MCAS 2.0

HIGH SCHOOL TESTING WORKGROUP

RECOMMENDATIONS

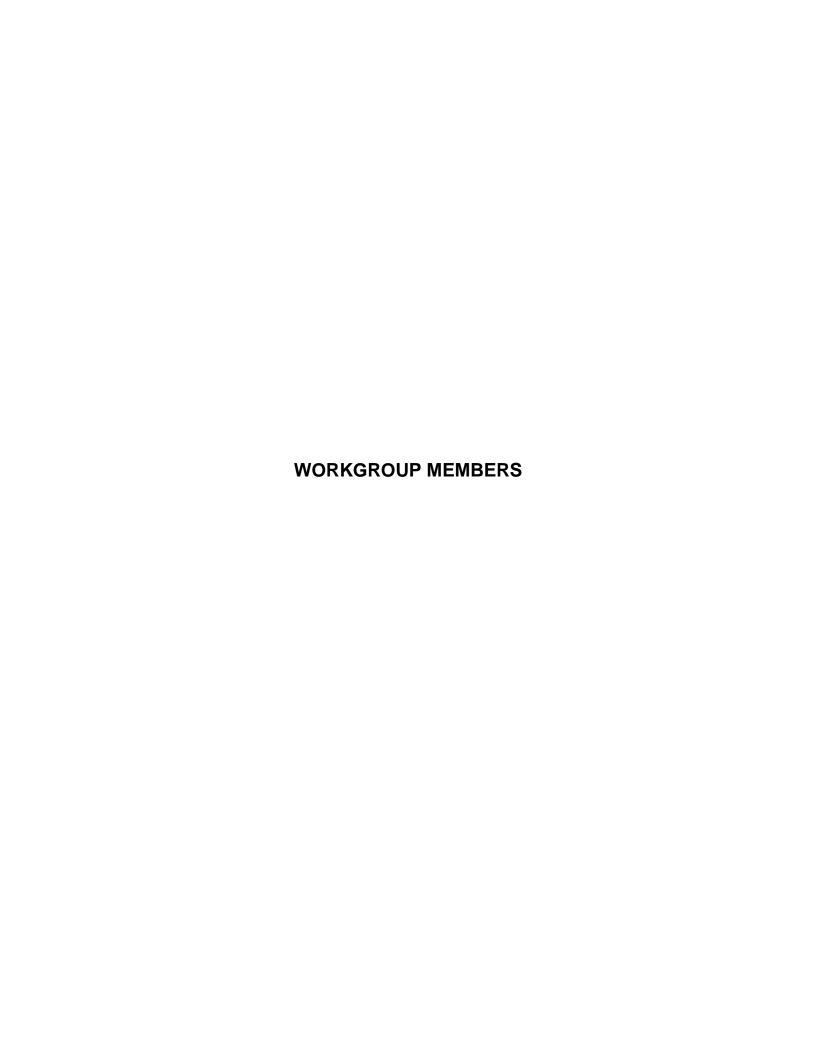
MARCH 2, 2016

The High School Testing Workgroup was organized by the Center for Teaching, Learning & Program Improvement Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Brooke Clenchy, Senior Associate Commissioner

Facilitated by Jake Foster, Director of STEM, with support from Jass Stewart, Special Assistant to the Sr. Assoc. Commissioner

PURPOSE

The High School Testing Workgroup will address a number of policy issues relating to the ELA, mathematics, and science tests to be administered in grades 9-12; it will also address issues related to history and social science high school testing. These issues include the specific tests to be offered; whether certain tests will be mandatory or optional; the sequence of tests required for the competency determination beginning with the class of 2020; and the schedule for transitioning from the current high school MCAS tests.



SCHOOL DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVES

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PROPOSED OPTIONS FOR HIGH SCHOOL TESTING FOR THE MCAS 2.0 SYSTEM

The High School Testing workgroup is composed of 30 educators, administrators, and higher education staff from across the state (see appendix) and is supported by almost 20 Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and Department of Higher Education staff. The full workgroup met 3 times between late January and late February to address a number of policy issues relating to the high school testing, including whether certain tests will be mandatory or optional, recommendations for the competency determination beginning with the class of 2020, and transitioning from current high school MCAS tests to MCAS 2.0 assessments.

Long-term goals of the MCAS system within 10 to 15 years

The High School (HS) Testing workgroup believes the HS MCAS testing system is critical in providing:

- Key information on students' readiness for post-secondary college and career initiatives.
- Valuable data for school, district, and higher education programs.
- Foundational messaging to the public on the effectiveness and impact of the educational system on student achievement.

After significant discussion the HS Testing workgroup recommends that the HS MCAS aim to reach the following goals over time, likely up to 15 years:

- A competency determination (CD) policy that expects the development of well-rounded students through the inclusion of each core subject, including history/civics.
- A graduation expectation that is a measure of college and career readiness (CCR), in alignment with
 expectations for student learning called for in state learning standards (each of the core academic
 subjects) and the state's definition of CCR.
- Participation of all students in state CCR assessments. Both college and business communities make purposeful use of information from the CCR assessments. The MCAS system and related policies incentivize CCR as a high school goal for all.
- Performance-based assessment (PBA) opportunities within the MCAS system that allow students to demonstrate skills, application, and critical thinking across different contexts. Ideally PBA tasks would be scored by the state to be fully valid, but minimally PBA tasks be scored regionally (locally) for accountability purposes. PBA results could be used as an optional component to boost CD or CCR scores.

