

*Progress Report on Students Attaining the
Competency Determination
Statewide and by School and District:
Classes of 2008 and 2009*

March 2008
Massachusetts Department of Education



Massachusetts Department of Education

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Executive Summary of the Competency Determination Rates for the Classes of 2008 and 2009

This report provides an update on the progress of students in the classes of 2008 and 2009 toward meeting the Competency Determination (CD) standard.

Statewide data in this report are summarized by race/ethnicity, student status (students with disabilities, limited English proficient students, and low income students), gender, vocational-technical school enrollment, and type of community (i.e., urban, non-urban) where students live. Additionally, aggregate data is provided in separate Excel files, located at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/results.html, for every public school and district in the Commonwealth.

A. State Level Competency Determination Results

The November 2007 MCAS retest administration represented the third retest opportunity for students in the class of 2008 and the first retest opportunity for students in the class of 2009. As **Figure 1** below shows, 94% of the class of 2008 and 90% of the class of 2009 have met the CD standard.

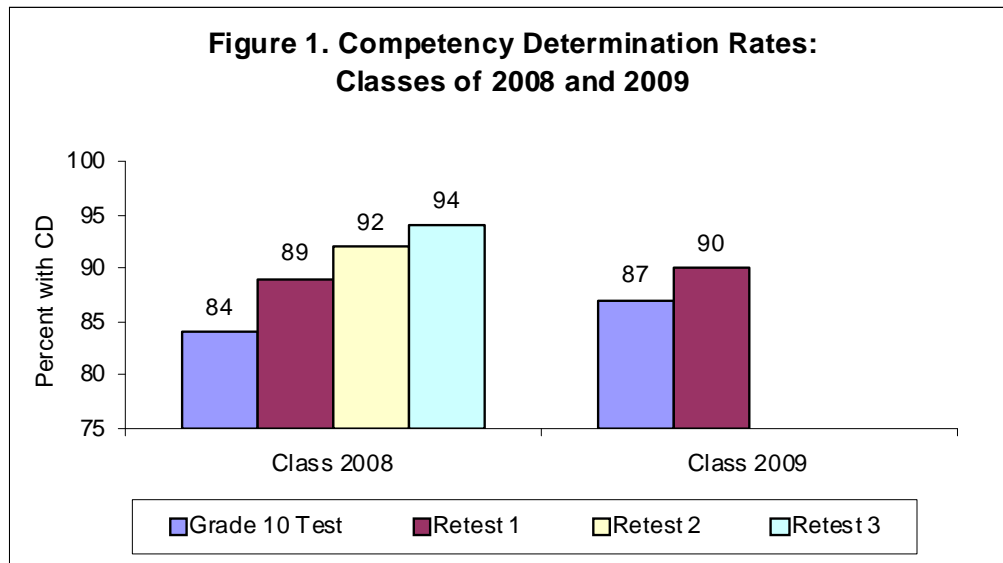
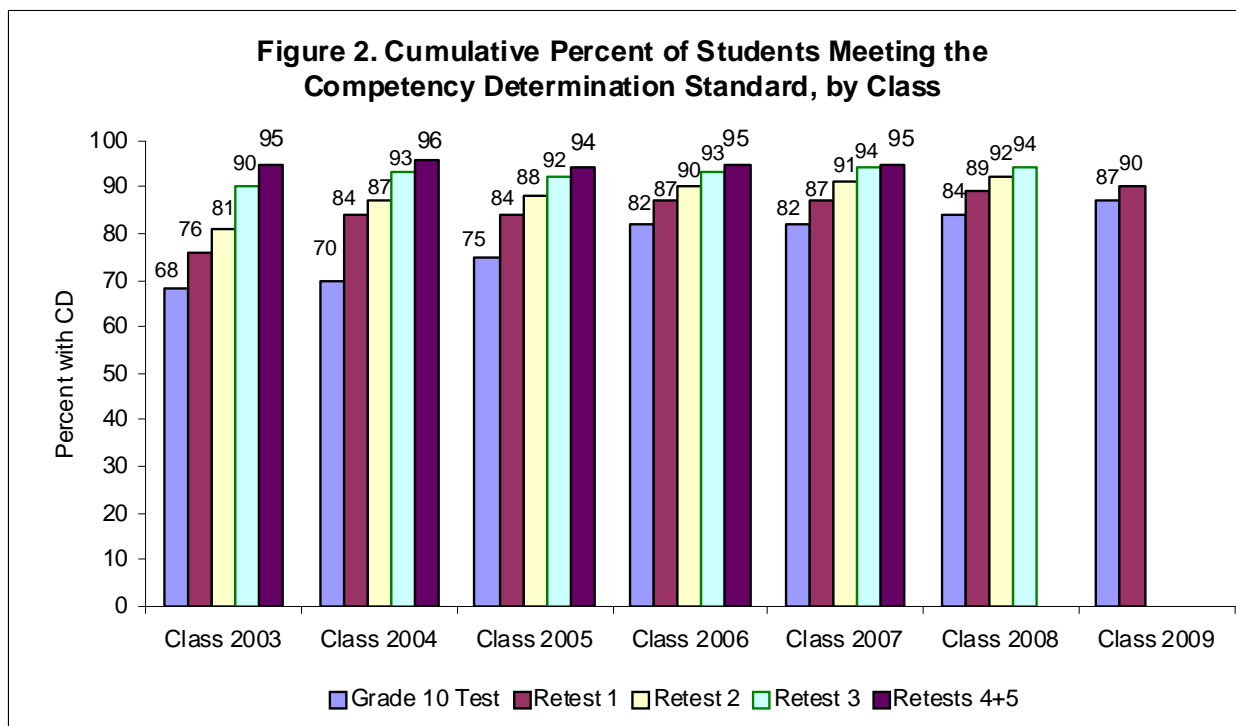


Figure 2 shows the percent of students in the classes of 2003-2009 who met the CD standard by passing MCAS tests in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics in grade 10 and the cumulative percent of students in each class who met the standard after each retest opportunity available to them. Figure 2 illustrates the following trends:

- The percent of students meeting the standard on the first attempt has increased for each successive graduating class, with the exception of the percent for the class of 2007, which remained unchanged from 2006. The percent increased from 68% for the class of 2003 to 70% for the class of 2004; to 75% for the class of 2005; to 82% for the classes of 2006 and 2007; to 84% for the class of 2008; and to 87% for the class of 2009.

