



Progress Report on Students Earning the Competency Determination Statewide and by School and District: Classes of 2009 and 2010

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Executive Summary

This report provides an update on the status of Competency Determination (CD) attainment by students in the classes of 2009 and 2010 based on MCAS test and retest results through the spring 2009 administration.

The class of 2010 is the first graduating class in the Commonwealth that must pass an end-of-course MCAS test in Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) in addition to tests in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics in order to earn a Competency Determination, a state requirement for receiving a high school diploma. The respective CD requirements for the classes of 2003–2009 and the classes of 2010 and beyond are shown in the table below.

Competency Determination Requirements

| Classes of 2003–2009 | Classes of 2010 and Beyond | |
|---|---|---|
| Earn a scaled score of 220 (<i>Needs Improvement</i>) or higher on the MCAS ELA and Mathematics grade 10 tests or retests (or MCAS-Alt) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Earn a scaled score of 240 (<i>Proficient</i>) or higher on the ELA and Mathematics grade 10 tests or retests (or MCAS-Alt) <li style="text-align: center;">And ▪ Earn a scaled score of 220 or higher on one of the four MCAS high school STE tests in Biology, Chemistry, Introductory Physics, or Technology/Engineering (or MCAS-Alt) | <div style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">OR</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Earn a scaled score of 220–238 on the ELA and Mathematics grade 10 tests or retests (or MCAS-Alt) <li style="text-align: center;">And ▪ Earn a scaled score of 220 or higher on a high school STE test (or MCAS-Alt) <li style="text-align: center;">And ▪ Successfully complete the requirements of an Educational Proficiency Plan (EPP) for ELA and/or Mathematics (the subject(s) in which the student has not earned a scaled score of 240) |
| Students in all classes also must meet all local requirements in order to qualify for a high school diploma. | | |

Students are provided with multiple opportunities to meet the MCAS requirements for earning a CD. In ELA and Mathematics, students' first opportunity is the grade 10 tests administered in the spring. Subsequent to this, they may take retests in either or both subjects in November and/or March of their junior and/or senior years. In STE, students first take an end-of-course test in Biology, Chemistry, Introductory Physics, or Technology/Engineering in grade 9 or grade 10. Students have additional subsequent opportunities to take an STE test.

This report provides statewide aggregate and disaggregated data, as of spring 2009, on students in the classes of 2009 and 2010 meeting their respective Competency Determination requirements.¹

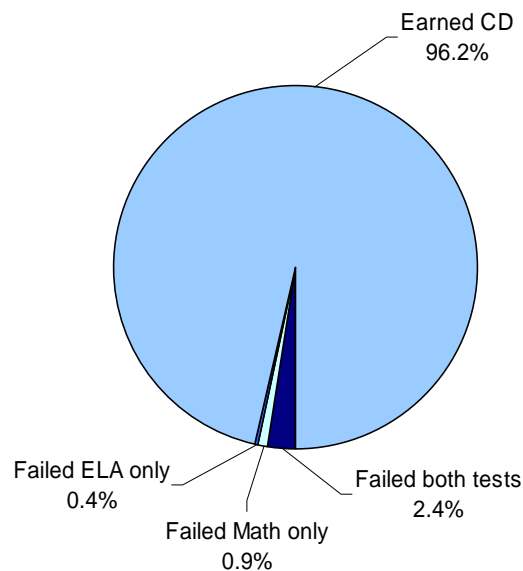
¹ CD attainment rates are based on MCAS results for all students educated with public funds, including those placed in private schools and those who took the MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt).

CD Attainment Rates Based on MCAS Results through Spring 2009

Class of 2009

- Ninety-six percent of all students in the class of 2009 have earned a CD by performing at the *Needs Improvement* level or higher in both ELA and Mathematics. See Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Students in the Class of 2009 Earning the Competency Determination through Spring 2009

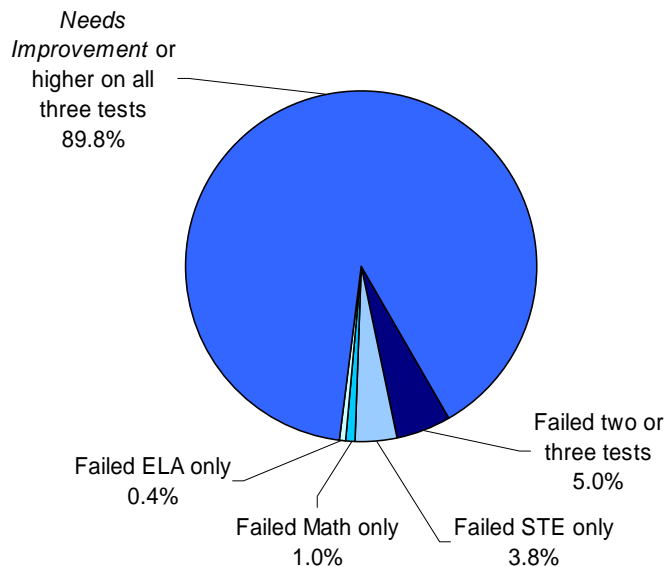


- CD attainment rates varied greatly by student subgroup.
 - Of the major racial/ethnic subgroups in the state, Asian students had the highest CD attainment rate at 98 percent, followed by white students at 97 percent, and African American and Hispanic/Latino students at 91 percent each.
 - Seventy-eight percent of limited English proficient (LEP) students earned a CD, 82 percent of students with disabilities did so, and 93 percent of low-income students earned a CD.
 - Ninety-eight percent of vocational-technical students earned a CD.

Class of 2010

- Sixty-four percent of students in the class of 2010 have already fully met the CD standard, after two retest opportunities, by performing at the *Proficient* level or higher in both ELA and Mathematics and by performing at the *Needs Improvement* level or higher in STE.
- Ninety percent of students have met or partially met the MCAS requirements for earning a CD by performing at the *Needs Improvement* level or higher in ELA, Mathematics, and STE. See Figure 2 on the following page.

