*****Massachusetts Department of***

***Elementary and Secondary Education***

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# MCAS RESULTS AND STUDENTS SERVED BY EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVES[[1]](#footnote-1)

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education provides this report, along with the educational collaborative data published in School/District Profiles, as required by *Chapter 43 of the Acts of 2012*: An Act Relative to Improving Accountability and Oversight of Education Collaboratives, which amended the law authorizing educational collaboratives, M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E. This report accompanies statewide performance results for students served in educational collaboratives beginning with the spring 2012 administration of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) and MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt) in the subject areas of English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, and Science and Technology/Engineering (STE). Beginning in 2012, assessment data published on the Department’s website include the number and percentage of students who took the MCAS and MCAS-Alt in individual educational collaboratives (herein, “collaboratives”) and collaboratives in the aggregate. Demographic data, including enrollment by race/ethnicity, gender, grade, and special education and disability status, were first reported in 2013.

**History of Collaboratives**

Collaboratives have operated as public entities in Massachusetts for over forty years. The primary mechanisms under which these collaboratives have operated are M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E and M.G.L. c. 71B, the current state special education law. Collaboratives were initially formed by school districts under these statutes in order to operate joint special education programs in which students from member districts (and some non-member districts) could be served. While collaboratives still provide special education programming, they have evolved since that time in order to meet other needs of public entities in a cooperative manner. Many collaboratives currently provide additional programs for students and services to member and non-member districts, the state, and other public entities, including (but not limited to) alternative school programs, professional development, transportation, related services, Medicaid reimbursement billing, and cooperative purchasing.

**Who Collaboratives Serve**

The educational programming offered by an individual collaborative is determined by the collaborative board. Most collaborative programs are offered in classrooms in public schools within the collaborative’s member districts. Collaboratives also run public day school programs which are subject to approval by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. All collaboratives currently in existence in the Commonwealth serve students with disabilities; some serve students without disabilities, as well. The vast majority of students served by collaboratives, however, are students with disabilities. Data for the years now available show, in the aggregate, approximately 97% of students enrolled in collaboratives are identified as students with disabilities. By way of comparison, less than 20% of public school students statewide are identified as students with disabilities.

**Participation Requirements**

The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System is designed to meet the requirements of the Massachusetts Education Reform Law of 1993. (For more information about this law, see [*Building on 20 Years of Massachusetts Education Reform, prepared for the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education*](http://www.doe.mass.edu/commissioner/BuildingOnReform.pdf)*.)* This law specified that the state-wide testing program must:

* Test all public-school students in Massachusetts, including students with disabilities and English learner students;
* Measure performance based on the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework learning standards; and
* Report on the performance of individual students, schools, and districts.

Students with significant disabilities who are unable to take the standard MCAS tests, even with accommodations, must take the MCAS-Alt. Across all collaboratives, data for 2018 show that 27% of all collaborative students participated in the MCAS-Alt in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics, while 26% took the MCAS-Alt in Science and Technology/Engineering (STE). By comparison, the *2018* [*MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt): State Summary of Participation and Achievement*](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/results.html) indicates that among all students with disabilities in the state, between 6.6% and 8.2% took the MCAS-Alt in each content area. Decisions as to how each student with a disability will participate in MCAS must be made by the student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 team, and must be documented in the student’s IEP or Section 504 plan.

Across all collaboratives, data for the years now available show that over 90% of students with disabilities have either moderate or high levels of need, as determined by their IEP teams. For details on the criteria used to determine level of need, please see the *Primary Disability / Level of Need* form on the Special Education [IEP Forms and Notices page](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/iep/forms/english/default.html).

**Data Reporting and Accountability**

The MCAS participation and performance results of students served by collaboratives have been and continue to be reported to their sending districts for accountability purposes. As a result of the amendment to M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E, the Department is now required to report on the MCAS results of students served by each collaborative.

In 2017, the Department began updating its MCAS testing program to new, next-generation tests that are designed to measure readiness for college and a career after high school. The first next-generation tests were administered in 2017 in grades 3-8 English language arts (ELA) and mathematics; in 2019, next-generation tests were first administered in grade 10 in ELA and mathematics. Information about the transition to next-generation tests, including the MCAS tests in science and technology/engineering, is available in a [communication to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education](http://www.doe.mass.edu/bese/docs/fy2019/2018-09/item5.html) from Commissioner Jeffrey Riley.

State MCAS results, as well as school and district results, including collaboratives, can be found on the [School/District Profiles pages](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/). The Department also provides a [state summary of MCAS-Alt results](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/results.html).

MCAS results for collaboratives are posted on the [School/District Profiles](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/) pages under the ***Directories*** tab. On each collaborative's profile page, MCAS and MCAS-Alt participation and achievement level data are reported on the ***Assessment*** tab. For the years 2012 through 2016, achievement level data are provided for the following student groups: all students; students with disabilities; students with moderate or high level of need; gender. Beginning in 2017, a **Participation Report** was added to the Assessment tab to show MCAS and MCAS-Alt participants by gender and nature of students' primary disability. Participation and achievement data are also provided on the [Assessment and Accountability Statewide reports](http://profilesuat.doe.mass.edu/state_report/#Assessment%20and%20Accountability) that display all collaboratives and that include aggregate totals for collaboratives statewide. In addition to participation and achievement level data, [Student Growth Percentiles (SGP)](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/growth/) for ELA and Mathematics are provided for students in grades 4-8 and 10 who participated in the current and prior standard MCAS test administration. As is the case with all schools and school districts, participation and achievement data are not reported for groups with fewer than 10 students (for student privacy and validity purposes), and SGP is not reported for groups with fewer than 20 students.

The Department will continue to report MCAS data for collaboratives on the [School/District Profiles](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/) pages. It is our hope that the data will be useful in serving collaborative students. Additional information and assistance concerning these reports can be obtained by contacting Student Assessment Services by email at mcas@doe.mass.edu or by phone at 781-338-3625.

1. Assessment results for educational collaboratives are available beginning with the spring 2012 MCAS administration; student enrollment and demographic data are available beginning with the June 2013 SIMS collection. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)