

Proposed Model for New Massachusetts Assessments

1. If the Board elects to develop a next-generation Massachusetts assessment, the Department would undertake a series of steps to receive input from the field and ensure the technical soundness of the assessments. At a minimum, these steps would include the following:
 - ❖ Elicit input from teachers, administrators, and other key stakeholder groups
 - ❖ Obtain technical advice and input from the MCAS Technical Advisory Committee, a long-standing group composed of local and national experts in assessment
 - ❖ Partner with a contractor that has deep experience in delivering custom, high-quality assessments

2. The new program would be focused on the following:
 - ❖ Combining PARCC, MCAS, and newly developed items into full ELA and math tests
 - ❖ Creating stronger alignment to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks
 - Introducing writing-in-response-to-text at all grades for ELA
 - Developing and implementing new item types that more deeply and strategically assess the standards
 - Assessing MA-specific standards
 - ❖ Developing a consistent set of performance standards across all grades
 - ❖ Phasing in of full computer-based testing
 - ❖ Developing an appropriate sequence of tests for high school to gauge college and career readiness
 - ❖ Setting standards for the tenth grade competency determination (CD) tests in ELA and mathematics beginning with the class of 2020, to provide reliable feedback on whether students are on track for success in post-secondary education. (The current MCAS remains the CD standard through the class of 2019.)

Throughout the process of building and implementing this new system, the Department will remain committed to best practices and high standards in all aspects of test development, administration, and reporting, including the following:

- ❖ Educator involvement throughout the test development process
- ❖ Superior customer service, training, and support for schools, districts, parents, and students
- ❖ Rapid turn-around of results
- ❖ High bar for student performance, as compared to national and international benchmarks and tests

Selected Benefits of Proposed New Model

- ❖ The state benefits from a large pool of previously developed PARCC and MCAS items (including technology-enhanced items) that can be used as a starting point for the new ELA and mathematics tests.
- ❖ The model creates a sense of coherence and continuity for the field; specifically:
 - One online platform used to manage test administration and deliver test questions for all MA grades and subjects (schools and districts do not have to learn multiple online systems as they transition to computer-based testing)
 - All MA assessments have a similar “look and feel”
 - One customer service center/portal provides services for all MA assessments
 - All reporting activities housed in Edwin Analytics and on the Department’s website
- ❖ Massachusetts maintains control over assessment planning and decision-making, including the following:
 - Test design and development
 - Standard setting
 - Policies for students with disabilities and English language learners
 - Timely reporting at the student, school, district, and state levels
 - Item release policies
- ❖ Local educators remain involved and strongly invested in the processes of item development and review.

Timeline (estimates)

- December 2015/January 2016 – begin convening of advisory groups
- February 2016 – issue request for proposals
- July 2016 – award of new MCAS contract

New Directions and Possibilities

Reinstatement of history and social science testing program

The history tests were suspended in 2009 following the economic downturn of the mid-2000s. This program could be restored with modifications such as new item types and a performance-based component.

Development and implementation of performance-based assessments

Using Race to the Top funding, the assessment office has already developed and piloted a small number of classroom-based performance assessments in science and history. This program could be expanded to include more grades and subjects. In the first few years, the assessments could be scored locally, with students awarded credit for participation only, and with selected auditing by the Department.

Over time, a summative score could be obtained and used as part of the overall profile of students' achievement and growth.

Online student reports

Currently, many schools and districts throughout the Commonwealth make information available to parents online, including report cards and progress reports. Online score reporting (in addition to paper reports and available through a secure, password-protected site) would provide parents/guardians with easy access to their child's scores, as well as a way for the Department to inform parents about other data, additional academic supports, and other pertinent information to encourage parental involvement and improve student outcomes.

New testing constructs

We will continue to monitor and evaluate other innovative approaches to testing (for example, adaptive testing) that might allow us to reduce testing time while maintaining test validity.

Draft Scope of New Assessment Contract

Summary

- ❖ All-inclusive approach, with the exception of specialized programs (MCAS-Alt for students with significant disabilities and the WIDA consortium testing for English learners)
- ❖ ELA and mathematics tests will incorporate existing PARCC and MCAS items, as appropriate, and additional items to be developed under the contract
- ❖ Five-year contract with up to two one-year extensions

Summative assessments included in new contract

- ❖ New ELA and mathematics tests (grades 3–8)
- ❖ Science and technology/engineering (grades 5 and 8)
- ❖ Current MCAS grade 10 ELA and mathematics (until no longer needed for the high school competency determination)
- ❖ High school ELA, mathematics, and science tests to address both the competency determination and college and career readiness standards (exact configuration to be determined)
- ❖ History and social science (as an optional deliverable)

Proposed major vendor services

- ❖ Project management for overall Massachusetts testing program
- ❖ Item development for summative assessments, including technology-enhanced items
- ❖ Administration of tests; scanning, scoring, and reporting of results
- ❖ Online platform to deliver tests for all grades and subjects, with ability to accommodate previously developed content (PARCC items)

- ❖ Paper-and-pencil available through at least spring 2018 administration to provide time for districts to secure sufficient technology infrastructure – paper-and-pencil available thereafter as an accessibility accommodation.