Figure 2. Students in the Class of 2010 Scoring *Needs Improvement* or Higher in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science and Technology/Engineering through Spring 2009



- The percentage of students scoring *Needs Improvement* or higher in all three subjects varied widely by subgroup.
 - Of the major racial/ethnic subgroups, the percentage was highest for white students at 94 percent, followed by Asian students at 92 percent, African American students at 75 percent, and Hispanic/Latino students at 73 percent.
 - Forty-nine percent of LEP students performed at the *Needs Improvement* level or higher in all three subjects, while 67 percent of students with disabilities did so, as did 79 percent of low-income students.
 - Ninety percent of vocational-technical students performed at the *Needs Improvement* level or higher in all three subjects.
- Over one-third of students require an Educational Proficiency Plan because they did not perform at the *Proficient* level or higher in ELA and/or Mathematics: 8 percent of students require an EPP in ELA only, 10 percent require one in Mathematics only, and 18 percent require one in both subjects.
- Of the 6,037 students who have not yet scored at the *Needs Improvement* level in STE, 1,630 (27 percent) have not yet taken an STE test, of which 753 (46 percent) are students with disabilities.

CD Attainment Rates for the Classes of 2009 and 2010

This section provides statewide CD attainment rates for students in the classes of 2009 and 2010 on all MCAS tests and retests through spring 2009. Data are given in the aggregate and are also disaggregated by student subgroup (see page 18 for subgroup definitions).

Class of 2009

As of spring 2009, 96.2 percent of students in the class of 2009 had earned a CD by performing at the *Needs Improvement* level or higher on both the grade 10 ELA and Mathematics tests or retests; 0.4 percent performed at the *Failing* level on the ELA test or retests only; 0.9 percent performed at the *Failing* level on the Mathematics test or retests only; and 2.4 percent performed at the *Failing* level in both subject areas. See Figure 1 on page 2.

Table 1 below shows the percentage of students in the class of 2009 who have performed at the *Needs Improvement* level or higher on the ELA test or retests, the Mathematics test or retests, and who have earned a CD, for all students and by subgroup.

Table 1. Students in the Class of 2009 Earning the Competency Determination through Spring 2009 by Subgroup

| Subgroup | Adjusted Oct. 2008 Enrollment | ELA NI or Higher | | Mathematics NI or Higher | | Earned CD | |
|---|-------------------------------------|---------------------|---------|-----------------------------|---------|-----------|---------|
| | | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| All Students | 70,471 | 68,470 | 97 | 68,131 | 97 | 67,822 | 96 |
| Gender | | | | | | | |
| Female | 34,832 | 34,039 | 98 | 33,836 | 97 | 33,712 | 97 |
| Male | 35,639 | 34,431 | 97 | 34,295 | 96 | 34,110 | 96 |
| Race/Ethnicity | | | | | | | |
| African American | 6,127 | 5,768 | 94 | 5,679 | 93 | 5,602 | 91 |
| Asian | 3,360 | 3,290 | 98 | 3,298 | 98 | 3,281 | 98 |
| Hawaiian/Pacific Islander | 69 | 60 | 87 | 59 | 86 | 59 | 86 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 8,140 | 7,649 | 94 | 7,563 | 93 | 7,433 | 91 |
| Multi-Race (non-Hispanic) | 950 | 926 | 97 | 928 | 98 | 922 | 97 |
| Native American | 177 | 174 | 98 | 173 | 98 | 172 | 97 |
| White | 51,648 | 50,603 | 98 | 50,431 | 98 | 50,353 | 97 |
| Student Status | | | | | | | |
| Non-Disabled | 59,794 | 59,352 | 99 | 59,242 | 99 | 59,046 | 99 |
| Students with Disabilities | 10,677 | 9,118 | 85 | 8,889 | 83 | 8,776 | 82 |
| Limited English Proficient | 1,994 | 1,649 | 83 | 1,720 | 86 | 1,564 | 78 |
| FLEP ^a | 1,026 | 1,001 | 98 | 998 | 97 | 984 | 96 |
| Low Income | 17,287 | 16,479 | 95 | 16,322 | 94 | 16,145 | 93 |
| Vocational-Technical^b | 14,601 | 14,417 | 99 | 14,339 | 98 | 14,279 | 98 |
| Type of Community | | | | | | | |
| Urban ^c | 18,814 | 17,734 | 94 | 17,510 | 93 | 17,288 | 92 |
| Non-Urban | 51,657 | 50,736 | 98 | 50,621 | 98 | 50,534 | 98 |

^a FLEP students are formerly limited English proficient students. See page 18 for more information.

^b Includes students in both Chapter 74 approved and non-approved vocational-technical education programs.

