials to run the test.
   - **Note:** Site Readiness tests must be conducted using the *secure* MCAS Student Kiosk.
     - Site Readiness will not be conducted on browser-based practice tests in the MCAS Resource Center and the MCAS Training Site.

3. Technology coordinators complete the two-part test on each device type:

   - System Set-Up Test
   - Student Interface Test

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Overview of Site Readiness (continued)

What are the general steps involved (continued)?

4. Technology coordinators go back to the MCAS Portal to complete the Site Certification step.

5. Technology coordinators communicate with their principal/school test coordinator to let them know Site Readiness has been completed and certified.

6. School and district coordinators confirm that their technology coordinators have completed the Site Certification for their schools by the deadlines listed on the previous slide.

- The Site Readiness procedures take approximately 5–10 minutes per device.

- It is recommended to conduct Site Readiness again prior to testing if your school experiences any changes to technology.

- See pages 31–41 of the Guide to Installing the MCAS Student Kiosk and Conducting Site Readiness for additional information.

Site Readiness Tests

- Site Readiness is a two-part test that allows technology coordinators to ensure the MCAS Student Kiosk has been properly installed.

Site Readiness Tests	Purpose of Test
System Set-Up Test	Verifies and confirms the following: • network connectivity • screen resolution • text-to-speech • how many students may begin testing at the same time
Student Interface Test	Provides sample test questions to determine whether the device is capable of correctly displaying and navigating test content in the MCAS Student Kiosk. • The Student Interface Test also allows technology coordinators to test the student tools, including the Line Reader, Answer Eliminator, Text Highlighter, and Notepad, to ensure those are functioning properly.

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Certifying Site Readiness

- After all device configurations for your school have successfully completed Site Readiness, certify the site for testing.

- Site Certification is done in the MCAS Portal.
  - Technology coordinators certify Site Readiness to signal to school and district test coordinators that the school technology has been confirmed as ready for testing.
  - See pages 39–41 of the [Guide to Installing the MCAS Student Kiosk and Conducting Site Readiness](#).

- DESE will follow up with schools that do not complete Site Readiness.

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Demonstration

- Retrieving Site Readiness credentials
- Conducting the Site Readiness test
- Certifying Site Readiness

Retrieving Site Readiness Credentials

1. Log in to the MCAS Portal with your username and password.

2. On the Portal home page, click **Administration**. The Site Readiness account information appears at the bottom of the Administration home page.

3. Make a note of the username and password for the school, which you will use to log in to the MCAS Student Kiosk.

Site Readiness login for Cyber City Sch DLV1 (Cyber City) ▾

Username: WSR-00-88I888-012
Password: 00-88I888-012

Conduct Site Readiness: System Set-Up Test

1. Launch the MCAS Student Kiosk on the device.

2. Log in to the MCAS Student Kiosk with the Site Readiness username and password provided for the school.

3. Verify your school's name underneath the username. Under **System Set-Up Test**, click **Check System Set-Up** to begin the test.

Conduct Site Readiness: Student Interface Test

1. If all the system checks succeed, you are ready to begin the next Site Readiness test.

   If one or more system checks fail, adjust your configuration as needed and re-run the System Set-Up test.

2. When the System Set-Up test is completed, click the blue **Check Student Interface** button.

3. Read the instructions on the page and then click **Continue**.

4. Confirm that you can respond to a few questions, and try a few student tools.

5. On the last test question page, click **Finish**.

6. On the Test Review page, click **Turn In** to submit your test.

Not **SiteReadiness** User? Exit

Hello, SiteReadiness User

3774-42190		3/2/1998	
State Student ID		Date of Birth	Gender
Cyber Valley Sch1-001			1
School Name		Teacher	Grade

The following tests have been scheduled for you:

System Set-Up Test

Check System Set-Up

Site Readiness

Check Student Interface

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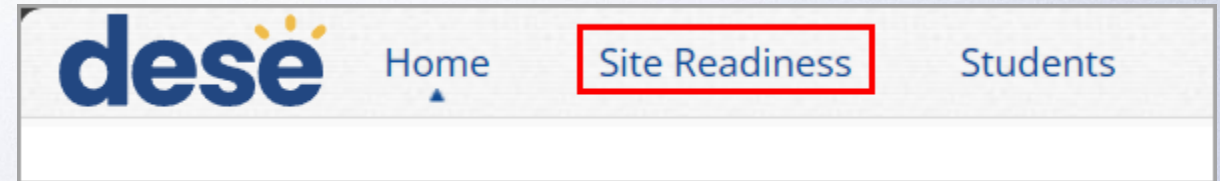
Certify Site Readiness

After all devices or device configurations for your school have successfully completed Site Readiness, the technology coordinator will certify the site for testing.

