



MCAS Tests of Spring 2009 Parent/Guardian Report

Letter from the Commissioner

Dear Parent(s) or Guardian(s):

This report shows your child's results on the spring 2009 MCAS tests and explains what the results mean.

The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests are a key part of our state's effort to support the education of every child. The tests are designed to measure students' knowledge and skills based on state academic content standards. The tests are also used to show the progress schools and districts are making to help students learn.

MCAS results, along with your child's grades and daily schoolwork, can be used to evaluate how well your child is doing in school. If you have questions about your child's performance, I encourage you to meet with your child's teacher(s) to discuss the results and identify ways that you can partner with your school to support your child's education. Your involvement in your child's education is important in helping your child to be successful in school.

Sincerely,

Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

What is MCAS?

The MCAS program meets the requirements of the Education Reform Act of 1993, which states that the testing program must

- test all public school students in Massachusetts, including students with disabilities and limited English proficient students;
- measure performance based on the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework learning standards; and
- report on the performance of individual students, schools, and districts.

The MCAS program also holds schools and districts responsible for the yearly progress they make toward meeting the goal, set by the federal No Child Left Behind Act, that all students will be proficient in reading and mathematics by 2014.

Who must take MCAS tests?

All public school students, including students with disabilities and limited English proficient (LEP) students, in grades 3–8 and grade 10 must take the MCAS tests. Students in grade 9 have the option of taking one of the four high school Science and Technology/Engineering tests.

Students with disabilities who cannot take the standard MCAS test, with or without accommodations, participate in the MCAS Alternate Assessment. Schools have the option of testing LEP students in their first year in U.S. public schools on the ELA test, but the results are used for informational purposes only.

What subjects were tested in spring 2009?

English Language Arts (ELA)	Grades 3–8 and 10
Mathematics	Grades 3–8 and 10
Science and Technology/Engineering (STE)	Grades 5 and 8
Biology	High school STE
Chemistry	High school STE
Introductory Physics	High school STE
Technology/Engineering	High school STE

What types of questions are on MCAS tests?

The MCAS tests use several types of questions to measure student learning.

- Multiple-choice questions. Students choose the correct answer from four options and receive 1 point for a correct answer and 0 points for an incorrect answer.
- Open-response questions. Depending on the subject tested, students write one or more paragraphs and/or make a chart, table, diagram, illustration, or graph. Each answer receives a score from 0 to 4 points.
- Short-answer questions (Mathematics tests only). Students give a brief response, which is usually a number or a short statement. Students receive 1 point for a correct answer and 0 points for an incorrect answer.
- Writing prompts are used in ELA Composition tests. In grades 4, 7, and 10, students write a composition in response to a writing prompt. Each ELA Composition is scored independently by two scorers, based on a scoring guide, in the following two areas:
 - Topic Development (2–12 points)
 - Standard English Conventions (2–8 points)

What can you do to help your child?

Supporting your child is important now and in his or her future education. Here are some tips for helping your child prepare for the next MCAS tests.

- Have regular discussions with your child's teacher(s) to see what you can do at home to support your child's work in school, such as making sure homework is done.
- Discuss with your child the subjects that need improvement. Later, talk about whether he or she thinks there has been improvement. If the answer is no, find out why.
- Ask your child to explain what he or she is studying. These conversations help you follow your child's progress and help your child to remember what he or she has learned.
- Help your child practice MCAS test questions. Review the tests together so you will all become familiar with the expectations.
- Make sure your child gets enough rest, eats properly, and arrives at school on time every day. Send your child to school prepared to learn.

How are MCAS test results used?

MCAS results are used for the following purposes:

- To determine whether schools are helping their students meet the state standards
 - To assist educators in planning improvements to curriculum and instruction
 - To determine whether your child meets the state testing requirements for earning a high school diploma
- Beginning with the class of 2010, students must either earn a score of at least 240 (*Proficient*) on the grade 10 ELA and Mathematics tests or retests, or earn a score between 220 and 238 on the tests or retests and fulfill the requirements of an Educational Proficiency Plan (EPP). In addition, students must earn a score of at least 220 on one of the high school STE tests. Students must also meet all local requirements in order to qualify for a high school diploma.
- To determine your child's eligibility for the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship based on his or her results on the grade 10 ELA and Mathematics tests

Where can you find more information?