- For each graduating class, the cumulative percent of students meeting the standard has increased from one retest opportunity to the next. For example, the percent of students meeting the standard for the class of 2007 increased from 87% (retest 1) to 91% (retest 2) to 94% (retest 3) to 95% (retest 4).
- For retests 1 and 2, the cumulative percent of students meeting the standard after each retest opportunity equaled or exceeded that of each preceding graduating class. For example, after the first retest opportunity, 76% of the students in the class of 2003 met the standard; 84% of the students in the classes of 2004 and 2005 met the standard; 87% of the classes of 2006 and 2007 met the standard; and 89% of students in the class of 2008 met the standard.



Note: Students in out-of-district placements are included in retest results for the classes of 2005-2009, but not for 2003 and 2004.

Table 1 shows student enrollment numbers, which are the denominators used in calculating the cumulative percent of CD rates reported in Figure 2.

Table 1
Student Enrollment and Percent of Students Attaining the Competency Determination:
Classes of 2003-2009

		Grade 10 Test	Retest 1	Retest 2	Retest 3	Retest 4+5
Class of 2003	% Earning CD	68	76	81	90	95
	Enrollment	68,118 (MCAS 2001)	63,767 (Oct. 2001)	63,767 (Oct. 2001)	60,742 (Oct. 2002)	59,823 (Adj. Oct. 2002)
Class of 2004	% Earning CD	70	84	87	93	96
	Enrollment	67,343 (MCAS 2002)	66,472 (Oct. 2002)	66,472 (Oct. 2002)	62,266 (Oct. 2003)	61,424 (Adj. Oct. 2003)
Class of 2005	% Earning CD	75	84	88	92	94
	Enrollment	69,981 (MCAS 2003)	69,263 (Oct. 2003)	69,263 (Oct. 2003)	65,285 (Oct. 2004)	65,165 (Adj. Oct. 2004)
Class of 2006	% Earning CD	82	87	90	93	95
	Enrollment	71,038 (MCAS 2004)	70,610 (Oct. 2004)	69,425 (Adj. Oct. 2004)	66,975 (Oct. 2005)	66,757 (Adj. Oct. 2005)
Class of 2007	% Earning CD	82	87	91	94	95
	Enrollment	72,680 (MCAS 2005)	72,623 (Oct. 2005)	70,771 (Adj. Oct. 2005)	69,118 (Oct. 2006)	69,195 (Adj. Oct. 2006)
Class of 2008	% Earning CD	83	89	92	94	
	Enrollment	75,771 (MCAS 2006)	73,964 (Oct. 2006)	72,684 (Adj. Oct. 2006)	70,227 (Oct. 2007)	
Class of 2009	% Earning CD	87	90			
	Enrollment	74,675 (MCAS 2007)	73,527 (Oct. 2007)			

Note: Student enrollment figures for the grade 10 tests are based on the number of grade 10 students enrolled at the time of testing. Enrollment figures for retests are based on the enrollment information submitted to the Department through the Student Information Management System (SIMS) on October 1 of each year for the class. An adjusted October student enrollment figure is derived from the October 1 SIMS enrollment for the school year minus/plus students who changed grade, minus students who transferred out of the state or to private schools during the year, or who passed away.

I. Overview of the Massachusetts Competency Determination

A. Background

The Massachusetts Education Reform Law of 1993 requires students to attain the CD as a condition for high school graduation. In January 2000, the Board of Education voted to adopt the following regulation for the CD:

Students in the graduating class of 2003 shall meet or exceed the Needs Improvement threshold score of 220 on both the English Language Arts and Mathematics MCAS grade 10 tests in order to satisfy the requirements of the Competency Determination.

The Education Reform Law also states: “If a student’s assessment results for the tenth grade do not demonstrate the required level of competency, the student shall have the right to participate in the assessment program the following year or years.” Accordingly, the Board of Education voted in January 2001 that students who do not earn a scaled score of at least 220 on either or both of the required grade 10 tests be provided additional opportunities to take retests before their scheduled graduation dates.

The vast majority of students meet the CD standard by passing the grade 10 MCAS tests or retests with a scaled score of at least 220 in both ELA and Mathematics. Additionally, two other means for attaining the CD are available to eligible students whose knowledge and skills are not measured well by standardized tests: the MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt) and the MCAS Performance Appeals Process. For each class since 2003, approximately 99% of students earned the CD through the grade 10 MCAS tests or retests; around 1% earned the CD through MCAS appeals; fewer than 10 students earned the CD through the MCAS-Alt.

The MCAS-Alt enables students with severe disabilities to demonstrate academic achievement through a portfolio assessment. The MCAS Performance Appeals Process was established to allow students who fail to earn a passing score on the grade 10 MCAS tests or retests to demonstrate that they have knowledge and skills equivalent to the knowledge and skills of their classmates who have met the passing standard for graduation. Additional information about the MCAS-Alt is available on the Department Web site at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt, while information on the MCAS Performance Appeals Process is available at www.doe.mass.edu/mcasappeals.