1. Log in to the MCAS Portal with your username and password.
   - **Note**: Use your own username and password, not the Site Readiness credentials.

2. Click Administration.

3. Click **Site Readiness** at the top of the page.

4. On the Site Readiness page, locate the school to be certified, and then click **View Details**.

Certify Site Readiness (cont'd)

5. On the Site Readiness Details page, verify that all the devices or device configurations for the school have successfully run the Site Readiness tool and meet the technology requirements.

6. Click **Certify Site Readiness** and click **Yes** in the pop-up message to confirm.

Questions & Answers
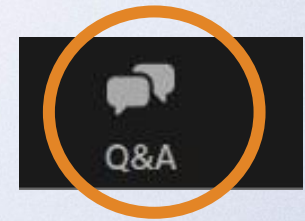

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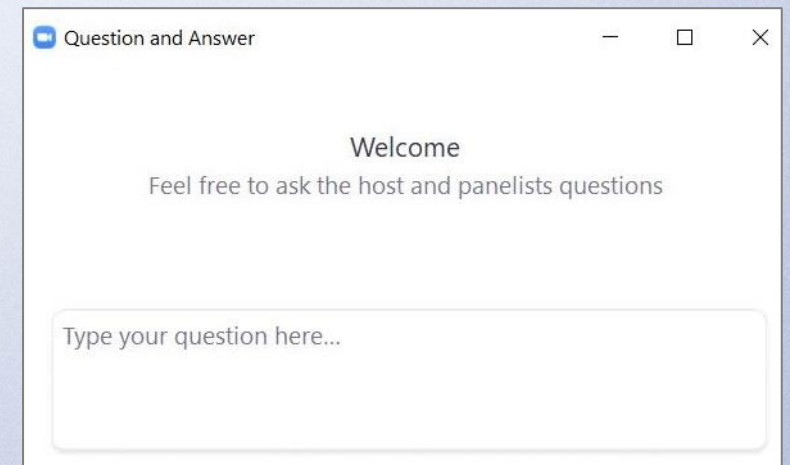
6. Additional Information for Technology Coordinators

MCAS Student Kiosk: Internet Connectivity

- Internet connectivity is required during testing only as follows:
  - At the **beginning** of the test to authenticate student login and download the test content
  - At the **end** of the test to submit responses for scoring
- Once a student has finished reading the test session directions and the content has downloaded onto the local device, the student may continue testing regardless of internet connectivity.
- If a student's device loses internet connectivity:
  - The student should keep testing on that device.
  - Do not move a student to a new device when experiencing technical issues if the student has already begun testing.
  - Student responses will be saved to the save response location indicated during MCAS Student Kiosk installation.
  - Once internet connectivity resumes, the saved responses will automatically be synced to eMetric servers.
  - If the student turns in the test offline, the student will receive a message to notify the test administrator.

MCAS Student Kiosk: Internet Connectivity

When is internet connectivity required?

Beginning of Test:
1. Authenticate login
2. Download test content

eMetric Servers
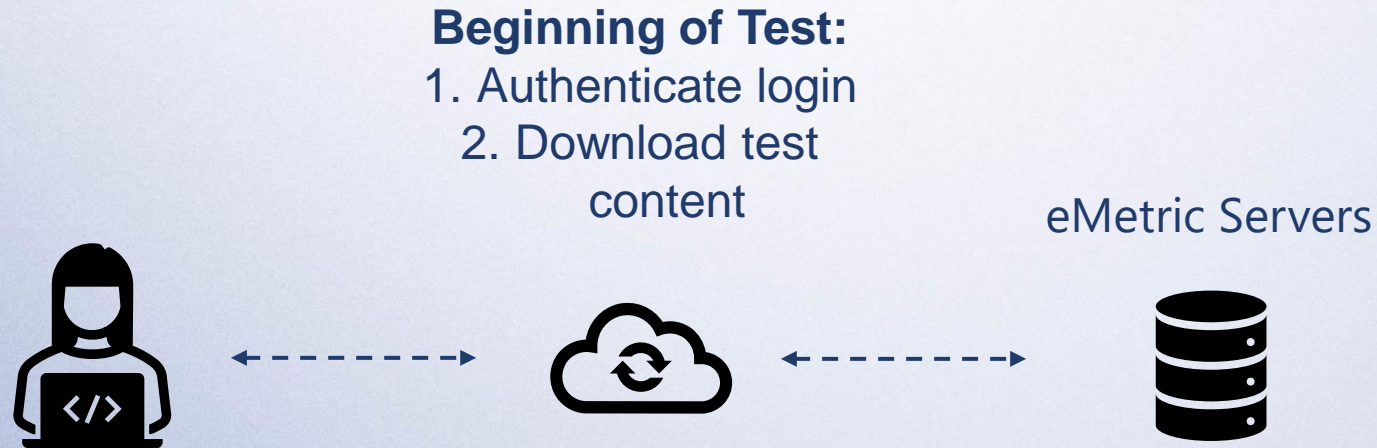
End of Test:
1. Submit responses for scoring