MCAS test results for all schools and districts in the state	http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/state_report/mcas.aspx
Requirements for the participation of students with disabilities in MCAS	http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation/sped.pdf
Requirements for the participation of students with limited English proficiency in MCAS and MEPA (Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment)	http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation/lep.pdf
Educational Proficiency Plan, an educational planning tool required for students who did not earn a score of 240 (<i>Proficient</i>) or higher on the grade 10 ELA and/or Mathematics tests or retests	http://www.doe.mass.edu/hsreform/epp
John and Abigail Adams Scholarship	http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/adams.html

Your child's performance levels and scores

English Language Arts	Mathematics
Performance level:	Performance level:
Score:	Score:

Your child's scores in the sub-content areas measured by each test

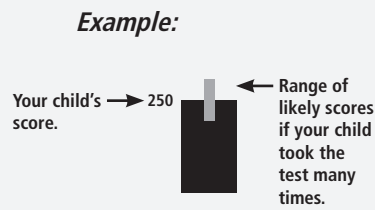
Each test measures knowledge and skills in various sub-content areas. This section shows the percentage of possible points earned by your child in each sub-content area. For comparison, you will also find the percentage of possible points earned by students who performed at the low end of the *Proficient* level across the state. This information can give you a general impression of your child's relative strengths and weaknesses.

English Language Arts	Percent of Possible Points Earned by Your Child	Percent of Possible Points Earned by Students Who Performed at the Proficient Level
Language		
Reading and Literature		
Composition: Topic Development		
Composition: Standard English Conventions		

Mathematics	Percent of Possible Points Earned by Your Child	Percent of Possible Points Earned by Students Who Performed at the Proficient Level
Number Sense and Operations		
Patterns, Relations, and Algebra		
Geometry		
Measurement		
Data Analysis, Statistics, and Probability		

Display of scores and probable range of scores

In the figure below, the top of the black bar indicates your child's score on each test. The smaller gray bar shows the range of likely scores your child could have received if he or she had taken the test multiple times.



Performance Level

Advanced

Students at this level demonstrate a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of challenging subject matter and provide sophisticated solutions to complex problems.

Proficient

Students at this level demonstrate a solid understanding of challenging subject matter and solve a wide variety of problems.

Needs Improvement

Students at this level demonstrate a partial understanding of subject matter and solve some simple problems.

Warning

Students at this level demonstrate a minimal understanding of subject matter and do not solve simple problems.

	English Language Arts	Mathematics
280		
260		
240		
220		
200		

How your child did on individual test questions

This section shows how your child did on each test question that is being released to the public. In the column to the right of the question number, you will find whether your child gave the correct answer on multiple-choice and short-answer questions, and the number of points earned by your child on open-response questions and the ELA Composition. Examples are shown below.

✓	Your child chose the correct answer on a multiple-choice question or gave the correct answer on a short-answer question.
A, B, C, or D	Your child chose an incorrect answer on a multiple-choice question. The letter represents the incorrect choice.
*	Your child chose more than one answer on a multiple-choice question (0 points earned).
0	Your child gave an incorrect answer on a short-answer question.
X of 4	Your child earned x points (where x equals 0, 1, 2, 3, or 4) out of 4 possible points on an open-response question.
X of 12	Your child earned x points out of 12 possible points for Topic Development (Question Number CT) on the ELA Composition.
X of 8	Your child earned x points out of 8 possible points for Standard English Conventions (Question Number CC) on the ELA Composition.
blank space	Your child did not answer this question (0 points earned).

English Language Arts		Mathematics	
Question Number	Your Child's Answer or Points Earned	Question Number	Your Child's Answer or Points Earned
CT	X of 12	1	
CC	X of 8	2	
1		3	
2		4	X of 4
3		5	
4		6	X of 4
5		7	
6		8	
7		9	
8		10	
9	X of 4	11	
10		12	
11		13	
12		14	
13		15	
14		16	
15		17	
16			
17	X of 4		

Test questions are available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testitems.html>.

Your child's performance compared to school, district, and state performance in grade 4

This section shows your child's performance in each subject. It also shows the percentage of students at each performance level in your child's school, district, and the state. The check (✓) indicates your child's performance level.

	English Language Arts			
	Your Child	School	District	State
Advanced				
Proficient				
Needs Improvement				
Warning				
	Mathematics			
	Your Child	School	District	State
Advanced				
Proficient				
Needs Improvement				
Warning				