B. Standard Grade 10 Tests vs. Focused Retests

The standard grade 10 MCAS tests are designed for multiple purposes. In addition to providing data to determine whether a student has met the CD standard, results of these tests are used by local educators to improve curriculum and instruction, and by the Department to determine whether schools and districts have made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as required by the No Child Left Behind law. Results are also used to determine students’ eligibility for the John and Abigail Adams Scholarships and the Stanley Z. Koplik Certificate of Mastery Awards. Grade 10

MCAS tests measure and report results at four performance levels: *Advanced*, *Proficient*, *Needs Improvement*, and *Failing*.

In contrast, retests are designed for the single purpose of determining whether students have met the CD standard. Currently, a scaled score of 220 (the threshold of the *Needs Improvement* level) is required for passing. Accordingly, results of the retests are reported at only two performance levels: *Passing* and *Failing*.

C. Student Participation in Retests

Participation in retests is not mandatory. Students may take either the ELA retest, the Mathematics retest, or the retests in both subjects.

MCAS retest participants are primarily students in grade 11 or 12 who have previously taken the grade 10 tests but have not yet attained the CD. Students who move to Massachusetts from another state or country, who transfer from a private school during grade 11 or 12, or who are unable to participate in the spring grade 10 tests due to illness are also eligible for the retests.

Tables 2 and 3 below show the numbers of students in the classes of 2008 and 2009 who participated in each testing opportunity and the percent that passed (earned a scaled score of at least 220) for each content area test.

Table 2
Class of 2008: Number of Students Participating and Percent Passing Each Test and Retest

Subject Area	Grade 10 May 2006		Retest 1 Nov. 2006		Retest 2 Mar. 2007		Retest 3 Nov. 2007	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
English Language Arts	75,698	91	4,833	58	2,125	43	1,860	51
Mathematics	75,348	85	8,193	43	4,506	43	2,959	51

Table 3
Class of 2009: Number of Students Participating and Percent Passing Each Test and Retest

Subject Area	Grade 10 May 2007		Retest 1 Nov. 2007	
	#	%	#	%
English Language Arts	74,643	93	4,452	54
Mathematics	74,162	90	6,477	49

D. Competency Determination Rate vs. Graduation Rate

Prior to the 2007 school year, CD rates were used in the calculations that determined which high schools made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Massachusetts. In 2007, the Department changed its policy and replaced the CD rate with a four-year graduation rate for AYP determinations, along with participation, performance, and improvement requirements.

CD rates and four-year graduation rates represent different measures. CD rates portray the number and percentage of students in a given class who have passed MCAS and who were still enrolled as of the beginning of their junior or senior year. Graduation rates measure the number and percentage of students who enrolled at any time in the class who met both state and local graduation requirements.

The class of 2006 was the first for which the state was able to track all students using four years of complete enrollment information from SIMS. When the Department released its first-ever statewide graduation rate in January 2007, the class of 2006 graduation rate was based on the number of students who had enrolled as first-time ninth graders in 2002 and who graduated from high school with the same student cohort four years later, as follows:

$$\frac{\text{\# of students in cohort (denominator) who graduated in 4 years or less}}{\text{\# of 1st time entering 9th graders in 2002–03} - (\text{transfers out/deaths}) + (\text{transfers in})}$$

(# of 1st time entering 9th graders in 2002–03) – (transfers out/deaths) + (transfers in)

For the class of 2006, approximately 80% of the nearly 75,000 students who started as freshman during the 2002–2003 school year graduated within four years. By contrast, the CD rate for the seniors who were still enrolled as 12th graders during the 2006 school year was 95%.

E. New Race/Ethnicity Codes

In response to federal changes in requirements for data collection methods, the Department of Education made changes to its collection of race and ethnicity data in October 2005.

Previously each student could only be identified as one of the following: African American/Black, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, Native American, or White. Under the new system, each student may be identified by one or more race and by an ethnicity. The racial groups used for reporting education-related data in Massachusetts are: African American/Black, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Native American, and White. In addition, each student's ethnicity is identified as either Hispanic/Latino or non-Hispanic/Latino.

This new categorization results in 63 possible combinations of the five racial groups and two ethnicities. To facilitate analysis, reports collapse the 63 categories into seven. Consequently, all students identified as Hispanic are placed in the Hispanic category, regardless of their racial identification. All students identified by a single race and as non-Hispanic/Latino are placed in their respective racial category. The remaining students are placed in the multi-race (non-Hispanic) category.

II. CD Results Disaggregated by Subgroup: Classes of 2008 and 2009

This section provides statewide student subgroup CD attainment rates for the classes of 2008 and 2009 on all MCAS tests and retests through November 2007. The following is a list of definitions for each of the student groups for which results are disaggregated.

Students with Disabilities: A student with a disability has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) provided under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*.

Non-Disabled: A student who is non-disabled does not have an IEP provided under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*.

Limited English Proficient: A limited English proficient (LEP) student is “a student whose first language is a language other than English and who is unable to perform ordinary classroom work in English.”

Formerly Limited English Proficient: A student who is formerly limited English proficient (FLEP) has transitioned out of LEP status during the current school year or within the past two school years. The federal government requires that states continue to monitor the progress of FLEP students. The combined LEP & FLEP reporting category in tables 4, 6, 7, and 9 represents an official AYP subgroup reporting category.

Low Income: A student identified as low income is eligible to receive free or reduced-price school lunches according to federal guidelines.