Proposed innovations in high school testing over the next 5 years

The primary focus of the HS Testing workgroup was on a 5-year window, essentially informing the development of the MCAS RFR that will position the state to advance on the long-term goals above. Within 5 years a number of innovations in the HS MCAS system are expected and encouraged which represent significant accomplishments for the Commonwealth. These 5-year innovations include:

- Begin to raise the "proficiency" bar to move the CD expectation toward CCR expectations.
 - o Reset the assessment standard for what constitutes each MCAS performance level (the performance level descriptors and associated student performance scores).
 - Enhance the assessment of skills and critical thinking within each discipline through better alignment to grade 10 (for CD) or grade 11 (for CCR) standards, and assessment of skills and practices included in learning standards.
 - o Moving the expectation up can also include adjustment of either or both of:
 - More varied and rigorous item types
 - Adjustment of the CD policy to make proficiency the expectation (rather than needs improvement)
- Add a grade 10 and/or end-of-course history and/or civics assessment (maintaining a CD focused on grade 10 standards for the first 5 years).
 - o The focus is to be determined through the history and civics standards review group.
 - While there is a sense of urgency to include this assessment in the CD policy, focus on the standards review, district adjustments to local curriculum, and development of a quality HS assessment is deemed substantive work in the 5-year window.

- Consider allowing the mathematics CD assessment to be taken by grade 9 students who have completed sufficient HS-level algebra and geometry. This would effectively make the mathematics assessment an end-of-algebra-and-geometry assessment rather than a "grade 10" assessment. The MA Mathematics Framework does not have "grade 10" standards; only course standards.
- Provide for an optional grade 9 diagnostic assessment for ELA and mathematics (perhaps at district expense). This would provide information earlier to allow for remediation with individual students before the CD assessment is taken, and additionally reduce the need for retesting.
- Move to computer-based testing (CBT) across the system.
 - o Continue to provide alternative paper-based forms for specific accommodation situations.
- Begin to develop performance-based assessment (PBA) components that can eventually be included in the MCAS system. The 5-year window provides time for exploration and development of PBAs.

Establish and incentivize CCR as a goal for all students

- Promote CCR as a goal by adding a grade 11 CCR assessment in ELA and mathematics.
 - o Provide a grade 11 CCR assessment in the HS MCAS system.
 - Include explicit assessment of critical thinking in ELA and mathematics which indicate students' career readiness and college readiness.
 - Consider instituting a policy that mandates participation in a CCR assessment, either the MCAS CCR assessment or choice from a set of state-approved assessments (including career-oriented options). The MCAS CCR assessment would be the default. Options may include assessments already/typically offered in junior year of high school.
- Incentivize participation in MCAS CCR assessment through the use of CCR scores for higher education placement in credit-bearing courses.
- Incentivize CCR as a goal by adjusting the requirements for Adams and/or Koplick scholarship eligibility to reflect CCR scores for ELA and mathematics (keep science CD requirement).

Please note that while the HS Testing workgroup values innovations that, in principle, reduce the overall amount of testing in the HS MCAS system, the workgroup did not arrive on a specific recommendation about reducing testing. The primary concern articulated by members, particularly for those focused on students in urban districts or certain student populations, was to ensure the MCAS system provides substantive opportunities for all students to achieve the CD requirement. For many workgroup members the overall number of test-taking opportunities takes priority over reducing testing in the MCAS system.

Elements of the HS MCAS system that should remain the same

To provide consistency for the field as the innovations above are addressed, the core of the grade 9-10 assessment options should remain the same. In particular, maintain:

- A CD that focuses on grade 10 standards and provides an indication of "progress toward CCR".
- The core testing structure for the CD, including:
 - o Passing (1) grade 10 ELA assessment
 - o Passing (1) grade 10 integrated (Algebra 1 and Geometry) mathematics assessment (but see note above about the potential shift to an end-of-algebra-and-geometry perspective)
 - o Passing (1) science and technology/engineering EOC assessment (taken in grade 9 or 10), from the suite of (4) options (biology, chemistry, introductory physics, technology/engineering).
- Assessment of "securely held knowledge" assessment of selected standards from prior grades (with a
 particular focus on skills that span grade levels).

The MCAS system should also continue to provide CD opportunities for students who have exited high school without a diploma and/or adult learners.

Note:

• Continuing to provide all four options in science is important because physical sciences and technology/engineering can be a strong foundation for grade 9 students, and there are schools that have made programmatic choices to provide these as the first HS science course. In addition, biology has changed significantly over time and in most real-world contexts is strongly focused on biochemistry and biotechnology, particularly within the Massachusetts economy. Additionally, the range of options provides CD retake opportunities in a way that can match the assessment taken with the students' strengths. The state recognizes that while approximately 85% of students currently take biology and introductory physics, reducing the science HS MCAS options to just those 2 would severely limit student and local programmatic options.

