

MCAS-Alt

Same Standards • High Expectations for ALL Students



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www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/



This newsletter is published by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and will provide Massachusetts educators with information, advice, and support to teach the Massachusetts learning standards to students with significant disabilities, and to conduct the MCAS Alternate Assessment.

"Do one small thing immediately—often this is all you need to do to get started."

-Brian Tracy

Welcome back to school!

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2009 MCAS-Alt Scoring and Reporting

Thank you to the 220 teachers who worked with Department of Elementary and Secondary Education staff to score 8,847 student portfolios in July.

MCAS-Alt school-, district-, and student-level results were posted on August 10, 2009, to the Department's secure website at www.mcasservicecenter.com. Portfolio Feedback Forms have also been posted to this site. Superintendents will receive MCAS and MCAS-Alt Parent/Guardian Reports on September 15, 2009. Schools will receive their shipment of returned portfolios by October 1.

What Portfolio Scorers found...

Portfolios continue to reflect a commitment by educators to assess the academic performance and progress of students with disabilities, and a commitment to excellence through the use of a wide range of creative instructional approaches.

While the vast majority of portfolios contained all required information, some common areas for improvement include the following:

- Outcomes should address only **one skill**. For each strand/standard required for assessment, the teacher should identify a targeted skill that is challenging and attainable for each student. The goal is to show that a student has made progress over at least eight different dates. Please remember that each "entry point" listed in the Resource Guide may consist of more than one skill. Skills that are dissimilar should be charted separately on two different graphs.
- A **brief description** of each activity is required. This will enable portfolio scorers to know what the student was asked to do.
- The **measurable outcome** listed on the Strand Cover Sheet should be the same as the outcome (skill) listed on the data chart and on all related pieces of primary evidence. Additional evidence showing *other* related skills in the strand may also be submitted in the portfolio once the core set of evidence is complete.
- Each skill addressed must be based on the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks and must be matched with learning standards required for assessment of a student in that grade.
- If a student is working **at or near grade-level**, additional skills must be addressed in order to attain a score of *Needs Improvement* or higher.
- Please refer to the *2010 Educator's Manual for MCAS-Alt* for additional information.



MCAS-Alt Score Appeals

The deadline for submitting MCAS-Alt Score Appeals is Friday, September 4. If you believe a discrepancy exists between a reported score and the actual evidence in the student's photocopied portfolio kept at the school, a score appeal may be submitted by the principal after carefully reviewing the information at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html, and completing and submitting an MCAS-Alt Score Appeal form. **MCAS-Alt Score Appeals must be received at the Department by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, September 4, 2009.**



What's New for 2010 MCAS-Alt?

The following is a summary of important changes to the 2010 MCAS-Alt. Please review the *2010 Educator's Manual for MCAS-Alt* and/or attend a fall training session for more details.

- **Earlier submission of portfolios:** As announced earlier this summer, the submission deadline for 2010 MCAS-Alt portfolios is **Thursday, April 1, 2010**. Earlier submission will allow schools, districts, and parents to receive preliminary MCAS ELA and all MCAS-Alt results in mid-June. Earlier reporting will encourage schools to use the results to plan instruction and make placement decisions for the following year. Beginning in spring 2010, MCAS-Alt portfolios will be scored in the spring by the state's testing contractor. The Department will not conduct the MCAS-Alt summer scoring institute in 2010.
- **MCAS-Alt EV electronic portfolio software:** Educators interested in the electronic portfolio option are directed to use the MCAS-Alt Forms and Graphs Online program, which allows educators to complete and print all data charts and required forms for submission of paper-format portfolios in three-ring binders provided to schools for this purpose. The Department will no longer provide MCAS-Alt-EV software for the creation and submission of MCAS-Alt student portfolios on CDs. Educators may still compile video and audio evidence, and submit disks and cassettes in a three-ring binder with other portfolio materials.