The number of students in the class of 2009 presented in this report is subject to change if students currently in that class are retained and become members of the class of 2010. Beginning with the class of 2010, students who score between 220 and 238 on ELA and Mathematics tests must complete an Educational Proficiency Plan (EPP) in order to earn their CD. In addition, students in the class of 2010 must earn a scaled score of at least 220 on a high school Science and Technology/Engineering subject area test to earn a CD.

A. Class of 2008

Table 4 shows the cumulative percent of students in the class of 2008 who have passed the ELA test, passed the Mathematics test, and attained the CD by subgroup. The percentages for passing ELA, passing Mathematics, and earning the CD were calculated by dividing the number of students who achieved each milestone by the October 2007 SIMS enrollment.

**Table 4
Competency Determination Results for the Class of 2008: All Students and Subgroups**

	Oct. 2007 Enrollment	ELA		Math		Competency Determination	
		# Passing ELA	% Passing ELA	# Passing Math	% Passing Math	# Earning CD	% Earning CD
All Students	70,227	67,464	96%	66,776	95%	66,241	94%
Student Status							
Non-Disabled	59,612	58,705	98%	58,419	98%	58,070	97%
Students with Disabilities	10,615	8,759	83%	8,357	79%	8,171	77%
Limited English Proficient	1,868	1,284	69%	1,439	77%	1,169	63%
LEP & FLEP	2,805	2,167	77%	2,303	82%	2,011	72%
Low Income	15,181	14,074	93%	13,803	91%	13,485	89%
Race/Ethnicity							
African American/Black	5,852	5,333	91%	5,146	88%	5,014	86%
Asian	3,211	3,086	96%	3,106	97%	3,060	95%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	75	68	91%	64	85%	64	95%
Hispanic/Latino	7,495	6,753	90%	6,604	88%	6,386	85%
Multi-Race (non-Hispanic)	845	815	96%	813	96%	804	95%
Native American	183	176	96%	172	94%	171	93%
White	52,566	51,233	97%	50,871	97%	50,742	97%
Gender							
Female	34,868	33,739	97%	33,340	96%	33,123	95%
Male	35,359	33,725	95%	33,436	95%	33,118	94%
Vocational Technical	15,377	15,064	98%	14,865	97%	14,773	96%
Urbanicity							
Urban*	16,935	15,458	91%	15,058	89%	14,707	87%
Non-Urban	53,292	52,006	98%	51,718	97%	51,534	97%

*Urban districts reported here are: Boston, Brockton, Cambridge, Chelsea, Chicopee, Fall River, Fitchburg, Framingham, Haverhill, Holyoke, Lawrence, Leominster, Lowell, Lynn, Malden, New Bedford, Pittsfield, Revere, Somerville, Springfield, Taunton, and Worcester.

Figure 3 shows that as of November 2007, 66,241 (94%) students in the class of 2008 had attained the CD by passing the grade 10 ELA and Mathematics tests, 1,223 (2%) had passed the grade 10 ELA test only, 535 (1%) had passed the grade 10 Mathematics test only, and 2,228 (3%) had not passed either test.

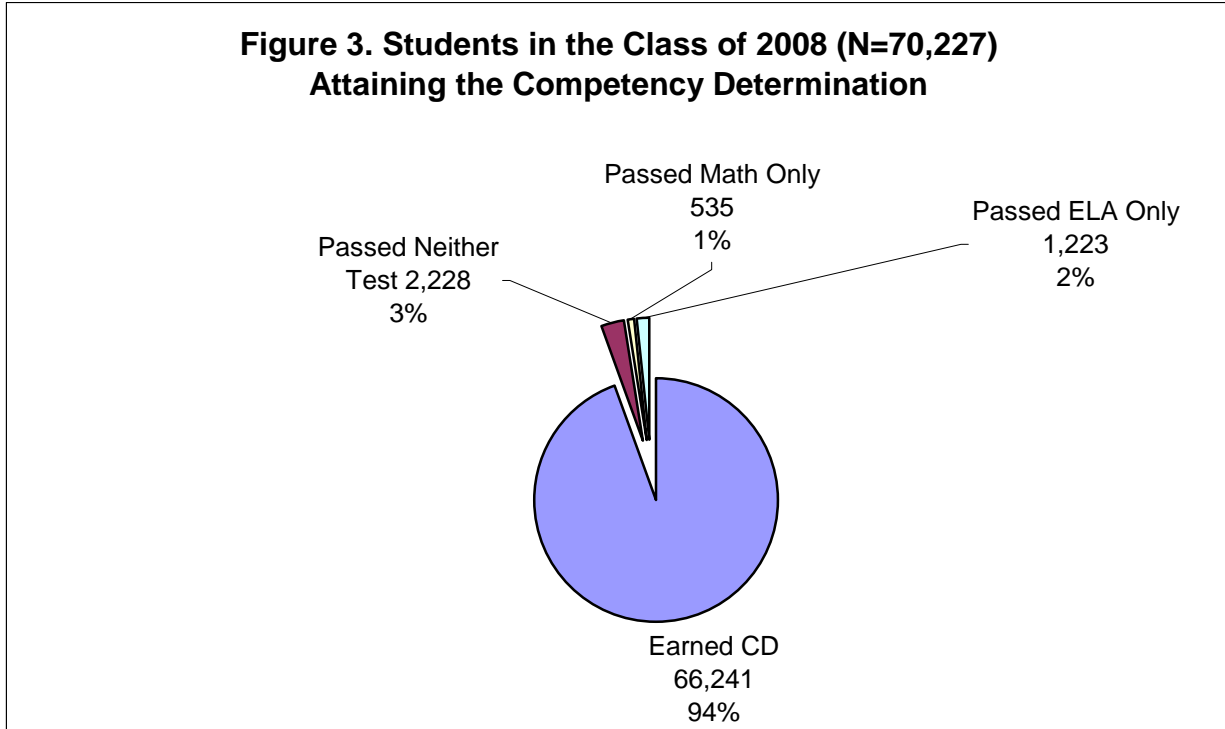


Figure 4 shows the percent of students in the class of 2008 by race/ethnicity who passed grade 10 tests in ELA and Mathematics on the first attempt. The figure also shows the cumulative percent of students who have attained the CD after retesting opportunities (up to four). Table 5 offers the same information in a table format.

