

## **MDPH GUIDANCE ON 504 OR IEP PLANS FOR STUDENTS RETURNING TO ACADEMIC WORK**

### **From MDPH SPORTS-RELATED HEAD INJURY REGULATIONS: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS #27 Revised November 7, 2011**

**Will a student on a graduated reentry plan also need a 504 plan or IEP for their return to academic activities? What about providing MCAS accommodations to these students?**

All students recovering from a concussion will need a written graduated reentry plan, as described under DPH regulation 105 CMR 201.010. These students are entitled to receive instructional accommodations and modifications for routine classroom work (or tutoring) and for classroom assessments, as described in their reentry plan. In addition, to be eligible to receive accommodations on statewide assessments (e.g., MCAS tests), the student will also need either a 504 plan or an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Instructional accommodations and modifications should be based on an individual student's academic performance and stage of recovery and must be described either in the graduated reentry plan, current IEP, or a 504 plan. The 504 plan may be used to address section 201.010 (2) (b) of the graduated reentry plan (i.e., "instructions for the student's graduated return to extracurricular athletic activities and classroom studies, as appropriate, including accommodations and modifications as needed"). A reference to the graduated reentry plan should be included in the student's IEP, if appropriate, in the section titled "Additional Information."

Note: An *accommodation* is intended to provide a student with a support that allows the student to achieve at the same level as other students.

A *modification* is a change in the expectations for a student's performance, such as taking a reduced workload or specially-adapted classroom tests.

It may be necessary to "try out" various approaches for adapting instruction, then revise the information in the academic portion of the graduated reentry plan based on whether the accommodation or modification appears to be having the desired effect and the student is comfortable using it.

In terms of MCAS participation, the student must have either an IEP or the 504 plan to be eligible to receive test accommodations. The IEP or 504 team must evaluate the student's current academic performance, profile, and learning preferences and make separate decisions in each subject as to how the student will participate in MCAS, including whether the student will take the standard MCAS test and, if so, which

accommodations will be provided. Accommodations must be listed *separately* for routine instruction and for MCAS testing in the 504 plan.

It may be appropriate for a student with a concussion to participate in the MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt), instead of the standard MCAS test in a subject, even with the provision of test accommodations, because the complexity and severity of the student's disability may make it impossible for the student to take a test of the intensity and duration of MCAS and/or to complete each test session in a single school day, as required. The MCAS-Alt is a collection of the student's work and other information in the assessed subject collected into a portfolio by the student's teacher over the course of the school year and submitted each year to the state in early April. The decision to designate a student for the MCAS-Alt is made by the IEP or 504 team.

The principal may determine that a student diagnosed with a concussion who is on a graduated reentry plan should *not* participate in MCAS testing because participation may impede the student's recovery or endanger the student's health. In making this determination, the principal should consult with any of the following, as appropriate: the school nurse, guidance counselor, student's teacher(s), members of the student's building-based support and assistance team or Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team, the physician who made the diagnosis or is managing the student's recovery, and the child's parent or guardian. In such cases, the student should be designated *Absent Medical* in the student's test booklet, which will be reflected in reports of test results received by the parent, school, and district.

Information on participation requirements for students with disabilities in MCAS can be found on the Department's website at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation/?section=sped](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation/?section=sped).