Updates

Educator's Manual

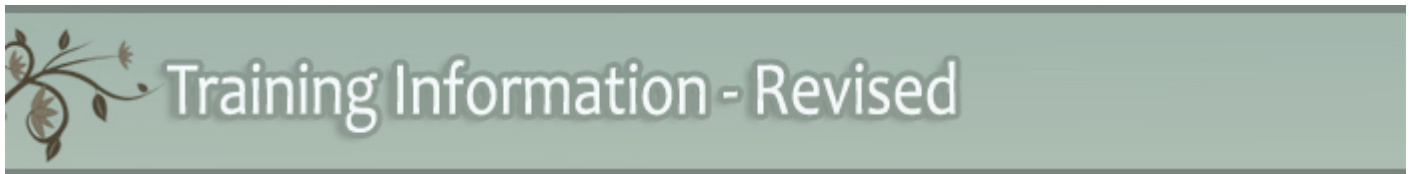
Print copies of the *2010 Educator's Manual* and the *Resource Guide to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for Students with Disabilities* (2006) will be available at the Educators' Training sessions in October. The *2010 Educator's Manual for MCAS-Alt* will be available shortly online at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html. Be sure to review the "New and Notable for 2009–2010" section of the *2010 Educator's Manual* for a summary of changes to the MCAS-Alt this year.

Note: The *Resource Guide to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for Students with Disabilities* (Fall 2006) is the latest edition.

MCAS-Alt Forms and Graphs Online

2010 MCAS-Alt cover sheets, work description labels, and data charts will be available in digital format from the MCAS-Alt website at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt in mid-September. The digital format allows educators to complete these forms on their personal computers and to print and include them, as appropriate, in each portfolio. Two versions will be available for digital completion of forms and graphs:

- The **download** version allows completion of forms on a single personal computer or laptop
- The **online** version allows completion of forms on multiple computers through log in and access to a secure web site.



Register Now for Fall Training at www.mcasservicecenter.com.

Department-sponsored **training sessions** will be conducted in September/October 2009, January 2010, and March 2010. Announcements and registration information will be faxed to schools and are posted to www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html. October 2009 training sessions will include the following presentations:

- Administrators' Overview for school and district administrators on MCAS and MCAS-Alt for students with disabilities.
- MCAS-Alt Overview for educators who are conducting MCAS-Alt for the first time.
- What's New for 2010 MCAS-Alt for educators with previous MCAS-Alt experience, plus a session on data collection strategies.

Schedule of training sessions:

Administrators Overview: MCAS and MCAS-Alt for Students with Disabilities

Dates and Locations (8:30–11:30 a.m.)

Tuesday, September 29, 2009.....	Taunton – <i>Holiday Inn</i>
Wednesday, September 30, 2009.....	West Springfield – <i>Clarion</i>
Thursday, October 1, 2009.....	Marlborough – <i>Marriott</i>
Friday, October 2, 2009.....	Peabody – <i>Marriott</i>

Training for Educators: MCAS-Alt

Week One: (8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.)

Tuesday, October 6, 2009..... Taunton – *Holiday Inn*
Wednesday, October 7, 2009..... West Springfield – *Clarion*
Thursday, October 8, 2009..... Danvers – *Sheraton*
Friday, October 9, 2009..... Marlborough – *Marriott*

Week Two: (8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.)

Tuesday, October 20, 2009..... Braintree – *Sheraton*
Wednesday, October 21, 2009..... West Springfield – *Clarion*
Thursday, October 22, 2009..... Taunton – *Holiday Inn*
Friday, October 23, 2009..... Peabody – *Marriott*



- It is not too early to start organizing your students' portfolios. The beginning of the year, while you are getting to know your students, is a great time to identify skills and begin setting up their data charts. You can also organize folders for each student by subject/strand for storage of work samples, data charts, etc. Plan ahead for the submission of portfolios on April 1, 2010.
- It is also a good time to decide which teachers and other staff will assist in collecting data and evidence for each student's portfolio and how the information will be collected and organized. Discuss together what methods worked in the past and how to make the collection process more efficient.

**We look forward to seeing you at a Department-sponsored training session this fall.
Please register early!**

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.

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