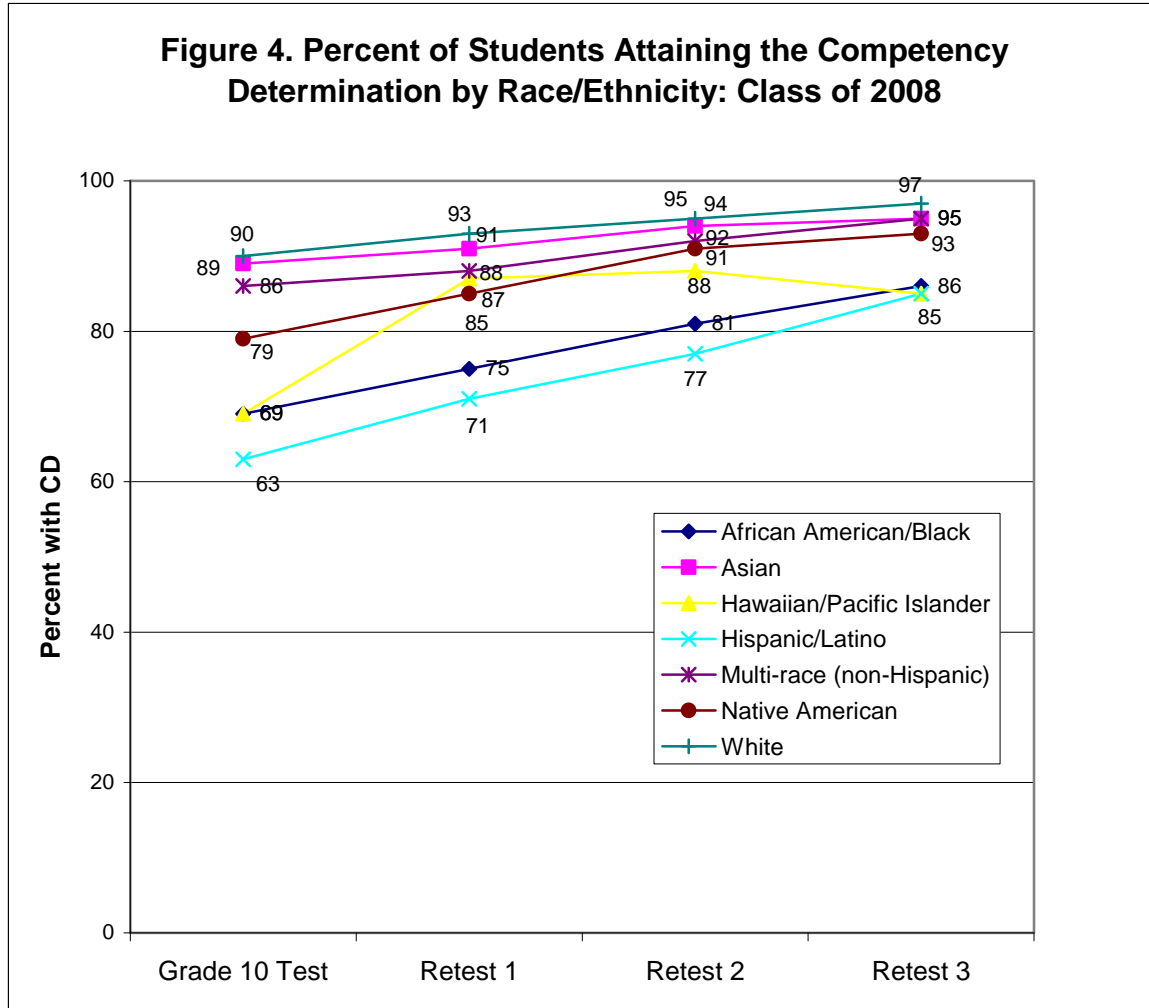


Table 5
Percent of Students Attaining the Competency Determination by Race/Ethnicity: Class of 2008

	Grade 10 Test May 2006	Retest 1 Nov. 2006	Retest 2 Mar. 2007	Retest 3 Nov. 2007
African American/Black	69	75	81	86
Asian	89	91	94	95
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	69	87	88	85
Hispanic/Latino	63	71	77	85
Multi-race (non-Hispanic)	86	88	92	95
Native American	79	85	91	93
White	90	93	95	97

Figure 5 shows the percent of students in the class of 2008 by student status who passed the grade 10 tests in ELA and Mathematics on the first attempt. The figure also shows the cumulative percent of students who have attained the CD after retesting opportunities (up to four). Table 6 offers the same information in table format.

