

Jeffrey Nellhaus
Acting Commissioner
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Commissioner's Update

January 10, 2008

Dear Superintendents, and Leaders of Charter Schools and Collaboratives:

In this Update I have one announcement and four items for your review.

School Attending Children Report

The School Attending Children Report is now available and must be completed by all local school districts for each city/town in Massachusetts by March 1, 2008. Charter Schools and Regional Vocational schools are not required to complete this report.

If school district staff need any assistance, they should contact the data collection office at 781-338-3282 or data@doe.mass.edu.

Items Posted at www.doe.mass.edu:

1. [2008 Participation Requirements and Information about Additional Testing Opportunities for the MCAS High School Science and Technology/Engineering \(STE\) Tests](#)
2. [Release of November 2007 MCAS Retest Results](#)
3. [2008 MCAS and MEPA Administration Workshops](#)
4. [Providing Updates to Shipping Information and Ordering Test Materials for the Spring 2008 MCAS Tests, March Retest, and Spring MEPA-R/W Administrations](#)

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Nellhaus
Acting Commissioner of Education

last updated: January 10, 2008

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Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

2008 Participation Requirements and Information about Additional Testing Opportunities for the MCAS High School Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) Tests

To: Superintendents, Principals, Directors of Charter Schools, Approved Private Special Education Schools, Institutional Schools, and Educational Collaboratives

Copy: District and High School Science Curriculum Coordinators/Directors

From: Jeffrey Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner of Education

Date: January 7, 2008

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform schools and districts of the 2008 MCAS high school STE test participation requirements and about additional testing opportunities for students to meet the Competency Determination (CD) in STE.

As you know, beginning with the class of 2010, all students will have to meet the CD requirement in science and technology/engineering, in addition to meeting CD requirements in English language arts and mathematics, as required by the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993. Students must meet or exceed a scaled score of 220 on one of the MCAS high school STE tests in order to satisfy this CD requirement.



Spring 2008 MCAS High School STE Participation Requirements

- All students must participate in a high school STE test by the end of grade 10. Students should participate in the test that corresponds to the course they have taken.
- Students who are held back a grade and become part of the class of 2010 or beyond will be required to pass one of the STE tests for the CD.
- Only students in grades 9 and 10, based on the grade designation reported in the March 2008 Student Information Management System (SIMS), are eligible to participate.

- Students may not participate in more than one STE test per spring administration.
- Once a student has earned a CD in STE, he/she is not eligible to participate in another STE test.

Graduating Class	Enrollment	STE Test Participation Status
Class of 2011	First-time and repeating grade 9 students who are enrolled in an STE course during the 2007-2008 school year and who have not earned their CD in STE	Eligible
	First-time grade 9 students who are not enrolled in an STE course during the 2007-2008 school year	Not Eligible ¹
Class of 2010	First-time and repeating grade 10 students who did not participate in an STE test in spring 2007 (regardless of course enrollment or the reason for their nonparticipation)	Participation Required
	Grade 10 students who participated in an STE test in spring 2007 but did not earn their CD in STE	Eligible
Grade 10 students who have earned their CD in STE	Not Eligible ¹	
Classes of 2003-2009	Grade 11 students, grade 12 students, and adults who have exited high school	Not Eligible for Testing (not required to earn a CD in STE) ¹

¹ Scores will not be generated for students who are not eligible to participate.

The Department encourages grade 9 students to participate in testing if they are completing a course that corresponds with one of the tests. Parents/guardians, in consultation with principals and other school staff, may request that their child delay participation in testing until grade 10. A **sample non-participation form**   is available.

As a reminder, state law requires all students-including students designated as limited English proficient and students with disabilities-to participate in MCAS testing. Current requirements for compiling science and technology/engineering MCAS-Alt portfolios are outlined in the *2008 Educator's Manual for MCAS-Alt* available at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/.



2008 STE Test Administration Schedule

STE tests in Biology, Chemistry, Introductory Physics, and Technology/Engineering will be administered according to the following schedule:

- Session 1 will be administered on Tuesday, June 3.
- Session 2 will be administered on Wednesday, June 4.
- Make-up tests will be administered on Thursday and Friday, June 5 and 6.

MCAS High School STE Additional Testing Opportunities for Students to Meet the CD in STE

Students in the class of 2010 or beyond who fail a high school STE test have the right to participate in additional testing opportunities. The first additional testing opportunity for these students will be in June 2008. A student who participates in additional testing opportunities will have the option to take an STE test in the same content area in which he/she first tested or take a test in a different content area from that in which he/she previously tested, provided he/she is completing a course that corresponds with that test.

The Department strongly encourages students who participated in an STE test in spring 2007 and did not earn a CD in STE to participate in testing in June 2008. For students who choose not to participate in an additional testing opportunity, it is recommended that parents or guardians sign an acknowledgement of their child's non-participation. A **sample non-participation form**   is available.

Students who participate in an STE test as an additional testing opportunity will not be administered a "focused" retest (focused retests measure student performance at the *Failing* and *Needs Improvement* levels only, for more information see www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/retest.html) as is currently the case for English language arts and mathematics. Instead, students who take an STE test as an additional testing opportunity will be taking the same test as students who are taking an STE test for the first time.

Starting in 2009, the Biology test will be offered twice a year, in February and in June, to accommodate students on semester block schedules and to provide an additional testing opportunity for students who previously failed an STE test. Students who fail the June Biology test will be eligible to take the February Biology test and vice versa. All other tests (Chemistry, Introductory Physics, and Technology/Engineering) will be offered once a year in June.

Additional Information on the High School STE Tests

The Department has established a high school STE Resources and Frequently Asked Questions page at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/science/. This page includes links to high school STE MCAS tests from 2004-2007, MCAS student work, test administration information, and other important information regarding the high school STE tests.

If you have any questions, please contact the Department's Student Assessment Services Unit at 781-338-3625.