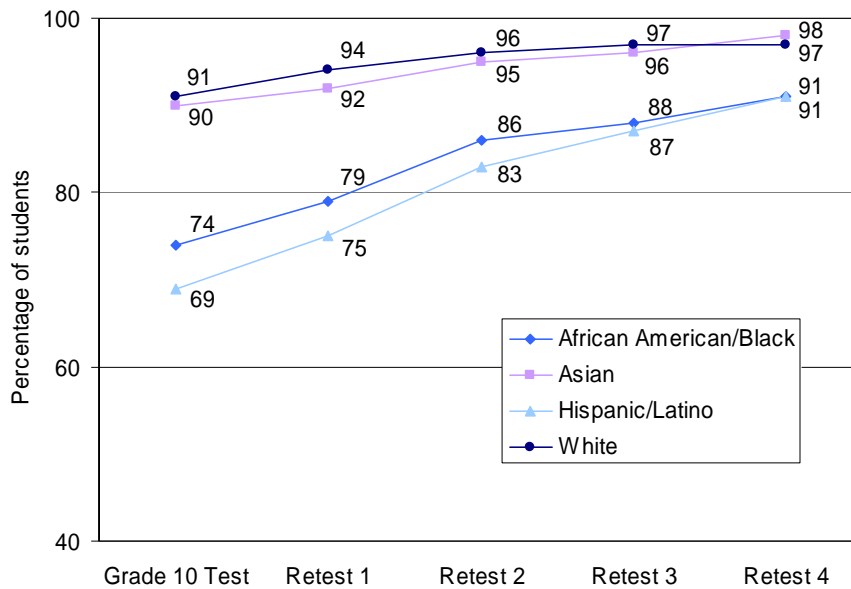
^c Urban districts are Boston, Brockton, Cambridge, Chelsea, Chicopee, Everett, Fall River, Fitchburg, Framingham, Haverhill, Holyoke, Lawrence, Leominster, Lowell, Lynn, Malden, New Bedford, Pittsfield, Quincy, Revere, Somerville, Springfield, Taunton, and Worcester.

CD attainment rates varied greatly by subgroup.

- Of the major racial/ethnic subgroups in the state, Asian students had the highest CD attainment rate at 98 percent, followed by white students at 97 percent, and African American and Hispanic/Latino students at 91 percent each.
- Seventy-eight percent of limited English proficient students earned a CD, 82 percent of students with disabilities did so, and 93 percent of low-income students earned a CD.
- The CD attainment rate for vocational-technical students equaled that of Asian students at 98 percent.
- Ninety-two percent of urban students earned a CD compared to 98 percent of non-urban students.

Figure 3 below shows the percentage of students in the class of 2009 who earned a CD on the first attempt for the major racial/ethnic subgroups in the state, and the cumulative percentage of students who have earned a CD after retesting opportunities (up to four). Table 2 provides the same information in tabular format for all racial categories for which the Department reports data.

Figure 3. Percentage of Students in the Class of 2009 Earning the Competency Determination by Race/Ethnicity: Grade 10 Test and Retests



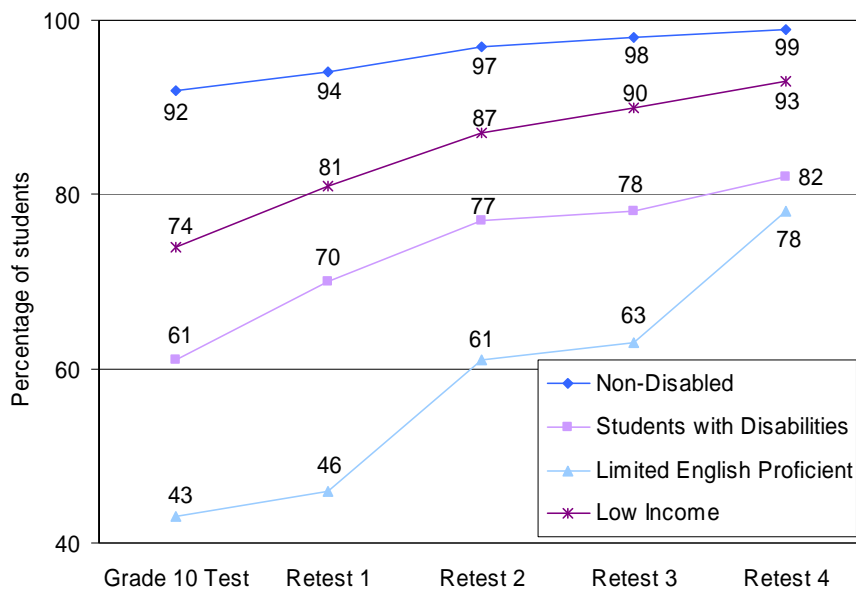
Of the major racial/ethnic subgroups, the increase in the percentage of students who earned the CD between the first attempt and the fourth retest opportunity was 22 percentage points for Hispanic/Latino students, 17 points for African American students, 8 points for Asian students, and 6 points for white students.

Table 2. Percentage of Students in the Class of 2009 Earning the Competency Determination by Race/Ethnicity: Grade 10 Test and Retests

| Race/Ethnicity | Grade 10 Test Spring 2007 | Retest 1 Nov. 2007 | Retest 2 Mar. 2008 | Retest 3 Nov. 2008 | Retest 4 Mar. 2009 |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| African American | 74 | 79 | 86 | 88 | 91 |
| Asian | 90 | 92 | 95 | 96 | 98 |
| Hawaiian/Pacific Islander | 78 | 75 | 82 | 82 | 86 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 69 | 75 | 83 | 87 | 91 |
| Multi-race (non-Hispanic) | 86 | 88 | 92 | 95 | 97 |
| Native American | 81 | 86 | 90 | 96 | 97 |
| White | 91 | 94 | 96 | 97 | 97 |

Figure 4 below shows the percentage of students in the class of 2009 who earned a CD on the first attempt by student status, and the cumulative percentage of students who have earned a CD after retesting opportunities. Table 3 provides the same information in tabular format.

Figure 4. Percentage of Students in the Class of 2009 Earning the Competency Determination by Student Status: Grade 10 Test and Retests



The increase in the percentage of students who earned the CD between the first attempt and the fourth retest opportunity was 35 percentage points for LEP students, 21 points for students with disabilities, and 19 points for low-income students.