Note: Students with an ASL video accommodation (grade 10 Math, June Science) will need internet connectivity during the test. Content with video (grades 5 and 8 STE) will need to have internet connection to play the video.

MCAS Student Kiosk: Loss of Internet Connectivity During Testing

Internet connectivity indicator

Responses Sync every 45-90 seconds

eMetric Servers

Student with Internet Connectivity
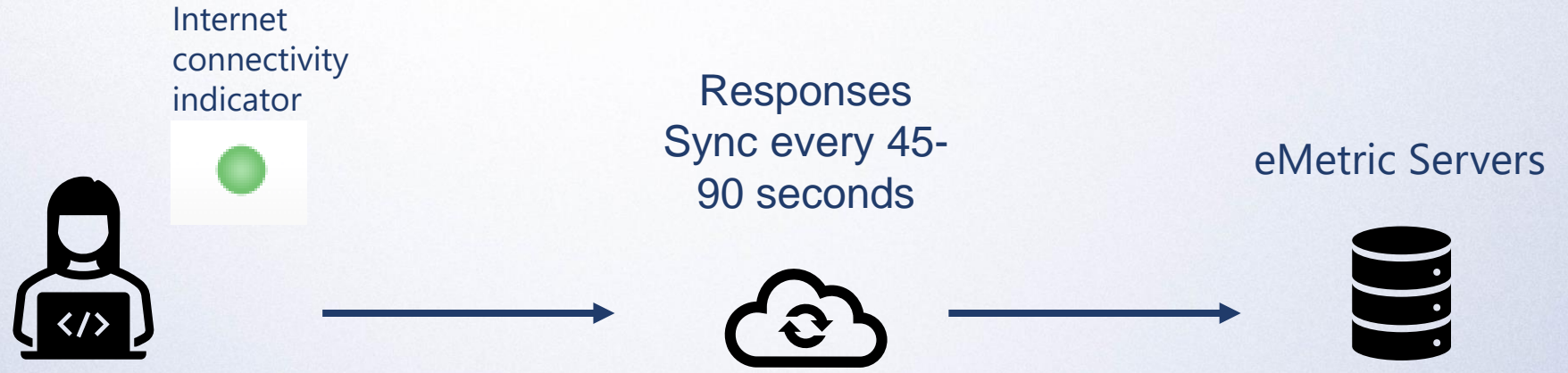
Student with no Internet Connectivity

eMetric Servers

Student with restored Internet Connectivity

eMetric Servers

MCAS Student Kiosk: Finish the Test with No Connectivity
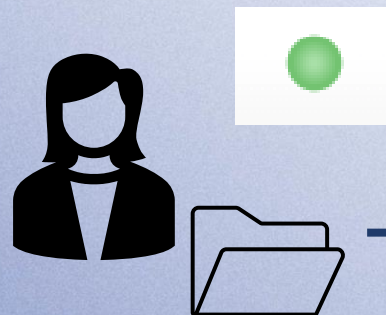
Internet connectivity indicator

Student finishes test with no Internet Connectivity
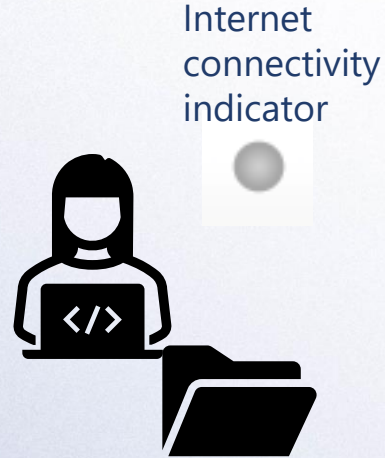
Student turns in test and receives prompt to notify test administrator