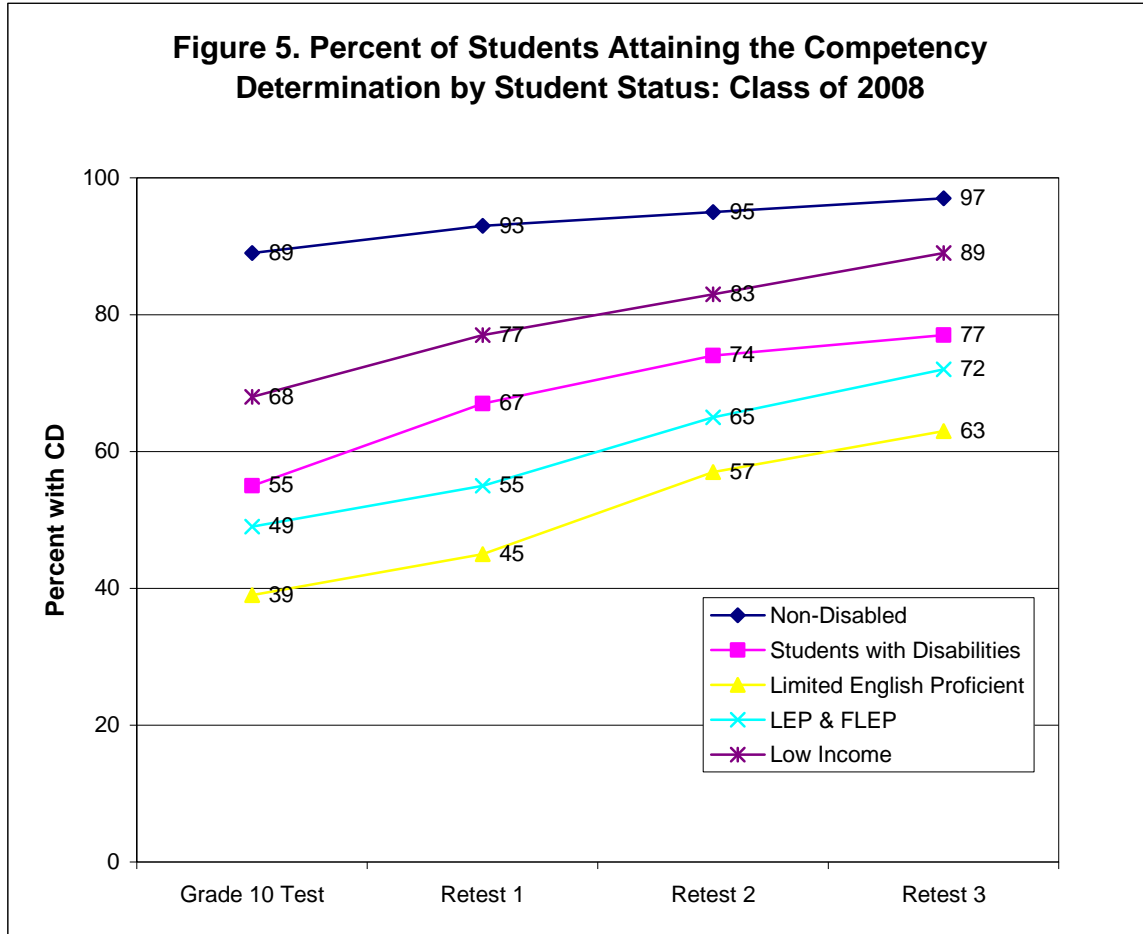


Table 6
Percent of Students Attaining the Competency Determination by Student Status: Class of 2008

	Grade 10 Test May 2006	Retest 1 Nov. 2006	Retest 2 Mar. 2007	Retest 3 Nov. 2007
Non-Disabled	89	93	95	97
Students with Disabilities	55	67	74	77
Limited English Proficient	39	45	57	63
LEP & FLEP	49	55	65	72
Low Income	68	77	83	89

B. Class of 2009

Table 7 shows the cumulative percent of students in the class of 2009 who have passed the ELA test, Mathematics test, and have attained the CD by subgroup. The percentages for passing ELA, passing Mathematics, and earning the CD were calculated by dividing the number of students who attained each milestone by the October 2007 SIMS enrollment.

**Table 7
Competency Determination Results for the Class of 2009: All Students and Subgroups**

	Oct. 2007 Enrollment	ELA		Math		Competency Determination	
		# Passing ELA	% Passing ELA	# Passing Math	% Passing Math	# Earning CD	% Earning CD
All Students	73,527	69,057	94%	67,419	92%	66,431	90%
Student Status							
Non-Disabled	62,010	59,872	97%	59,057	95%	58,419	94%
Students with Disabilities	11,517	9,185	80%	8,362	73%	8,012	70%
Limited English Proficient	2,589	1,387	54%	1,662	64%	1,203	46%
LEP & FLEP	3,537	2,252	64%	2,475	70%	1,988	56%
Low Income	18,214	15,973	88%	15,316	84%	14,728	81%
Race/Ethnicity							
African-American/Black	6,365	5,512	87%	5,248	82%	5,003	79%
Asian	3,447	3,227	94%	3,267	95%	3,174	92%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	83	67	81%	64	77%	62	75%
Hispanic/Latino	8,895	7,472	84%	7,009	79%	6,679	75%
Multi-Race (non-Hispanic)	968	905	93%	871	90%	854	88%
Native American	191	175	92%	166	87%	164	86%
White	53,578	51,699	96%	50,794	95%	50,495	94%
Gender							
Female	36,008	34,207	95%	33,322	93%	32,969	92%
Male	37,519	34,850	93%	34,097	91%	33,462	89%
Vocational Technical	15,358	14,640	95%	14,197	92%	13,945	91%
Urbanicity							
Urban*	18,872	16,363	87%	15,482	82%	14,887	79%
Non-Urban	54,655	52,694	96%	51,937	95%	51,544	94%

*Urban districts reported here are: Boston, Brockton, Cambridge, Chelsea, Chicopee, Fall River, Fitchburg, Framingham, Haverhill, Holyoke, Lawrence, Leominster, Lowell, Lynn, Malden, New Bedford, Pittsfield, Revere, Somerville, Springfield, Taunton, and Worcester.

