Appendix E: Guidelines for Using Assistive Technology as an MCAS Test Accommodation

These guidelines will assist schools in determining how specific assistive technology (AT) programs may be used by students with disabilities for MCAS computer-based testing.

Assistive Technology is categorized into the following three groups for the purpose of MCAS testing:

1. **Embedded Assistive Technology:** Assistive Technology programs that are embedded in the MCAS Student Kiosk computer-based testing platform.
2. **Compatible assistive technology:** Assistive Technology, such as Screen Readers and Dragon Naturally Speaking, that are *external* (a school-owned program) but are compatible with the MCAS Student Kiosk.
3. **AT on a separate device:** Assistive Technology programs that may be incompatible with the MCAS Student Kiosk and must be *used on separate device* in order for the student to access the MCAS test. Schools must request approval prior to administration by contacting mcas@mass.gov.

Group 1: Embedded AT Programs in the MCAS Student Kiosk

This group includes AT programs that are embedded within the MCAS Student Kiosk and are available as described below.

The following accommodations must be selected in advance in the Student Registration *(SR)* process.

- ASL Video **(SR)**

- Enlarged Cursor/ Pointer **(SR)**

- Spell Checker **(SR)** for the MCAS ELA tests; automatically available on Mathematics, STE, and Civics tests

- Calculator **(SR)** for the noncalculator session of the Mathematics tests; automatically available for Mathematics (in the calculator session) and STE tests

- Speech-to-Text **(SR)**

- Text-To-Speech **(SR)**

- Word Prediction **(SR)**

Group 2: Assistive Technology Confirmed as Compatible with the MCAS Student Kiosk

The Screen Reader and the Assistive Technology test forms permit students to use their own assistive technology program within the MCAS Student Kiosk.

The following accommodations must be selected in advance in the Student Registration *(SR)* process.
- **Screen Reader (SR)**
  - The screen reader test form is for students using JAWS 2021® and NVDA. Other screen reader programs may not be compatible with the screen reader test form.

- **Compatible AT Accommodation (SR)**
  - In the MCAS Student Kiosk, the external compatible assistive technology accommodation is available for students who require Windows-based third-party

accessibility software. Note that this accommodation is only available in the Windows®
MCAS Student Kiosk. Due to the MCAS Student Kiosk's security features and the
variability among assistive technologies, some assistive technology software may not be
compatible with the MCAS Student Kiosk, even with the selected Assistive Technology
accommodated form. Test coordinators will follow the guidelines below to determine if
the Assistive Technology accommodation needs to be assigned for the assistive
technology to work with MCAS Student Kiosk or whether a separate computer is
necessary for the student's AT program.

Determining Compatibility of Assistive Technology

Some assistive technology can be used with the MCAS Student Kiosk with or without the Compatible
Assistive Technology accommodation.

Many commonly used Windows-based speech-to-text programs (e.g., Windows dictation, Dragon
Professional) can be used with the MCAS Student Kiosk without the Compatible Assistive Technology
accommodation, provided the software is running prior to launching the kiosk. Speech-To-Text (STT)
programs can be used for basic dictation, but editing commands (i.e., voice commands used to select
and edit text that was previously dictated) will not function. If the student closes the STT application
during testing, the student must exit the kiosk, restart the STT program, and then re-log into the kiosk to
continue testing with STT (shortcut keys cannot be used to launch the application while the kiosk is
open).

Important Note: The Compatible Assistive Technology accommodation reduces kiosk security controls
to allow third-party software to operate in conjunction with the kiosk. If the Compatible Assistive
Technology accommodation is used, test administrators should closely monitor students using this
accommodation to ensure that test security is not compromised.

Test Coordinator Responsibilities
Prior to operational testing, test coordinators must use practice tests to do the following:

- Ensure the student's assistive technology will work with MCAS Student Kiosk.

- Determine whether the student's Compatible Assistive Technology accommodation must be
  assigned to use assistive technology.

- Provide the student an opportunity to practice using assistive technology with the MCAS Student
  Kiosk.

Students should use the MCAS practice tests to become familiar with these tools, accessibility
features, and accommodations prior to testing.

If the preferred third-party assistive technology does not work well with the MCAS Student Kiosk
Assistive Technology accommodation, see the instructions under Group 3: Assistive Technology Not
Compatible and Requires a Second Computer.

Using the Assistive Technology Accommodation

1. School staff should first verify that the Assistive Technology accommodation has been selected for a student by navigating to the Students page in the Administration section of the MCAS Portal, selecting the student, and then selecting the Accommodations tab.

☑ **Compatible Assistive Technology**

2. Open the third-party accessibility application on the testing device and log in to the application if necessary.
3. Launch the MCAS Student Kiosk.
4. Student enters their username and password to log in to the MCAS Student Kiosk.
5. Student selects the session and enters the session access code.
   On the Options screen, verify that the student has Assistive Technology listed as Enabled, which indicates that they were assigned the Assistive Technology accommodation. There should additionally be a field for the test administrator to enter the proctor password.

Options

Compatible Assistive Technology   Enabled

Continue

Note: The student will only see Assistive Technology listed as enabled on the Options screen if they are using the MCAS Student Kiosk **on Windows**. If they are using a browser or other operating system kiosk (e.g., the macOS MCAS Student Kiosk), this accommodation will not be available.