Table 3. Percentage of Students in the Class of 2009 Earning the Competency Determination by Student Status: Grade 10 Test and Retests

| Student Status | Grade 10 Test Spring 2007 | Retest 1 Nov. 2007 | Retest 2 Mar. 2008 | Retest 3 Nov. 2008 | Retest 4 Mar. 2009 |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Non-Disabled | 92 | 94 | 97 | 98 | 99 |
| Students with Disabilities | 61 | 70 | 77 | 78 | 82 |
| Limited English Proficient | 43 | 46 | 61 | 63 | 78 |
| Low Income | 74 | 81 | 87 | 90 | 93 |

Table 4 below shows the 2008 annual dropout rate for students in the class of 2009, when they were in grade 11, who had earned a CD and those who had not by the end of the 2007-08 school year. Please note that dropout data for the 2008-09 school year are not yet available.

The dropout rate for students who had earned a CD was 2 percent compared to 27 percent for students who had not earned a CD. Students who earned a CD constituted 52 percent of all dropouts in the class of 2009, and students who did not earn a CD made up 48 percent of the dropouts. For more information, see *High School Dropouts 2007-08, Massachusetts Public Schools* at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/reports/dropout/0708/default.html> .

Table 4. 2008 Dropout Rate for the Class of 2009 by Competency Determination Status

| CD Status | Number of Enrolled Students | Number of Dropouts | Dropout Rate | Percent of Dropouts |
|------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| Earned CD | 67,996 | 1,230 | 2% | 52% |
| Did Not Earn CD | 4,282 | 1,144 | 27% | 48% |

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; these students are required to meet the CD standard that applies to the class of 2010.

Class of 2010

Table 5 below shows that as of spring 2009, through two retest opportunities, 64 percent of students in the class of 2010 have fully met the CD standard by performing at the *Proficient* level or higher in both ELA and Mathematics and by performing at the *Needs Improvement* level or higher in STE. For the separate components of the CD standard, 64 percent of students performed at the *Proficient* level or higher in both ELA and Mathematics, and 91 percent of students performed at the *Needs Improvement* level or higher in STE.

Table 5. Students in the Class of 2010 Earning the Competency Determination through Spring 2009

| CD Requirement | Number | Percent |
|---|--------|---------|
| Earned CD | 45,070 | 64 |
| ELA and Mathematics <i>Proficient</i> or Higher | 45,333 | 64 |
| ELA <i>Proficient</i> or Higher | 52,221 | 74 |
| Mathematics <i>Proficient</i> or Higher | 50,858 | 72 |
| STE <i>Needs Improvement</i> or Higher | 64,629 | 91 |

Table 6 below shows the percentage of students in the class of 2010 who performed at the *Needs Improvement* level or higher on the grade 10 ELA, Mathematics, and STE tests or retests through spring 2009. Ninety percent of students in the class of 2010 performed at the *Needs Improvement* level or higher in all three subjects, 94 percent did so in ELA and Mathematics, 91 percent did so in ELA and STE, 90 percent did so in Mathematics and STE, 96 percent did so in ELA, 94 percent did so in Mathematics, and 91 percent did so in STE.

Table 6. Students in the Class of 2010 Scoring *Needs Improvement* or Higher in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and/or Science and Technology/Engineering through Spring 2009

| Subject(s) | Number | Percent |
|-------------------------|--------|---------|
| All Three Subjects | 63,469 | 90 |
| ELA and Mathematics | 66,166 | 94 |
| ELA and STE | 64,182 | 91 |
| Mathematics and STE | 63,742 | 90 |
| ELA | 67,798 | 96 |
| Mathematics | 66,772 | 94 |
| STE | 64,629 | 91 |
| None (Failed All Three) | 2,087 | 3 |

As of spring 2009, 89.8 percent of students in the class of 2010 had met or partially met the MCAS requirements for earning a CD by performing at the *Needs Improvement* level or higher on the grade 10 ELA, Mathematics, and STE tests or retests; 0.4 percent performed at the *Failing* level on the ELA test or retests only; 1.0 percent performed at the *Failing* level on the Mathematics test or retests only; 3.8 percent performed at the *Failing* level on the STE test only; and 5.0 percent performed at the *Failing* level in two or three of these subject areas. See Figure 2 on page 3.

Many more students have performed at the *Needs Improvement* or higher in ELA or Mathematics than in STE. As of spring 2009, 6,037 students in the class of 2010 had not yet scored *Needs Improvement* or higher in STE. Of those students who had not yet scored *Needs*

Improvement or higher in STE, 1,630 (27 percent) had not yet taken an STE test, of which 753 (46 percent) are students with disabilities. These students are counted as failing to meet the *Needs Improvement* standard in this report.

Students Requiring an Educational Proficiency Plan

Table 7 below shows the number and percentage of students in the class of 2010 who are required to fulfill the requirements of an Educational Proficiency Plan (EPP) in ELA, in Mathematics, and in both subjects because they scored below *Proficient* on the respective tests. As of spring 2009, 7.8 percent of the students in the class of 2010 require an EPP in ELA only, 9.7 percent require one in Mathematics only, and 18.3 percent require one in both subjects. The Educational Proficiency Plan is a local responsibility, and districts must certify that students on EPPs have met their requirements. For more information about the EPP, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/hsreform/epp>.

Table 7. Students in the Class of 2010 Scoring Below *Proficient* and Who Therefore Require an Educational Proficiency Plan in English Language Arts and/or Mathematics through Spring 2009

| Subject | Number | Percent |
|---------------------|---------------|-------------|
| ELA only | 5,525 | 7.8 |
| Mathematics only | 6,888 | 9.7 |
| ELA and Mathematics | 12,920 | 18.3 |
| Total | 25,333 | 35.8 |

Results Disaggregated by Subgroup

Table 8 on the next page shows the percentage of students in the class of 2010 who have met or partially met the MCAS requirements for earning a CD by performing at the *Needs Improvement* (NI) level or higher on the ELA, Mathematics, and STE tests or retests (separately and combined), for all students and by subgroup.

The percentage of students scoring *Needs Improvement* or higher in ELA, Mathematics, and STE varied widely by subgroup.