Figure 6 shows that as of November 2007, 66,431 (90%) students in the class of 2009 had passed the grade 10 ELA and Mathematics tests, 2,626 (4%) had passed the grade 10 ELA test only, 988 (1%) had passed the grade 10 Mathematics test only, and 3,482 (5%) had not passed either test.

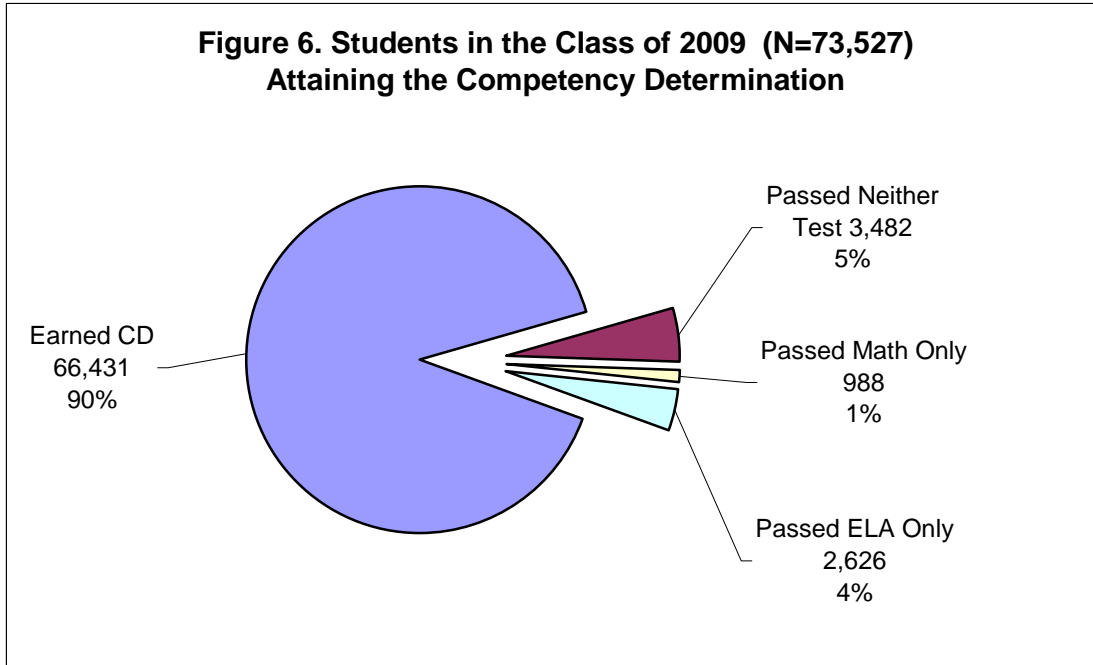


Figure 7 shows the percent of students in the class of 2009 by race/ethnicity who passed grade 10 tests in ELA and Mathematics on the first attempt. The figure also shows the cumulative percent of students who obtained the CD through one retesting opportunity. Table 8 offers the same information in table format.

