

## RICAS ELA/Literacy Informational Session Q&A

January 2018

### TestNav8 Functionality:

*Q: Do spaces and punctuation marks count as “characters” in the character counter within the student response box for both the Short Response and Essays Response?*

A: Yes, each space and punctuation mark counts as one character within the counter.

*Q: Does the note pad count characters?*

A: No, the note pad does not count characters. The character counter is only included within the student response boxes for the Short Response (grades 3 & 4) and Essay Responses.

*Q: What are hot spot items?*

A: Hot Spot items may look different and are best described by examples. The technology allows students to indicate an answer choice.

RICAS ELA Practice Test examples of items using Hot Spot technology.

[Grade 3, Item 8 of 17](#) - Students are asked to click on a circle within a chart to indicate their answer.

[Grade 7, Item 8 of 14](#) - Students are asked to select phrases from the text, by clicking on their answer. The answer will change color to indicate it has been selected.

*Q: Some questions have 3 selections - are they side by side or are students tabbing between them?*

A: For RICAS, TestNav8 will present all 3 passages in a whole screen view for students to read, prior to any questions. As the students proceed to answer questions, the text or texts needed to answer a question will be tabbed within the student view. Please refer to the [practice items](#) for examples.

*Q: What will happen if the character limit is reached on the short/essay responses? Will the student not be allowed to continue to write?*

A: When a student has reached their character limit, they will not be allowed to continue to type. Please know, the character limits have been set in accordance with field test data and we don't anticipate issues; however, should one arise, please be sure to contact us.

## **Test Design:**

*Q: Are the essays only narrative or will they also include informational text?*

A: Students will encounter both narrative and text-based essays on the RICAS. Students may read informational and/or literary passage sets for their text-based essays.

*Q: For multi-select items, do students need to get part A correct to earn points for part B?*

A: For multiple select items, students must answer Part A correctly in order to earn a point from Part B. Important to note: students will not receive any points for Part B, if Part A is not correct.

*Q: Do we know how the language points are distributed between writing and the other responses?*

A: The RICAS reporting category of LANGUAGE accounts for 25% (+/-5%) for all students grades 3-8. To ascertain how many language points are distributed between the essays and other questions in any given RICAS test, we will provide an example for students in grades 6-8.

For the Grades 6-8 RICAS ELA assessment, students will have a total of 51 points. Approximately 20-30% of said 51 points for LANGUAGE is 10-15 points. Each student in grades 6-8 is asked to write 3 essays. For each essay, students can earn a maximum of 3 points for language, therefore up to 9 language points maybe earned from the essays. This results in approximately 1-6 points to be earned from multiple choice, multiple select and/or technology enhanced items. Please refer to the [RICAS ELA Test Design](#).

*Q: Will all students have Matrix Items? Are they identified as Matrix items?*

A: All students will have a matrix passage set. The matrix items are not identified within the test as doing so would compromise the data. It is expected that students read and answer every passage set and questions with the same intensity and effort. Remember matrix questions do not count towards a student score on RICAS.

*Q: ELA is 2 sessions and if each session is 120 minutes -- how much of that time is extended time?*

A: The MA DOE states that "the recommended testing times are based on an analysis of student testing time from the first year of MCAS next-generation computer-based testing in 2017 (and are slightly longer than recommendations from the previous year). We didn't use a percentage, but it is above the average testing time."

### **Scoring and Reporting:**

*Q: Is there one score for ELA or separate scores for reading, language, and writing?*

A: Students will receive an overall performance level score for ELA. Details for each reporting category will be provided indicating how many points the student scored in each of the individual reporting categories (reading, writing & language).

*Q: Will the language score be for all grade levels?*

A: Yes. The RICAS ELA Reporting Category of Language is 25% for all students, grades 3-8. Please refer to the [RICAS ELA Test Design](#) for further information.

*Q: Who is scoring the written responses? Is that outsourced through Pearson or will there be an opportunity to become a trained scorer?*

A: Our vendor, Measured Progress/Pearson will be scoring all student responses. We encourage all educators to familiarize themselves with the RICAS ELA rubrics and calibrate teacher and student understanding of the expectations for writing.

*Q: Does the 3 or 4 score point on the rubric correlate to "proficient"?*

A: The RICAS Rubric scores of 3 or 4 do not correlate to a "proficiency score." We expect all students to strive for the highest score on the rubric (idea development and conventions) as it is the combination of these scores that are utilized to determine their overall proficiency in writing on the RICAS assessment. Please refer to the [RICAS rubrics](#), [released student work samples](#), and [calibration protocols](#).

*Q: Are students expected to fill 2 pages on the essay in grades 6-8, or if they answer the question using evidence and it's well organized, will the lack of using 5000 characters hurt their score?*

A: The character counter is provided for students to have a sense of how much space they have left to answer the question. Students are not expected to use all 5000 characters. Per the rubric, students are expected to compose well-developed essays that answer the question completely, provide insightful and fully developed ideas and contain skillful selection and explanations of evidence and/or details. In addition, their essay should demonstrate skillful use of organization and contain a rich expression of ideas. Please refer to the released [Student Work Samples](#).

## **Resources:**

*Q: Do you anticipate more items being released in the near future?*

A: The [Practice Tests](#) have all been updated as of February 2018 and do include additional items. Additional [released items](#) will be posted in Fall 2018.

*Q: Where can I find the metadata and a detailed report on descriptors?*

A: Metadata is found within [English Language Arts Released Items](#): Released Item Answer Key/Scoring Rubric.

Additional information on the RICAS Achievement Level Descriptors can be found within the [MCAS ELA Grades 3-8 Standard Setting Meeting Executive Summary](#)

*Q: Can you provide and clear and concise definitions of criteria to be met for Achievement Level Descriptors ("demonstrate sufficient understanding" compared to "comprehensive understanding". or "mostly consistent of conventions" vs. "consistent control") Does that mean no mistakes... some mistakes? What is the criteria to define these descriptors?*

A: Please refer to the [MCAS ELA Grades 3-8 Standard Setting Meeting Executive Summary](#). General rule of thumb to remember is to use the Achievement Level Descriptors in conjunction with professional judgement, student work samples, and grade level expectations.

*Q: What accommodations can a student receive on ELA RICAS?*

A: Please refer to the [RICAS Accommodations for Students with Disabilities and English Learners tab](#) within the RIDE RICAS webpage for further information.