Thank You, Training Specialists!
Thank you to all our training specialists for making the January Portfolios-in-Progress sessions a success, we appreciate your time, expertise, and assistance.

Feedback from the January Portfolios-in-Progress

Based on teachers’ questions during Portfolios-in-Progress, our training specialists would like you to remember the following:

- Brief descriptions must document the skill addressed by the student and describe the activity.
- Evidence and data in the ELA–Reading strand must include the title of the published text used for the assessment. Please include a photocopy or printout copy of the actual text if it is teacher-created or was taken from a website. (Below is a list of online informational text publications for which the title alone is sufficient and will not need to be photocopied.)
- Informational and literary text may not be combined in the ELA–Reading strand.
- An entry point that contains “AND” allows you the option to remove either of the related skills or you may assess both skills. If you choose to assess both skills, each data point and all evidence must include both skills.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT!

Due to the unprecedented number of days on which schools were closed due to the weather, Massachusetts will extend the portfolio submission date. Teachers should continue to make every effort to complete their students’ portfolios and ship them by April 2. However, schools that need additional time to complete their portfolios may have until 5:00 p.m. on April 8 for submission.

In This Issue

- Thank You
- Feedback from January
- Informational Text – Supplemental List
- February/March Portfolios-in-Progress Training Sessions
- Where You Should be in the MCAS-Alt Process
- Administrators Corner
An entry point that contains “AND/OR” allows you to assess one, the other, or both skills; or you may assess some of each. You may not change the wording of an entry point from “AND” to “AND/OR.”

Teachers are allowed to select an entry point from a lower grade (if available), but the standard must be listed on the Strand Cover Sheet at the student’s grade-level.

When you select an entry point from a lower grade level in Mathematics, the cluster headings at the lower grade will not be the same as at the student’s grade. If you select an entry point from a lower grade, it still must be in the required domain or conceptual category.

In high school, it is important to stay within the selected Mathematics conceptual category. Some, such as Algebra and Number and Quantity, begin and end at the high school level, while others spiral to earlier grades. Refer to the Progression of Skills chart on page 7 of the Mathematics Resource Guide for guidance on those conceptual categories that include lower grade-level entry points.

In Forms and Graphs Online, click on Find an Entry Point to generate a measurable outcome that will be reproduced on all of the student’s MCAS-Alt forms and data charts. This tool will also allow you to view all entry points and access skills available in a particular strand. For technical assistance contact 866-834-8880.

**Informational Text – Supplemental List**

In general, teachers are instructed to provide the title of the published text(s) used for the ELA–Reading strand (see first bullet above). Informational and literary text may not be combined in the ELA–Reading strand. A comprehensive list of texts that are either informational or literary is available at www.mcas-alt.org/materials.

Teachers are directed to include a photocopy of any Internet-based or teacher-created texts being submitted in the student’s portfolio. **The following informational texts do not require a photocopy for the ELA–Reading–Informational Text strand:**

- News-2-You
- Scholastic for Kids
- Weekly Reader
- Time for Kids
- Newsweek for Kids
- National Geographic for Kids
- Newsela (publishes daily news articles online at 5 different reading levels from grades 3–12)

Teachers are instructed to simply list the title or topic of articles from any of the sources listed above, and the name of the publication, either in the brief description or directly on the evidence. For example:

“(Student) read an article about penguins from National Geographic for Kids and answered 5 comprehension questions on a worksheet.”
February/March Portfolios-in-Progress Training Sessions

On January 28, registration became available for teachers to register to attend small discussion groups led by MCAS-Alt training specialists who will answer their questions and review their portfolios. Teachers should bring their portfolios and their fully-charged laptops or tablets (if available) and plan to use this time to continue compiling, organizing, and labeling their portfolio evidence for submission by the April 8 deadline. (You are encouraged to submit your portfolio before April 8, if possible.)

Portfolios-in-Progress review sessions will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the following locations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>February 24</th>
<th>Danvers, Doubletree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>February 25</td>
<td>Springfield, Marriott</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>March 10</td>
<td>Taunton, Holiday Inn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>March 11</td>
<td>Marlborough, Best Western</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you have questions or difficulties with registration, contact the MCAS Service Center at 800-737-5103.

Where you should be in the MCAS-Alt Process

- Continue collecting data and evidence, entering the information in Online Forms and Graphs.
- Register to attend a state-sponsored portfolio review session.
- Photocopy each strand as it is completed in order to maintain a copy of the portfolio at your school (optional, but recommended).
- Check with your administrator for the shipment of MCAS-Alt binders and submission materials expected after the February vacation.

(The Suggested Timeline for MCAS-Alt can be found in its entirety on page 6 of the 2015 Educator’s Manual for MCAS-Alt)

Administrators Corner

- Please monitor the progress of your teachers in completing MCAS-Alt portfolios for their students so they can be submitted by the deadline of April 8.

- Your school’s shipment of MCAS-Alt submission materials (three-ring binders, etc.) is scheduled to arrive the week of February 23. Once materials arrive, verify that the number of delivered materials is correct. If you do not receive your school’s shipment by February 27, please call the MCAS Service Center at 800-737-5103.

- Prior to submitting portfolios from your school, please review the MCAS-Alt security requirements and principal’s responsibilities on page 7 of the 2015 Educator’s Manual for MCAS-Alt.
The NEW deadline for scheduling a UPS pick-up of completed portfolios at your school will be 3:00 p.m. on April 7. Portfolios must be shipped from your school by 5:00 p.m. on April 8, but may be shipped any time after March 2. Instructions will be included in your materials shipment.

We’d love to hear from you.
Please let us know if there is a topic you’d like us to address in a future MCAS-Alt newsletter.

Was this email forwarded to you?
Get on our mailing list. Click here to sign up for the MCAS-Alt News.

Published bi-monthly during the school year by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt