



Best Practices for MCAS Computer-Based Testing Set-Up, Administration, and Troubleshooting

The tables below describe some best practices for a successful computer-based test administration:

1. Technology set-up
2. Steps for test coordinators and test administrators during test administration
3. Troubleshooting common computer-based testing issues

Further details will be provided in the spring 2020 MCAS *Principal’s Administration Manual*, which will be available this winter. Direct technology questions to the MCAS Service Center at mcas@cognia.org or 800-737-5103 and policy questions to the Department at mcas@doe.mass.edu or 781-338-3625, and contact the MCAS Service Center to report any technology issues that cannot be solved quickly at the local level. During testing, if there is a situation in which a student is waiting for more than 15 minutes, then schedule the student to complete the session at a later time.

1. Technology Set-Up

Best Practice	Steps to Take	Description
Verify that devices and operating systems meet system requirements prior to testing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit the system requirements page for the most updated information. • Turn off auto-update on Chromebooks whenever possible to avoid auto-updating to an unsupported OS. See instructions under “Set up all Chromebooks” below. 	Operating systems, particularly iOS and ChromeOS, update frequently. Students may not be able to test or may experience interruptions if the testing device/operating system is not supported.
Set Chromebooks to not wipe data when they restart or are powered off.	Sign in to the Google Admin console, go to Device Management , click Chrome Management , click Device Settings . Choose the organization you want to update these settings for. Click Sign-In Settings , click User Data , choose “Do not erase all local user data” and click Save .	<p>If the Chromebooks are set to wipe data upon reboot, students who experience connectivity, power, or device issues during testing may lose their responses.</p> <p>Schools that use public Chromebook profiles and need to have the data wiped between usage should set up a secondary save location in order to have a back-up student response file in case of emergency.</p>
Set up all Chromebooks to suspend OS updates, including peer-to-peer, during testing.	Sign into the Google Admin console, go to Device Management , click Chrome management , click Device Settings . Choose the organization you want to update these settings for. Go to Device Update Settings , click Auto Update Settings , select Stop Auto-Updates , click Save .	If the ChromeOS is set to automatically update, this could take place during testing, which could cause student connectivity or device issues. This ChromeOS feature can be managed by a Chrome administrator. Chrome releases a full OS update about every 6 weeks and releases minor updates approximately every 2–3 weeks.

Best Practice	Steps to Take	Description
<p>Set up a Secondary Save Location in the TestNav configuration in PAN.</p>	<p>When in PAN, click Setup > TestNav Configurations > Create/Edit Configurations. On the right-hand side, there are fields to set up a secondary save location on a local server.</p>	<p>Setting up a secondary save location will allow TestNav to write a student response file to both the device as well as the secondary location. It provides a back-up in case of a lost response due to a connectivity, power, or device issue, when the primary response on the student device cannot be located. In the case of Chromebooks set to wipe data, this step is necessary to create a back-up file of each student response.</p> <p>Chromebooks, iPads, and Android Tablets can only use an SFTP server for secondary save locations. These mobile devices cannot use UNC paths or mapped network drives. An example of the required SFTP path format is provided in the TestNav Configurations Menu.</p>

2. Steps for Test Coordinators and Test Administrators during Test Administration

Best Practice	Steps to Take	Description
<p>Have the following materials available, and confirm whether they are in working order:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> power cords, power strips, extra batteries, extra computers to serve as back-up devices that can be used if needed computer mice and wired external keyboards (strongly recommended for students using tablets) headphones for students with disabilities using the text-to-speech accommodation (See the Accessibility and Accommodations Manual for details.) <p>Ensure that devices will be charged prior to each test session.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use this device planner to determine the number of devices needed at a given time. Students who will be using a touchpad (only) should complete practice tests with the touchpad to familiarize themselves with answering the different question types prior to testing. External keyboards are strongly recommended due to the smaller screen size on a tablet when using the internal keyboard. 	<p>Schools have reported that some students had a challenging experience with some of the technology-enhanced test questions when they used a touchpad (only).</p> <p>Schools have reported that students cannot see all the parts in a test question or all the writing space available due to the reduced screen size when the keyboard pops up.</p>
<p>Keep a log of the devices that students will use during testing.</p>	<p>Mark the local device ID number on each student’s testing ticket or an internal tracking form, or maintain a spreadsheet.</p>	<p>If a student’s device experiences an interruption in testing, responses are saved on that device. If it appears that the student is missing some responses, resume the student’s test in PAN and have the student sign back into TestNav on the same device to transmit responses. If the device cannot be located, and there is no secondary save location, there is no way to find a student response file.</p>
<p>If the student is in Resumed Upload status, do not skip upload when prompted by TestNav.</p>	<p>Contact the technology coordinator to upload the student response file for the student.</p>	<p>“Skipping upload” indicates to TestNav that there is no student response file to be found, and the system will then auto-delete any previous student response files and create a new one. If the student was missing responses, there will be no file to locate.</p>

3. Troubleshooting Common Computer-Based Testing Issues

Issue	Solution
Loss of power or Internet connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When power or Internet connection is restored, the test administrator should instruct students to log back in on the same testing devices; this will confirm that all saved responses are transmitted properly.• If a school uses Chromebooks that are set to wipe data on reboot, the technology coordinator will need to find students' response files in the secondary save location and upload them to TestNav before the students' tests can be resumed.
A student runs out of space on the ELA test, or the character counter shows 0.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check the character counter to see if the student used all of the available characters. If the student has reached the maximum number of characters, instruct the student to edit his or her work so that it will fit in the space provided.• Students whose computer shows fewer characters than what appears on-screen may have hidden spaces or other characters in the text box taking up space. To restore the full character count, highlight the entire box, scrolling all the way down to catch any hidden characters, and click delete.
A student started testing with the wrong accommodation (e.g., a student needs text-to-speech but does not have TTS enabled).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Follow the steps in the "Resolving Incorrect Accommodations During Testing" module, which is available at http://mcas.pearsonsupport.com/training/.
A TestNav error code is received	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guidance for handling error codes is provided at https://support.assessment.pearson.com/display/TN/Error+Codes.