- Of the major racial/ethnic subgroups in the state, the percentage of students scoring *Needs Improvement* or higher in all three subjects was highest for white students at 94 percent, followed by Asian students at 92 percent, African American students at 75 percent, and Hispanic/Latino students at 73 percent.
- Forty-nine percent of LEP students performed at the *Needs Improvement* level or higher in all three subjects, while 67 percent of students with disabilities did so, as did 79 percent of low-income students.

Table 8. Students in the Class of 2010 Scoring *Needs Improvement* or Higher in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science and Technology/Engineering through Spring 2009 by Subgroup

| Subgroup | Adjusted Oct. 2008 Enrollment | ELA % NI or Higher | Math % NI or Higher | ELA & Math % NI or Higher | STE % NI or Higher | All 3 Tests % NI or Higher |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|---|
| All Students | 70,666 | 96 | 94 | 94 | 91 | 90 |
| Gender | | | | | | |
| Female | 34,760 | 97 | 95 | 94 | 92 | 91 |
| Male | 35,906 | 95 | 94 | 93 | 91 | 89 |
| Race/Ethnicity | | | | | | |
| African American | 6,031 | 91 | 87 | 85 | 79 | 75 |
| Asian | 3,371 | 96 | 97 | 95 | 94 | 92 |
| Hawaiian/Pacific Islander | 99 | 92 | 90 | 88 | 87 | 85 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 8,231 | 89 | 85 | 83 | 78 | 73 |
| Multi-Race (non-Hispanic) | 1,058 | 96 | 95 | 94 | 90 | 89 |
| Native American | 209 | 96 | 95 | 94 | 93 | 91 |
| White | 51,667 | 98 | 97 | 96 | 95 | 94 |
| Student Status | | | | | | |
| Non-Disabled | 59,392 | 98 | 98 | 97 | 95 | 94 |
| Students with Disabilities | 11,274 | 83 | 78 | 76 | 72 | 67 |
| Limited English Proficient | 2,129 | 68 | 73 | 60 | 60 | 49 |
| FLEP ^a | 1,009 | 95 | 90 | 89 | 83 | 80 |
| Low Income | 18,071 | 92 | 89 | 87 | 83 | 79 |
| Vocational-Technical^b | 14,740 | 97 | 95 | 94 | 92 | 90 |
| Type of Community | | | | | | |
| Urban ^c | 18,210 | 91 | 88 | 85 | 81 | 77 |
| Non-Urban | 52,456 | 98 | 97 | 96 | 95 | 94 |

^a FLEP students are formerly limited English proficient students. See page 18 for more information.

^b Includes students in both Chapter 74 approved and non-approved vocational-technical education programs.

^c Urban districts are Boston, Brockton, Cambridge, Chelsea, Chicopee, Everett, Fall River, Fitchburg, Framingham, Haverhill, Holyoke, Lawrence, Leominster, Lowell, Lynn, Malden, New Bedford, Pittsfield, Quincy, Revere, Somerville, Springfield, Taunton, and Worcester.

- Ninety percent of vocational-technical students performed at the *Needs Improvement* level or higher in all three subjects.
- Seventy-seven percent of urban students and 94 percent of non-urban students performed at the *Needs Improvement* level or higher in all three subjects.

Figure 5 on the following page shows the percentage of students in the class of 2010 for the major racial/ethnic subgroups in the state who performed at the *Needs Improvement* level or higher on the grade 10 tests in ELA, Mathematics, and STE on the first attempt. The figure also shows the cumulative percentage of students who did so through two retesting opportunities. Table 9 provides the same information in tabular format for all racial categories for which the Department reports data.

Figure 5. Percentage of Students in the Class of 2010 Scoring *Needs Improvement* or Higher in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science and Technology/Engineering through Spring 2009 by Race/Ethnicity: Grade 10 Test and Retests

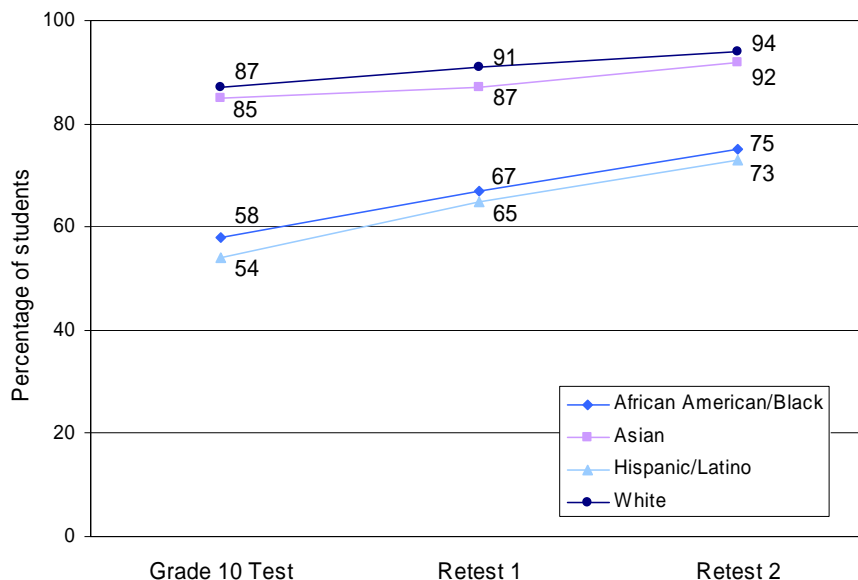


Table 9. Percentage of Students in the Class of 2010 Scoring *Needs Improvement* or Higher in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science and Technology/Engineering through Spring 2009 by Race/Ethnicity: Grade 10 Test and Retests

| Race/Ethnicity | Grade 10 Test Spring 2008 | Retest 1 ^a | Retest 2 ^b |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| African American | 58 | 67 | 75 |
| Asian | 85 | 87 | 92 |
| Hawaiian/Pacific Islander | 71 | 77 | 85 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 54 | 65 | 73 |
| Multi-race (non-Hispanic) | 77 | 82 | 89 |
| Native American | 73 | 85 | 91 |
| White | 87 | 91 | 94 |

