

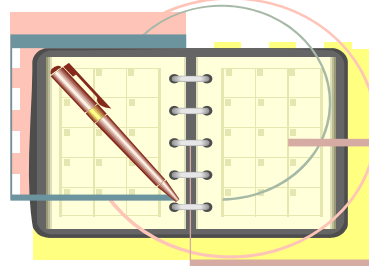
A Student and Parent's Guide to the Competency Determination and Educational Proficiency Plans

What is a Competency Determination?

The Competency Determination (CD) is a requirement for earning a high school diploma under Massachusetts state law. A student must also meet local requirements for graduation.

What is required to earn a CD?

- Beginning with the Class of 2010, a student must achieve:
 - ❖ A minimum score of 240 (*Proficient* level) on the Grade 10 English Language Arts (ELA) and Grade 10 Mathematics MCAS tests or Retests.
 - or
 - ❖ A minimum score of 220 (*Needs Improvement* level) on the Grade 10 ELA and Grade 10 Mathematics MCAS tests or Retests *and* successfully complete an *Educational Proficiency Plan* (EPP).
- Beginning with the Class of 2010, a student must also achieve a minimum score of 220 (*Needs Improvement* level) on **one** of the four high school Science and Technology/Engineering MCAS tests.
 - Biology;
 - Chemistry;
 - Introductory Physics; or
 - Technology/Engineering.



What is an Educational Proficiency Plan (EPP)?

An EPP is a plan that schools develop to help individual students make progress towards proficiency in English Language Arts (ELA) and/or Mathematics.

The purpose of the EPP is to help a student acquire the knowledge and develop the skills he or she needs to be ready for higher education and/or a career after high school.

Each EPP must include:

- A review of the student's strengths and weaknesses based on MCAS tests and other assessment results, coursework, grades, and teacher input.
- A list of the courses in the relevant ELA and/or Mathematics content areas that the student must take and complete successfully in grades 11 and 12.
- A description of the assessments the school will use at least once each year to make sure that the student is making progress toward or has achieved proficiency.



Who needs an Educational Proficiency Plan?

School districts are required to develop EPPs for any high school student who has not met the minimum *Proficient* level score of 240 on either or both of the Grade 10 English Language Arts (ELA) and Grade 10 Mathematics MCAS tests.

What happens if a student has not yet scored in the *Needs Improvement* level on the MCAS?

A student who has not yet achieved the minimum *Needs Improvement* score of 220 **must** take the MCAS retest in one or both subject areas (ELA /Math).

Beginning with the Class of 2010, a student must also meet or exceed the *Needs Improvement* score of 220 on **one** of the four Science and Technology/Engineering MCAS tests. Students who do reach the *Needs Improvement* score of 220 or above are not required to take the MCAS tests again.

How does a student successfully complete the EPP?

To successfully complete the EPP a student must complete both of the following:

- Meet the school district's requirements for completing the coursework identified in the EPP, and
- Demonstrate on an annual assessment that he or she has attained or is moving toward proficiency in the subject area.

The school principal makes the final determination whether or not the student has successfully completed the EPP.

It is important to note that a student may never score at the proficient level on a locally developed assessment but can earn a CD as long as the principal can document that the student is moving toward proficiency.

What is the parents' role?

The EPP is an opportunity for the student, parents, and educators to work together to plan for success during and after high school.



Parents of a high school student who scores below the 240 *Proficient* level on either or both the Grade 10 ELA and Grade 10 Mathematics MCAS tests should speak with the school principal or school counselor to discuss an EPP for their child. Parents may also want to seek guidance on how they can best support their child to qualify for a CD and graduate with a high school diploma.

What does the EPP requirement mean for my child?

Your child will now have to meet an additional requirement before he or she earns a high school diploma. The EPP will lay out challenging courses designed to equip your child with the skills and knowledge he or she needs to succeed in college and a career.

A student already enrolled in four years of mathematics and English language arts classes who also needs an EPP should not notice a difference in his or her course work. A student will be encouraged and supported to take rigorous courses that will better prepare him or her for postsecondary education and careers.

The EPP is not intended to promote test prep or remedial courses for the junior and senior years of high school. The intent of the EPP is to help a student become proficient at Grade 10 learning standards and beyond.

For more information go to <http://www.doe.mass.edu/hsreform/epp> or contact your school principal or guidance counselor.

