EDUCATIONAL PROFICIENCY PLAN (EPP)
The Educational Proficiency Plan (EPP) is a tool to help a student move toward proficiency on the high school English language arts and mathematics curriculum frameworks.
What is the EPP?

The purpose of the Educational Proficiency Plan (EPP) is to **increase the likelihood** that graduates of Massachusetts high schools **have the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in college and today's workforce**.

The plan is intended to help Massachusetts students become sufficiently knowledgeable in mathematics and English language arts to **matriculate at higher education institutions (remediation free)** and be prepared for postsecondary careers.
WHY RAISE THE BAR TO PROFICIENCY?

★ 62% of students scoring below *Proficient* on the math MCAS enroll in developmental math in their first semester of postsecondary education in Massachusetts public colleges and universities.

★ Students who scored higher (*Advanced/Proficient*) on the MCAS were more likely to return the fall after their initial enrollment in college than students scoring lower (*Needs Improvement*) on the MCAS.

★ A higher MCAS performance level is associated with a higher GPA and credits earned in college.

*Source: Edwin Post-Secondary Education Reports*
Public Postsecondary Enrollment in Developmental Coursework

34.4% of Massachusetts (MA) public high school graduates in the class of 2013 enrolled in MA public higher education took at least one remedial (developmental) course in their first semester.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Term Developmental Math Coursework by 10th Grade MCAS Math</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>39.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs Improvement</td>
<td>62.0%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Term Developmental Reading Coursework by 10th Grade MCAS ELA</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs Improvement</td>
<td>47.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the Regulations

603 CMR 30.00: M.G.L. c. 69, §§ 1B and 1D; St. 2003, c.140, §119.

(from) 30.03: Standards for Competency Determination

Students starting with the graduating class of 2010 must satisfy one of the following two conditions in both English language arts and mathematics to earn a Competency Determination.

(a) meet or exceed the Proficient threshold scaled score of 240 on the English Language Arts and Mathematics grade 10 MCAS tests; or

(b) meet or exceed the Needs Improvement threshold scaled score of 220 on the English Language Arts and Mathematics grade 10 MCAS tests and fulfill the requirements of an Educational Proficiency Plan.
30.03: Standards for Competency Determination

- **A student achieving a scaled score 240 or higher on an MCAS test** or a score on another approved test* will be deemed to have achieved proficiency in the subject area and to have **fulfilled the Educational Proficiency Plan** in that subject.

- For students who have met local graduation requirements and the Science and Technology/Engineering graduation requirement, but have scored 220-238 on the MCAS in their EPP subject(s), the **principal will determine** (or the head of school or his or her designee) whether the student has completed the Educational Proficiency Plan requirements.

*At this point in time, the MCAS/EPP Math Test is the only other approved test for this purpose.*
30.03: Standards for Competency Determination

Educational Proficiency Plans for each required content area shall include, at a minimum:

(a) A review of a student's strengths and weaknesses in the content area.

(b) The courses the student will be required to take and successfully complete in grades 11 and 12 that will move the student toward proficiency on the grade 10 curriculum framework standards as well as on grade 11 and 12 standards in English language arts or grade 11 and 12 grade span standards or Algebra II standards in mathematics.

(c) A description of the assessments the school will administer on at least an annual basis to determine whether the student is making progress toward proficiency, or has become proficient on the grade 10 standards. These assessments may include MCAS tests or allowable assessments (see slides 15-20 for details).
PLEASE NOTE

“Beginning with the class of 2010 and beyond” includes students who were originally in an older class but have been retained or held back.

Students must also meet/exceed the minimum Needs Improvement score (scaled score of 220 or higher) on one of the four Science and Technology/Engineering MCAS tests.
REMEMBER ...

At a **minimum** the EPP must include:

1. a review of the student's **strengths and weaknesses**, based on MCAS and other assessment results, coursework, grades, and teacher input;

2. identification of the **courses** the student will be required to take and successfully complete **in grades 11 and 12**; and

3. a description of **the assessment(s)** the school will administer on at least an annual basis to determine if the student is moving toward proficiency, or has become proficient on the grade 10 standards.
STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Developing a student’s EPP begins with first determining (in the content area) the student’s specific strengths (to build upon) and specific weaknesses to be addressed in carrying out the plan.
Coursework

The plan must outline the courses a student will take and successfully complete in grades 11 and 12 in order to move that student toward proficiency.
Coursework

- The Department encourages students with EPPs to take challenging courses that prepare them for college and a career.
- EPPs must include courses designed to move students toward proficiency on the grade 10 standards, but also on the grade 11 and 12 standards.
- Some students who score below 220 or its equivalent on MCAS may need additional support; however, the EPP for nearly all students should not prescribe remedial courses.
What is the definition of “successfully complete” a course in the relevant content area(s)?

“Successful completion” of a course means, at minimum, that the student has earned academic credit in that content area for the course under the school district’s standards for awarding academic credit.

The school district may establish additional criteria for successful completion of a course required by a student’s EPP.
FINALLY, ASSESSMENTS

The plan must identify the assessments to be used annually (at least) to determine whether a student has met or is moving toward proficiency.