Test Administrator on Student Device with Internet Connectivity

eMetric Servers

Test administrator uses student testing device and relaunches the MCAS Student Kiosk

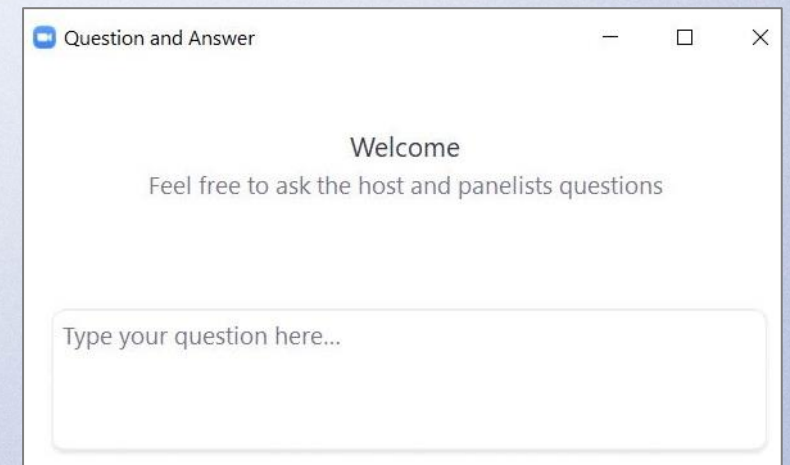dese MASSACHUSETTS Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Loss of Network Connectivity Procedure Summary

- If a student finishes and is ready to turn in the test while offline (prior to the network being restored):
  - Allow student to turn in test.
  - The student will receive a message to notify the test administrator.
  - Record the exact device the student is testing on.
  - Ensure no network management tools or system maintenance will alter that device's files or configuration.
  - When network connectivity is restored, the test administrator will need to resume internet connectivity and relaunch the MCAS Student Kiosk. (If you can see the student login page, the saved responses have synced.)

- If you are unsure of the status of the student responses, call the MCAS Service Center.

- Step-by-step instructions will be included in guidance documents on the MCAS Resource Center later this school year.

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Questions & Answers
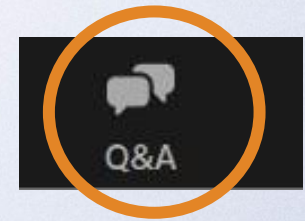
Use the "Q&A" feature
to ask questions.

7. Resources, Support, and Next Steps

Additional Resources

Resource	Location
MCAS Resource Center	mcas.onlinehelp.cognia.org
MCAS Portal user guides • MCAS Portal User Management Guide	https://mcas.onlinehelp.cognia.org/portal/
Technology Information • Technology Guidelines for MCAS Computer-Based Testing ***(Check prior to each test administration.)*** • Guide to Installing the MCAS Student Kiosk and Conducting Site Readiness	https://mcas.onlinehelp.cognia.org/technology-setup/
Student Assessment Updates (Biweekly email with important updates about the MCAS program)	www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/updates.html If you do not already receive this email, subscribe using this link: http://eepurl.com/ghSOhH
Cybersecurity Resources	https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testadmin/

Next Steps

- **Today:** Complete the evaluation form.
  - Responses are associated with the name and email address used to log in.
  - Email your input to mcas@mass.gov if you have problems accessing or completing the form.
- **Within one week:**
  - Receive an email with the Q&A from this session
  - Recording will be available

Email and Phone Support

MCAS Service Center

- Questions on logistics and technology
  - **Web:** https://mcas.onlinehelp.cognia.org/
  - **Email:** mcas@cognia.org
  - **Phone:** 800-737-5103
  - **TTY:** 888-222-1671
  - Live chat is available at the link on the bottom of the page at the MCAS Resource Center for the 2025 tests

DESE Student Assessment Services

- Policy questions (e.g., student participation, accommodations)
  - **Web:** www.doe.mass.edu/mcas
  - **Email:** mcas@mass.gov
  - **Phone:** 781-338-3625
  - **TTY:** 800-439-2370

8. Live "Sandbox Time"

Poll Question

Which demonstrations would you like to see again?

A. Signing in to the MCAS Portal
B. Overview of the MCAS Portal
C. MCAS Portal vs. MCAS Training
D. Retrieving Site Readiness credentials
E. Conducting the Site Readiness test
F. Certifying Site Readiness

THANK YOU

The Office of Student Assessment Services

📞 781-338-3625

🏠 www.doe.mass.edu/mcas

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