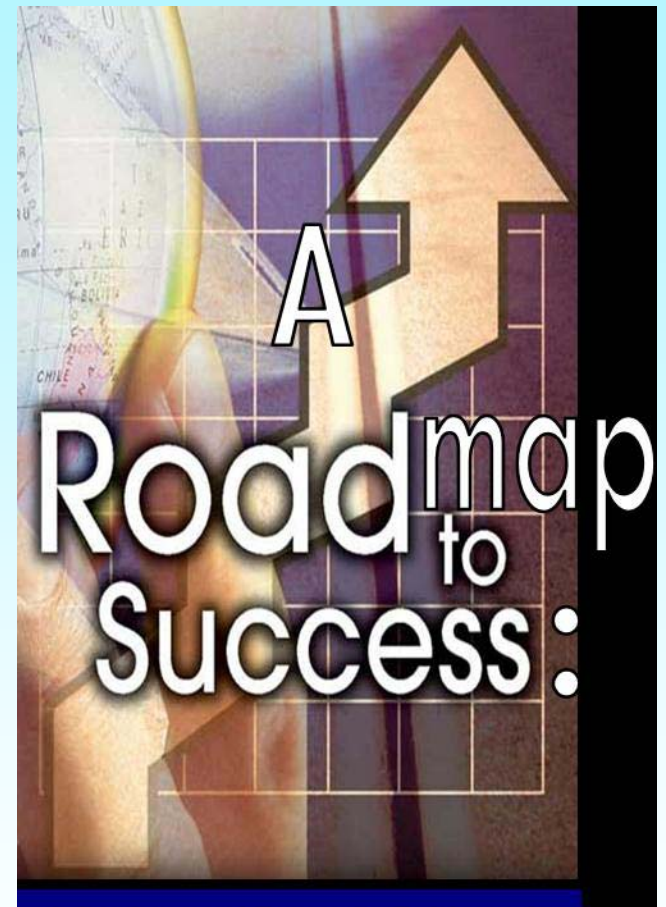


# EDUCATIONAL PROFICIENCY PLAN



The Educational Proficiency Plan (EPP) is a tool to help a student move toward proficiency on the roadmap to success.

# 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 assist MA students to be 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?

- 50% of students scoring below *Proficient* on the math MCAS enrolled in developmental math in their first semester of postsecondary education.
- 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: [Preliminary Findings from the School-to-College Database](#)

\*Includes only students with passing scores.

# Public Postsecondary Enrollment in Developmental Coursework

37% of Massachusetts (MA) public high school graduates in the class of 2005 enrolled in MA public higher education took at least one remedial (developmental) course in their first semester.

Developmental Enrollment by Segment	Percentage of Students
State University	8%
State College	22%
Community College	65%

Students scoring <i>Needs Improvement</i> in ELA attending community college	Students scoring <i>Needs Improvement</i> in math attending a community college
36% took a course in developmental reading 40% took a course in developmental writing	66% took a course in developmental math

# 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 determined by the Department of Education 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 not achieved this score threshold, the principal or head of school (or his or her designee) will determine whether the student has fulfilled the Educational Proficiency Plan.

## 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 must include MCAS tests or other tests identified by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for this purpose.

## PLEASE NOTE !

“Beginning with the class of 2010 and beyond” includes students who have been retained or held back.

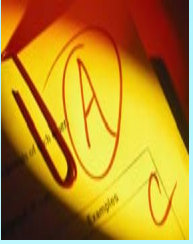
Students must also meet/exceed the minimum *Needs Improvement* score (scaled score of 220 or higher) on one of the four Science and Technology/Engineering MCAS tests.

## REMINDER ...

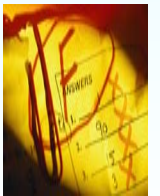
At a minimum the EPP must include:

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.

For School Year 2008-2009 schools may use the following:

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

For School Year 2009-2010 schools may use the following:

- ❖ Locally developed end-of-course English language arts and Mathematics assessments
- ❖ MCAS tests designed specifically for the EPP
- ❖ Accuplacer tests currently used by Massachusetts public colleges and universities for course placement
- ❖ The MCAS fall and spring retest for those students who are eligible to take the retest (students who have scored at the *Failing* level on previous MCAS administrations and transfer students for the most part)

# EPP Assessment Summary

SY 2008-09 Assessment Options	Determine Proficiency	Measures Progress towards Proficiency
End-of-Course Assessments		X
MCAS/EPP Tests	X	X
Accuplacer		X

Currently, the MCAS/EPP Test and the MCAS retest (for those students eligible) are the only ways for students to earn their Competency Determination in their junior year and not have an EPP for their senior year.

# 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.

# MCAS test forms designed specifically for the EPP

Grade 10 MCAS/EPP Test forms - for which scoring is done at the local level

1. **When were the 2008-2009 MCAS/EPP Tests available?** Forms for the MCAS/EPP Test for mathematics and ELA were posted in the Department's Security Portal in January 2009 for the 2008-2009 winter test administration window, and in April 2009 for the spring window. Superintendents/Principals needed 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 2008-2009, there were two time periods open for test administration for students. The test administration manuals (also posted to the portal) provided 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?** Both the math and ELA 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), and the ELA form includes only multiple choice items on the reading comprehension portion of the test. The ELA test does include a writing prompt.

# 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 provided to each district a list of students who participated in the November 2008 retest and who earned a scaled score of 240 in Mathematics and/or in ELA.
- Please note that the student participation and eligibility requirements for the spring MCAS grade 10 ELA and Mathematics tests and retests remain unchanged.

# 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 EPP tools available on the Department’s website

OR

Use locally developed plan templates

OR

Use software/web developed plans

(Note: Use of alternative EPP tools must meet the regulatory requirements of the EPP.)

# 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.

# **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 will be reported in SIMS in end of year reporting for School Year 2009-2010.

# 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/hsreform/epp/>