An MCAS test (retest or math EPP test are the only instruments that can determine proficiency without the requirement of additional coursework in 11th and 12th grade.
For School Year 2015-2016 schools **may use** the following:

- Locally developed end-of-course English language arts and Mathematics assessments
- Mathematics MCAS/EPP tests designed by the state specifically for the EPP
- The March ELA MCAS retest
- Accuplacer tests currently used by Massachusetts public colleges and universities for course placement

**NOTE:** *The November ELA and Mathematics and the March Mathematics retests may be also used, but ONLY for students who have NOT ALREADY SCORED AT LEAST 220 (Needs Improvement) in the relevant subject.*
Locally developed English language arts and mathematics tests

End of course assessments can take many forms, and may vary depending on the school or district.

The assessments may be traditional comprehensive final exams, a combination of the scores of midterms, finals or quarterly exams that cover the entire year, or a more innovative portfolio or project based assessment. The end of course assessment must cover the entire year of work and be based on high school standards in the assessed subject area.
Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education

Mathematics MCAS test forms designed specifically for the EPP

Grade 10 Mathematics MCAS/EPP Test forms (scoring is done at the local level)

1. **When are the 2015-16 MCAS/EPP Tests available?** Forms for the MCAS/EPP Math Test will be posted in the Department’s Security Portal in mid-April 2016. Superintendents/Principals need to have their district’s Directory Administrator assign them access to their high school’s MCAS EPP DropBox and then use their Department-assigned password to get to the secure EPP forms.

2. **What are the requirements for test administration?** In 2015-2016, there will be one time period open for test administration for students at the end of April/beginning of May. The test administration manuals (posted on the EPP website and in the Portal) provides details on test security, administration, and ethics requirements. Test forms may NOT be used for practice or review.

3. **What is the content and structure of the MCAS/EPP Tests?** The mathematics test forms are aligned to Curriculum Framework content standards and mirror the MCAS test blueprints except for the distribution of items types: the mathematics test includes only multiple choice questions (no short answer or constructed response).
Accuplacer tests

All public state and community colleges and the University of Massachusetts currently use Accuplacer as part of their placement process.

Testing should be done in partnership with a community or state college.

If selected as an option, Accuplacer testing can be used as an early college assessment for high school students. The assessment results can be used for access and readiness for college.
The MCAS Retest

- The Department has recently determined that MCAS retests *can* accurately measure performance up to the low end of the *Proficient* level (240), and will therefore report student performance at the *Needs Improvement/Proficient* threshold for students who take MCAS retests. This means that students eligible to take the retest who reach the *Proficient* level can earn their CD and avoid the need for further participation in an EPP.

- The Department provides to each district a list of students who participated in the retests and who earned a scaled score of 240 in Mathematics and/or in ELA.

- All students on EPPs for ELA may participate in the spring ELA MCAS retest.

- The MCAS fall and spring retest can only be taken by students who have not yet scored at least 220 on that subject (students who have scored at the *Failing* level on previous MCAS administrations and who are new to Massachusetts, etc.).
EPP School/District Management Issues

• Determine staff assignments and tasks

• Determine process for identifying students’ strengths and weaknesses

• Determine process for engaging students and parents/guardians

• Determine assessment option(s) for students in “EPP status”

• Determine process for record keeping through templates or electronic media
WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- The **principal/headmaster** is responsible for **assigning staff** to design, implement, and coordinate EPPs.

- The high school **principal/headmaster** or designee is responsible for determining whether a student has successfully fulfilled all the requirements of an EPP.

- **Students** and **parents/guardians** are encouraged to be active participants in the development of the EPP.
OPTIONS

School district personnel are invited to use or modify* the sample EPP templates and related documents available on the Department’s website: http://www.doe.mass.edu/hsreform/epp/samples

OR

Use locally developed plan templates

OR

Use software/web developed plans

*(Note: Districts are responsible for ensuring that EPPs meet all regulatory requirements, no matter what documents are used or modified.)
Making the EPP Relevant for Students

Templates have been designed and shared by districts to be of assistance in the implementation of the EPP requirement.

1. Educational Proficiency Plan sample templates
2. Revised Massachusetts Career Plan Model with EPP elements
3. Other materials related to the implementation of the Educational Proficiency Plan

These templates and other materials are found at: http://www.doe.mass.edu/hsreform/epp
AS FOR A STUDENT’S IEP ...

★ The IEP is a required document outlining how the student’s disability affects his/her learning and the services and support that are provided in response to the student’s disability and concomitant learning needs.

★ The IEP may be inappropriate to detail course selection as the services and supports in the IEP are mandated services under special education law.
AS FOR THE STUDENT’S IEP …

The Department suggests a review of the IEP prior to the development of the EPP in considering the student’s strengths and weaknesses in the learning environment.

For some students it may be appropriate to simply reference the IEP when writing the section of the EPP seeking information on the student’s strengths and weaknesses in the area that the EPP is addressing.

For many students with disabilities the Transition Plan [http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/cspd/transition.pps](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/cspd/transition.pps) may be an effective tool.
FINALLY, KEEP IN MIND THAT THE EPP CAN BE A VALUABLE TOOL

An EPP can improve communication with students and families.

An EPP can help students to identify their goals, maximize their strengths, and overcome challenges in order to be prepared for future educational, career and ultimately life success!
What evidence should be maintained to verify that a student’s EPP has been successfully completed?

Documentation that includes successful completion of the course(s) required by the student’s EPP, as well as the results of the annual assessments used and the dates of administration. EPP data has been reported in SIMS beginning in end of year reporting for School Year 2009-2010 as a graduate with a Competency Determination.
Additional EPP Resources

Updated EPP resources and information will be posted on the Department’s College and Career Readiness webpage

http://www.doe.mass.edu/ccr/epp/