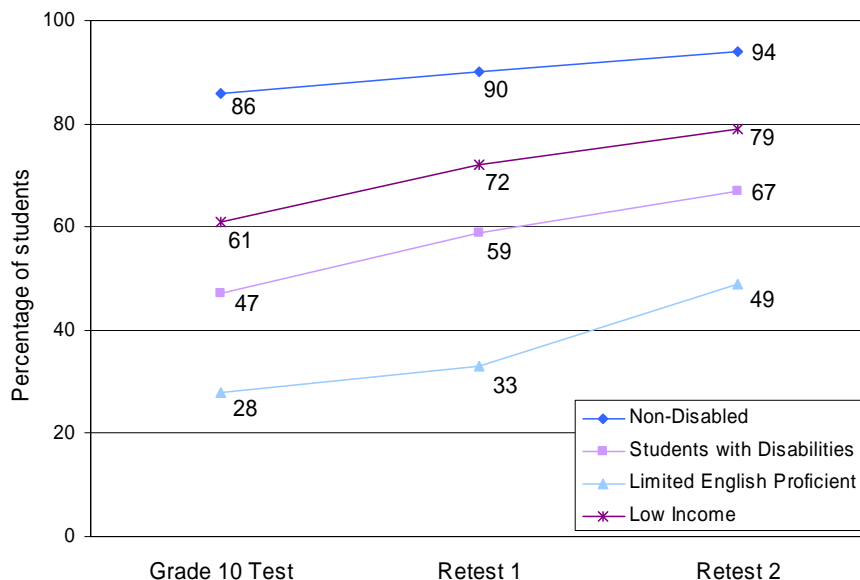
^a Retest 1 data include results from the November 2008 ELA and Mathematics retests and the February 2009 Biology test.

^b Retest 2 data include results from the March 2009 ELA and Mathematics retests and the spring 2009 STE tests.

Of the major racial/ethnic subgroups, the increase in the percentage of students who scored *Needs Improvement* or higher in all three subjects between the first attempt and the second testing opportunity was 19 percentage points for Hispanic/Latino students, 17 points for African American students, and 7 points each for Asian and white students.

Figure 6 on the next page shows the percentage of students in the class of 2010 by student status who performed at the *Needs Improvement* level or higher on the grade 10 tests in ELA, Mathematics, and STE on the first attempt. The figure also shows the cumulative percentage of students who did so through two additional testing opportunities. Table 10 provides the same information in tabular format.

Figure 6. Students in the Class of 2010 Scoring *Needs Improvement* or Higher in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science and Technology/Engineering through Spring 2009 by Student Status: Grade 10 Test and Retests



The increase in the percentage of students who performed at the *Needs Improvement* level or higher in all three subjects between the first attempt and the second retest opportunity was 21 points for LEP students, 20 percentage points for students with disabilities, and 18 points for low-income students.

Table 10. Percentage of Students in the Class of 2010 Scoring *Needs Improvement* or Higher in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science and Technology/Engineering through Spring 2009 by Student Status: Grade 10 Test and Retests

| Student Status | Grade 10 Test Spring 2008 | Retest 1 ^a | Retest 2 ^b |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Non-Disabled | 86 | 90 | 94 |
| Students with Disabilities | 47 | 59 | 67 |
| Limited English Proficient | 28 | 33 | 49 |
| Low Income | 61 | 72 | 79 |

^a Retest 1 data include results from the November 2008 ELA and Mathematics retests and the February 2009 Biology test.

^b Retest 2 data include results from the March 2009 ELA and Mathematics retests and the spring 2009 STE tests.

Appendix

Overview of the Massachusetts Competency Determination

The Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993 requires students to attain the Competency Determination (CD) as a condition for high school graduation. In January 2000, the Board of Education (now the Board of Elementary and Secondary 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 Act 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.

In October 2006, the Board voted to change the Competency Determination standard to increase the likelihood that graduates of Massachusetts high schools will have the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in college and the workforce. Beginning with the class of 2010, to earn the CD, students must earn a scaled score of at least 240 (*Proficient*) on the English Language Arts and Mathematics grade 10 tests or retests OR earn a scaled score of 220–238 (*Needs Improvement*) on the tests or retests and fulfill the requirements of an Educational Proficiency Plan (EPP). In addition, they must earn a scaled score of 220 or higher on one of four high school Science and Technology/Engineering tests (Biology, Chemistry, Introductory Physics or Technology/Engineering).

For students in the class of 2010 and beyond who have scored at the *Needs Improvement* level on either or both of the grade 10 ELA and Mathematics tests, districts are required to develop an EPP that ensures that students continue to receive instruction in the subject(s) in which they are not yet proficient, and that students are assessed annually to evaluate the progress they are making toward attaining proficiency; the Department has identified a number of assessment options for this purpose. Principals will determine whether students have fulfilled the EPP requirements.

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 percent of students earned the CD through the grade 10 MCAS tests or retests, around 1 percent earned the CD through MCAS appeals, and a small number of 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 achieve *Needs Improvement* or higher 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 graduation standard. Additional information about the MCAS-Alt is available on the Department website at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/>, and information on the MCAS Performance Appeals Process is available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcasappeals/>.

Standard Grade 10 English Language Arts and Mathematics Tests vs. Retests

The standard grade 10 MCAS tests in ELA and Mathematics 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 federal No Child Left Behind Act. Results are also used to determine students' eligibility for the John and Abigail Adams Scholarships and the Stanley Z. Koplik Certificate of Mastery Awards.