6. The test administrator will enter the proctor password.

Options

Compatible Assistive Technology   Proctor Password [   ] Submit

Continue
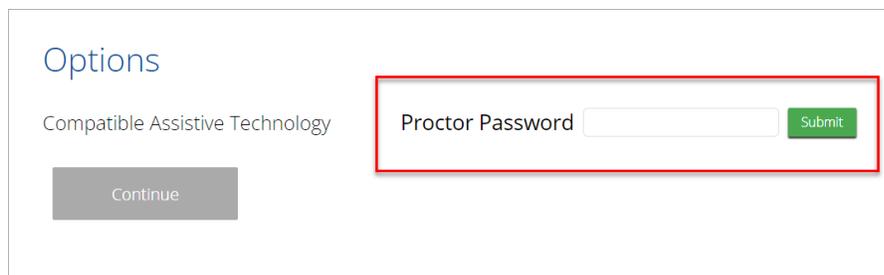
Note: The proctor password is located on the Administration home page of the MCAS Portal. The student will not be allowed to advance past the accommodations Options screen without the test administrator entering the correct proctor password.
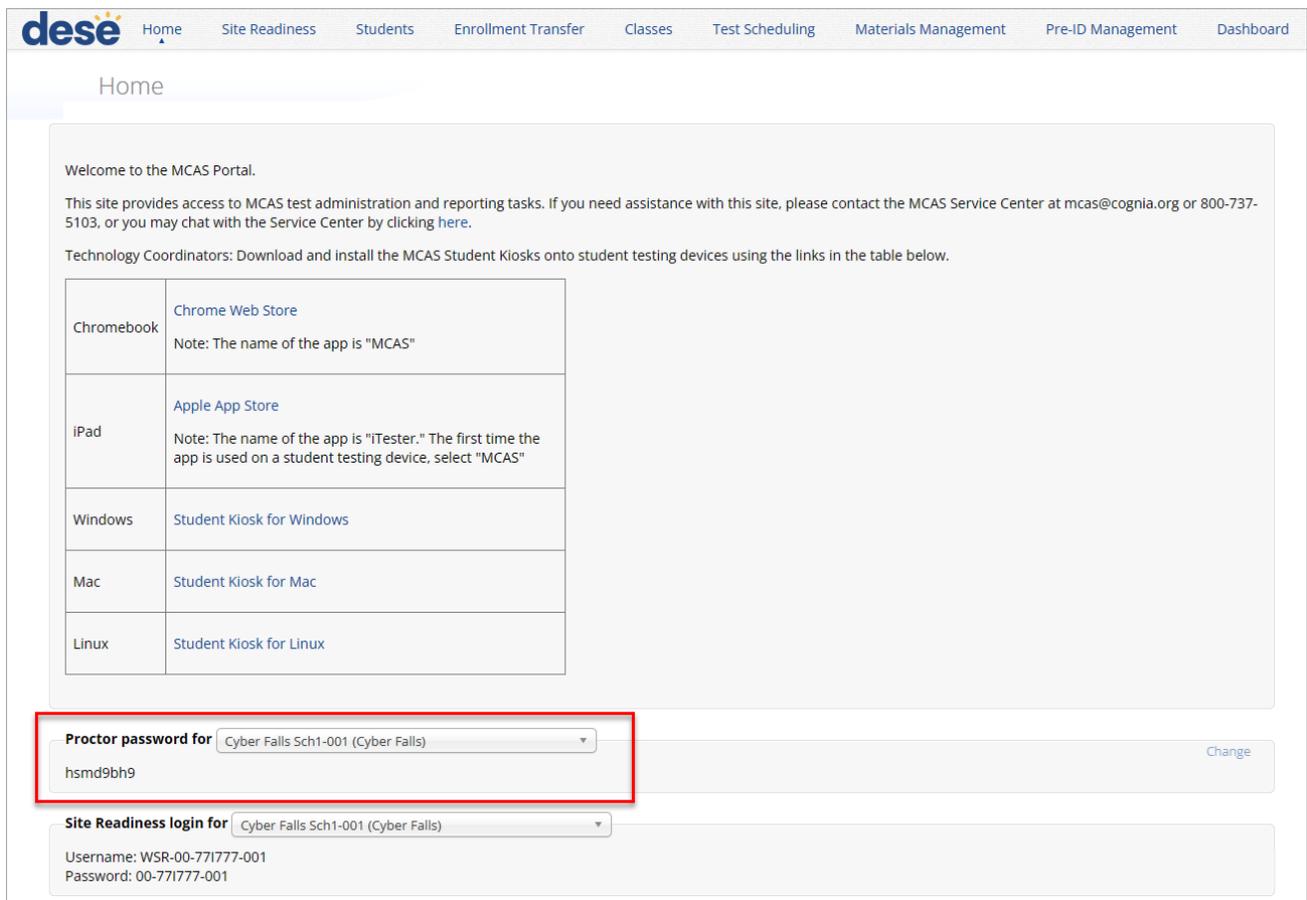
After the test administrator enters the proctor password, the student will be able to successfully use their assistive technology software, which will display as additional windows or an interface on top of the kiosk on screen.

7. When the student submits the test session and returns to the profile screen, the Compatible Assistive Technology accommodation will be disabled.

Group 3: Assistive Technology Not Compatible and Requires a Separate Computer

If the student's specific AT program is not compatible with the MCAS Student Kiosk and therefore must be accessed by the student using a separate external (i.e., stand-alone) computer, a test administrator must assist the student to transition between the external device used for the student's AT and the computer used by the student for their test (if CBT) or the student's paper-based test (if PBT). All responses generated using an external assistive technology device must be transcribed verbatim by a test administrator (or the student) onto the student's computer-based test or into their paper-based booklet.

Stand-alone AT programs are prohibited for MCAS testing if they provide coaching or assistance to the student or allow a student to access the internet.

Please contact the Department at mcas@mass.gov for approval to use stand-alone AT devices or programs and for specific test administration instructions.