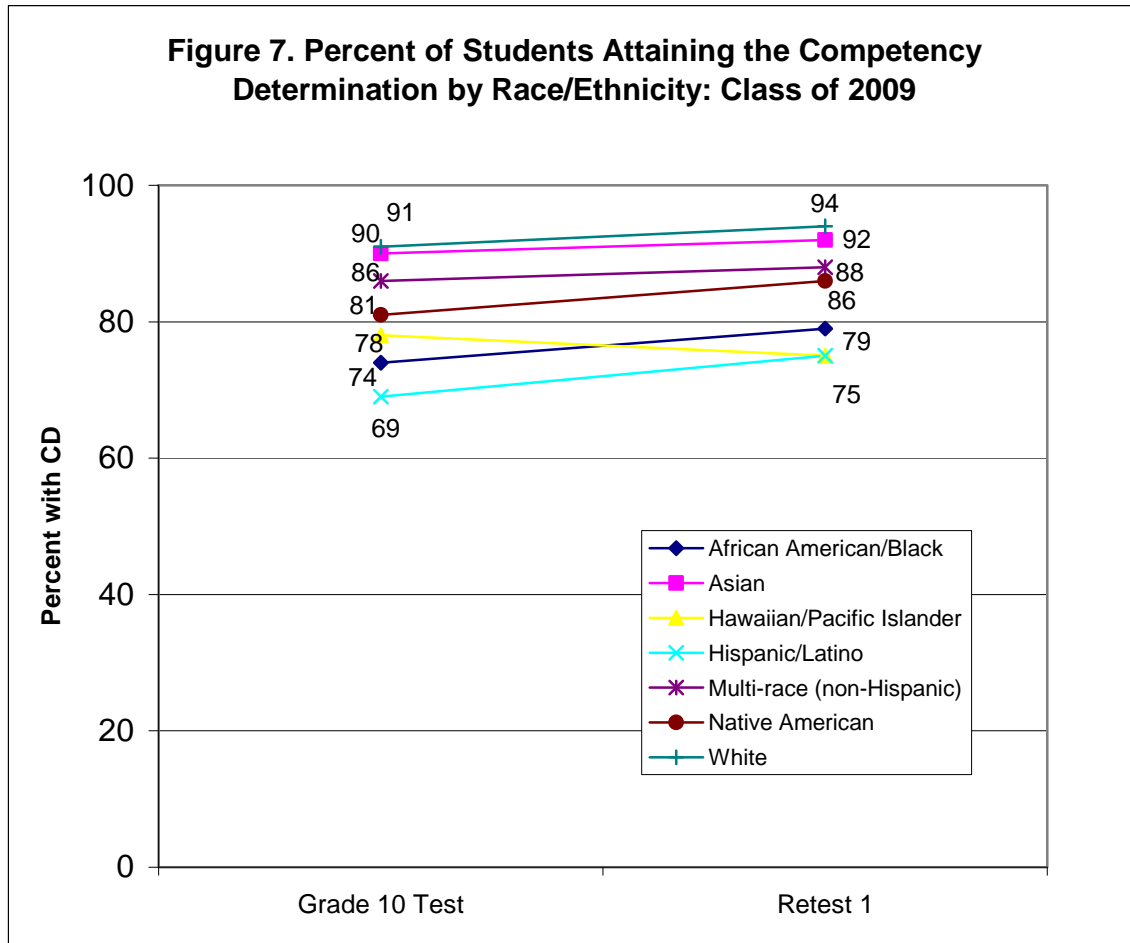


Table 8
Percent of Students Attaining the Competency Determination by Race/Ethnicity: Class of 2009

	Grade 10 Test May 2007	Retest 1 Nov. 2007
African American/Black	74	79
Asian	90	92
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	78	75
Hispanic/Latino	69	75
Multi-race (non-Hispanic)	86	88
Native American	81	86
White	91	94

Figure 8 shows the percent of students in the class of 2009 by student status who passed the grade 10 tests in ELA and Mathematics on their first attempt and the cumulative percent of students who obtained the CD through one additional retesting opportunity. Table 9 offers the same information in table format.

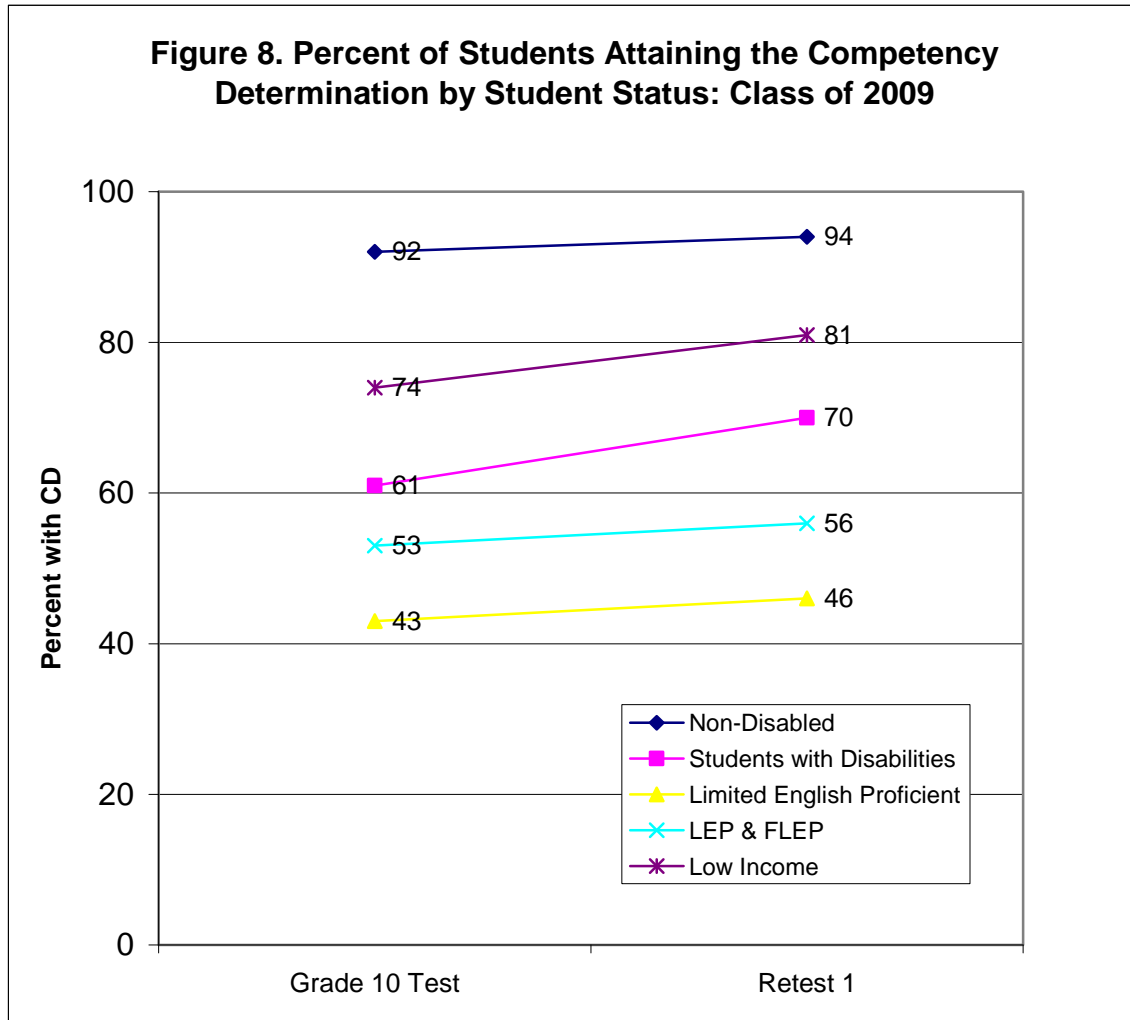


Table 9
Percent of Students Attaining the Competency Determination by Student Status: Class of 2009

	Grade 10 Test May 2007	Retest 1 Nov. 2007
Non-Disabled	92	94
Students with Disabilities	61	70
Limited English Proficient	43	46
LEP & FLEP	53	56
Low Income	74	81

III. School and District Results

The current cumulative Competency Determination attainment rates by school and district for the classes of 2008 (current seniors) and 2009 (current juniors) can be found in Excel documents located at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/results.html.