In contrast, retests are designed for the single purpose of determining whether students have met the CD standard. Students who fail to earn the required score to meet the CD requirement in a particular content area are provided multiple opportunities to retake the test in that content area. Students only retake the MCAS tests in those content areas in which they have not earned the score required for a CD. For example, a student who has met the CD requirement in ELA, but not in Mathematics, need only take the Mathematics test again.

For ELA and Mathematics, there are two regularly scheduled retest administrations each year in the fall (November) and spring (March). Prior to their scheduled graduation in grade 12, students have at least five opportunities to meet the MCAS requirements in ELA and Mathematics for earning a CD through the MCAS tests and retests. However, since 2006 at least 90 percent of students earned their CD by the second retest.

There is no limit on the number of times a student may participate in MCAS retests. Individuals may continue to participate in MCAS retests to earn a CD and a high school diploma after they have completed high school. On the whole, as the percentage of students meeting the CD requirements on the grade 10 test has increased steadily since 2001, the overall number of students who require multiple retesting opportunities has declined accordingly.

In STE, students must earn the required score on one of the four content area tests offered beginning in grade 9. Students who do not earn the required score have two options for additional testing. In subsequent years, students may take a test in the same content area, or they may take a test in one of the other three content areas for which high school STE tests are given. Testing opportunities are offered in February (Biology only) and spring (all four content areas). As in ELA and Mathematics, there is no time limit or limit on the number of times a student may participate in MCAS testing to meet the STE requirement for earning a CD.

Students Scoring *Needs Improvement* or Higher in Both English Language Arts and Mathematics: Classes of 2003–2010

Figure 7 below shows the percentage of students in the classes of 2003–2010 who scored *Needs Improvement* or higher on both the ELA and Mathematics tests in grade 10. It also shows the cumulative percentage of students in each class who scored *Needs Improvement* or higher on both tests after each retest opportunity available to them. The cumulative percentage of students performing at the *Needs Improvement* level or higher on both the ELA and Mathematics tests after the fourth retest opportunity has remained relatively stable for the classes of 2003–2009.

Figure 7. Percentage of Students Scoring *Needs Improvement* or Higher in Both English Language Arts and Mathematics by Test Administration: Classes of 2003–2010

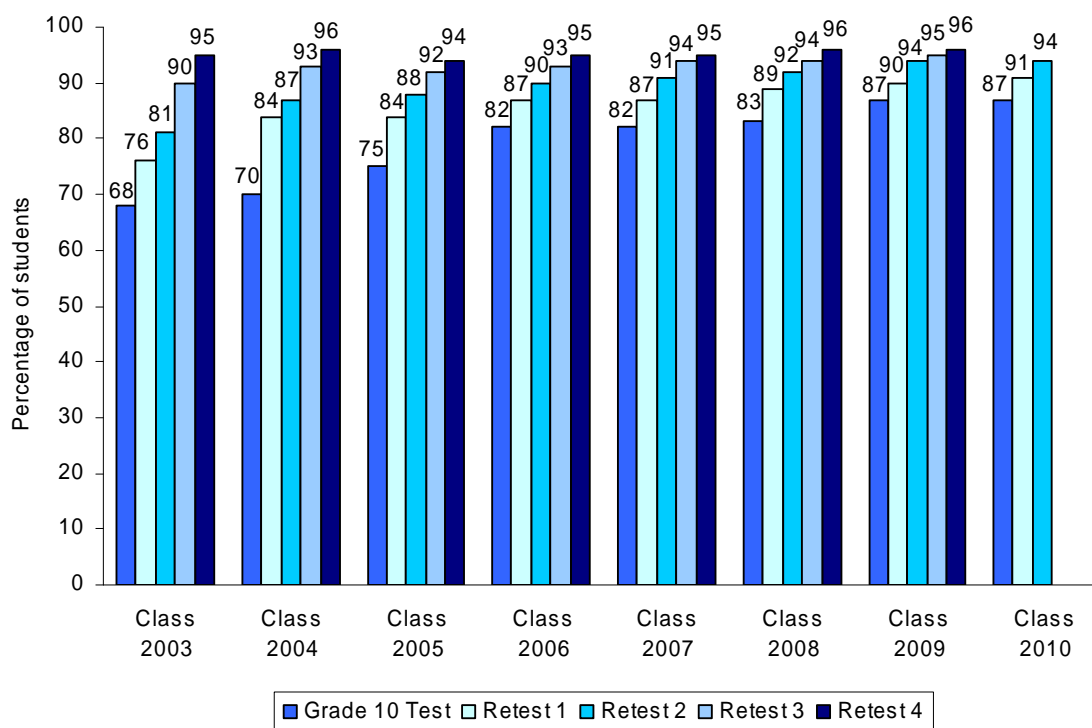


Table 11 on the next page shows student enrollment numbers used to calculate the percentages reported in Figure 7. For the classes of 2003–2009, the percentage of students who earned the CD equals the percentage of students scoring *Needs Improvement* or higher in both ELA and Mathematics. Student enrollments for the grade 10 tests are based on the number of grade 10 students enrolled at the time of testing. Enrollments for retests are based on the October 1 enrollment data submitted to the Department through the Student Information Management System (SIMS). Enrollments for Retest 2, classes of 2006–2010, and for Retest 4, all classes, are based on adjusted October enrollments, which are derived from the October 1 SIMS enrollments for the school year plus/minus students who changed grade, and minus students who transferred out of state or to private schools during the year or who passed away. Students in out-of-district placements are included in retest results for the classes of 2005–2010 but not for the classes of 2003 and 2004.

