MCAS Action Map

What is your goal?

The Massachusetts DESE mandates that all public schools administer the MCAS to students in grades 3-8 during the Spring of each school year. During each school year, the staff needs to have training on the test administration. The district benefits from having all staff trained on the administration of the test because failure to do so would have ramifications for the district as a whole. Each school benefits from having all staff trained so that the test administration runs smoothly and students can perform at their best.

What do they need to do?

Staff members will be able to:
- Login to PearsonAccessNext with their provided credentials
- Manage test administration sessions in PearsonAccessNext
- Assist students with accommodations and accessibility features during test administration
- Be briefed on Health and Safety Protocols for Spring 2022
- Understand school-based procedures and logistics for MCAS administration

What makes it difficult?

There are a number of factors that make the annual MCAS training a challenge, especially with the interruptions of the past few years due to COVID-19. In 2021 there was test administration happening for both in-person and remote students. In 2020, MCAS was outright cancelled due to schools across the state not attending in person. This year's test administration is expected to be back to "normal" with all students attending in-person.

In addition to the challenges of the actual test administration, there is a mix of staff members in the district who are veteran teachers and have experienced this before and new teachers from the past few years that have never experienced a "normal" test administration.

Lastly, a major challenge each year is that the mandated training has a number of items to cover, but traditionally the amount of time available for the mandated training is limited. This leads to areas being skimmed over and not fully understood. This results in additional support needed as the test administration timeframe approaches (i.e. staff members need accounts reset, instructions need to be given to access, information that was covered in the training, etc.) and puts a strain on tech staff, administration, and related staff.

What changes will help?

- Focused bits of information sent out to staff
- Development of self-paced training
- Use of faculty meeting to address questions and follow up (instead of the primary mode of training)

Is training part of the solution?

Yes, training must be part of the solution per the Massachusetts DESE guidelines and regulations. Practice activities will also help, as well as reference guides/handouts.

Brainstorm activity ideas

- [ ] Flashcards for accommodations and accessibility features
- [ ] Google Forms for recorded assessment purposes
- [ ] Updates for 2022 (Handout)
- [ ] 3D Image for classroom test security
- [ ] Scenario-based eLearning activity for tasks for test administrators
- [ ] Embedded padlet for questions & answers

Prototype one activity

To start this project, I created a prototype of two learning activities. The first is a walkthrough of the PearsonAccessNext websites which outlined to users the differences between the training site and the live testing site. The second is a flashcard learning activity reviewing accommodations and accessibility features. They can be accessed here:
https://rise.articulate.com/share/xuyvcKIVNsJhnK6NNk2u6xcmfp7N4cuI

Approve the prototype

Show it to learners as well as stakeholders

Outline all solutions

Summarize all solutions, not just training

Approve the outline

And the proposed look and feel

Produce the activity

Use the final format and media

Approve the activity

It will serve as a model

Write & produce in batches

SME reviews some while you write others

Release the activities

Not necessarily as a course!

Evaluate & improve

Are you moving toward your goal?