Table 11. Student Enrollment and Percentage of Students Scoring *Needs Improvement* or Higher in Both English Language Arts and Mathematics: Classes of 2003–2010

| Class | | Grade 10 Test | Retest 1 | Retest 2 | Retest 3 | Retest 4 ^a |
|-------|-------------------------------|---------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------------------|
| 2003 | Earned CD | 68% | 76% | 81% | 90% | 95% |
| | Enrollment | 68,118 | 63,767 | 63,767 | 60,742 | 59,823 |
| 2004 | Earned CD | 70% | 84% | 87% | 93% | 96% |
| | Enrollment | 67,343 | 66,472 | 66,472 | 62,266 | 61,424 |
| 2005 | Earned CD | 75% | 84% | 88% | 92% | 94% |
| | Enrollment | 69,981 | 69,263 | 69,263 | 65,285 | 65,165 |
| 2006 | Earned CD | 82% | 87% | 90% | 93% | 95% |
| | Enrollment | 71,038 | 70,610 | 69,425 | 66,975 | 66,757 |
| 2007 | Earned CD | 82% | 87% | 91% | 94% | 95% |
| | Enrollment | 72,680 | 72,623 | 70,771 | 69,118 | 69,195 |
| 2008 | Earned CD | 83% | 89% | 92% | 94% | 96% |
| | Enrollment | 75,771 | 73,964 | 72,684 | 70,227 | 69,925 |
| 2009 | Earned CD | 87% | 90% | 94% | 95% | 96% |
| | Enrollment | 74,675 | 73,527 | 72,180 | 69,889 | 70,471 |
| 2010 | NI or higher in ELA & Math | 87% | 91% | 94% | | |
| | Enrollment | 75,063 | 72,768 | 70,066 | | |

^a For the classes of 2003–2006, Retest 4 data also include data for summer retests (Retest 5), which were discontinued in 2006.

Student Participation Requirements

The 1993 Massachusetts Education Reform Act mandates that **all** students in the tested grades who are educated with Massachusetts public funds participate in MCAS, including the following groups of students:

- students enrolled in public schools
- students enrolled in charter schools
- students enrolled in educational collaboratives
- students enrolled in private schools receiving special education that is publicly funded by the Commonwealth, including approved and unapproved private special education schools within and outside Massachusetts
- students enrolled in institutional settings receiving educational services
- students in mobile military families
- students in the custody of either the Department of Children and Families (DCF) or the Department of Youth Services (DYS)
- students with disabilities, including students with temporary disabilities such as broken arms
- students with limited English proficiency

A very small number of students educated with Massachusetts public funds are not required to take the standard MCAS tests. These students are strictly limited to the following categories:

- LEP students in their first year of enrollment in U.S. schools, who are not required to participate in the ELA tests
- students with significant disabilities who must instead participate in the MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt)
- students with a medically documented absence who are unable to participate in make-up testing

Although students have the right to participate in testing as many times as they need in order to meet the Competency Determination requirements, participation in retests is not mandatory.

MCAS retest participants are primarily students in grade 11 or 12 who have previously tested but have not yet performed at the *Needs Improvement* level or higher. 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 tests due to illness are also eligible for the retests.

Tables 12 and 13 below show the number of students in the classes of 2009 and 2010 who participated in each testing opportunity and the percentage that earned a scaled score of at least 220 on each subject area test.

Table 12. Class of 2009: Number of Students Participating and Percentage Scoring *Needs Improvement* or Higher on Grade 10 Tests and Retests

| Subject Area | Grade 10 Test Spring 2007 ^a | | Retest 1 Nov. 2007 | | Retest 2 Mar. 2008 | | Retest 3 Nov. 2008 | | Retest 4 Mar. 2009 | |
|-----------------------|---|----|-----------------------|----|-----------------------|----|-----------------------|----|-----------------------|----|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| English Language Arts | 74,643 | 93 | 4,452 | 54 | 1,974 | 45 | 1,856 | 49 | 889 | 42 |
| Mathematics | 74,162 | 90 | 6,477 | 49 | 3,278 | 51 | 2,253 | 51 | 1,020 | 28 |

^a Data for the spring 2007 grade 10 ELA and Mathematics tests include repeating grade 10 students who participated the prior year.

Table 13. Class of 2010: Number of Students Participating and Percentage Scoring *Needs Improvement* or Higher on Grade 10 Tests and Retests

| Subject Area | Grade 10 Test Spring 2008 ^a | | Retest 1 ELA & Math Nov. 2008 | | Biology Test Feb. 2009 ^b | | Retest 2 ELA & Math Mar. 2009 | | STE Test Spring 2009 | |
|-----------------------|---|----|-------------------------------------|----|---|----|-------------------------------------|----|-------------------------|----|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| English Language Arts | 75,494 | 93 | 3,457 | 50 | | | 1,718 | 37 | | |
| Mathematics | 75,331 | 88 | 5,771 | 54 | | | 2,606 | 30 | | |
| Science & Tech./Eng. | 74,641 | 84 | | | 5,387 | 59 | | | 3,554 | 47 |

^a Data for the spring 2008 grade 10 ELA and Mathematics tests include repeating grade 10 students who participated the prior year. Data for the spring 2008 grade 10 STE test include students who participated the prior year when they were in grade 9.

^b The Feb. 2009 Biology test was a standard MCAS test available to students in grades 9–11, some of whom took the test for the first time, and was not a focused retest as in ELA and Mathematics.

Competency Determination Rate vs. Graduation Rate

Prior to the 2006-07 school year, CD attainment rates were used in the calculations that determined which high schools in Massachusetts made AYP. 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 the MCAS tests 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 the Student Information Management System (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. For more information about graduation rates and the methodology used to calculate them, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/reports/gradrates/>.

Subgroup Definitions

The following is a list of definitions for each of the student subgroups, in addition to gender and race/ethnicity, for which results are disaggregated.

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

Non-Disabled: A student who is non-disabled does not have an IEP provided under the IDEA.

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 1 and 8 represents an official AYP subgroup reporting category.

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