Three potential options

The HS Testing workgroup identified two likely options that provide for the innovations outlined above while maintaining the core of the grade 9-10 assessment structure of the current MCAS system:

- 1. Keep our <u>current HS testing system as is for grades 9-12</u>, and <u>add new assessments</u>.
 - a. Keep current grade 9-10 CD assessments (grade 10 ELA, grade 10 mathematics, four EOC science options) and all grades 11-12 retest opportunities (ELA and mathematics: one retest mid-year and one at the end of the year; science: one mid-year biology opportunity and 4 options at the end of the year).
 - b. Add a grade 10 history/civics assessment (no retake/retest yet as it is not recommended to be part of the CD in the 5-year window).
 - c. Add a grade 11 CCR assessment for ELA and for mathematics (separate from CD retests).
 - Additional options for CCR may be considered, as discussed above.
 - The CCR assessment would be an end-of-year assessment offered at grades 11-12.
 - d. This option provides for each student to have at least 5 testing opportunities in each subject to meet the CD requirement.

Benefits of this option:

- Maintenance of the HS MCAS system as the field currently knows it
- Substantive opportunities for retesting, in which the retests are shorter and more focused than full operational assessments
- Keeps CCR assessment separate from any CD assessment
- Maintains mid-year science assessment opportunity

Downsides of this option:

- Increases overall testing in HS MCAS system; requires districts to administer many tests at multiple times through the school year
- Only a small group of students may actually participate in the CCR assessments, and may widen opportunity gap for students to be eligible for scholarships
- For science, continues to provide inequitable focus on biology over other subjects
- 2. Keep the core of the current grade 9-10 assessment options, but simplify grade 11-12 assessments.
 - a. Keep current grade 9-10 CD assessments (grade 10 ELA, grade 10 mathematics, four grade 9 or 10 EOC science options).
 - b. Add a grade 10 history/civics assessment (no retake/retest yet as it is not recommended to be part of the CD in the 5-year window).
 - c. All CD assessments would only be offered at the end of the school year (not mid year).
 - d. Add a CCR assessment for ELA and mathematics in grades 11-12:
 - i. Offer only a CCR assessment that includes an identified benchmark for CD. (This would eliminate separately designed "retests".)
 - ii. Offer the assessment twice each year for grade 11 and 12 (one mid-year, one at the end of the year).

- iii. Additional options for CCR may be considered, as discussed above.
- e. This option provides for each student to have 4 testing opportunities in each subject (assuming they took a science assessment in grade 9) to meet the CD requirement.

Benefits of this option:

- Maintains grade 9-10 CD assessment options
- Reduces overall testing in HS
- Provides significant opportunities for retesting
- Integrates CCR assessment as a core part of the HS MCAS system, in which all students (even those taking the assessment for CD retest purposes) have the opportunity to demonstrate CCR performance
- Includes equitable focus on each science discipline

Downsides of this option:

- Removes the more focused, shorter retests in ELA and mathematics
- Reduces the number of testing opportunities for HS biology

The HS Testing workgroup also suggested that the Department consider an option involving a full redesign of the mathematics and ELA HS assessments. The basic intent is to have an adaptive, dynamic assessment that serves all three purposes: diagnostic, CD determination, and CCR determination. In addition, this option simplifies grade 11-12 assessments. Functionally:

- 3. Redesign the HS ELA and mathematics assessments and simplify end-of-course science assessments:
 - a. Develop a single dynamic, adaptive assessment for each of ELA and mathematics that are given to grade 9, grade 10, and grade 11 students (end-of-year only) and can provide results that are relevant to the full span of grades: diagnostic information for grade 9 students, a determination of CD at grade 10, and a determination of CCR at grade 11.
 - b. Items that expect student performance or demonstration that need to be human-scored should be included but would likely need to be scored separately.
 - c. Keep four grade 9 or 10 EOC science options that would be offered at the end of the school year (not mid-year), with end-of-course retake opportunities through grade 12.
 - d. Add a grade 10 history/civics assessment (no retake/retest yet as it is not recommended to be part of the CD in the 5-year window).

Benefits of this option:

- Reduces overall testing in HS
- Treats ELA and mathematics learning as a continuum with resulting data promoting growth over time
- Integrates CCR assessment as a core part of the HS MCAS system, in which all students have the opportunity to demonstrate CCR performance
- Includes equitable focus on each science discipline

Downsides of this option:

- A substantial technical challenge to design the ELA and mathematics assessments:
 - To address the span of grade 9 diagnostic to CCR determination
 - To include open response or other student writing/performance elements (humanscored item)
- Removes the more focused, shorter retests in ELA and mathematics
- Reduces the number of testing opportunities in ELA, mathematics, and biology

Visuals of each option, with implications for assessments to be developed, follow on the next pages.

Option 1: 5 years from now, keeping current MCAS components and adding assessments

	9th	10 th	11th	12th
ELA		CD assessment (mandatory) ELA: 10 th grade standards Math: integrated algebra and geometry	CCR assessment* (optional)	CCR assessment* (optional)
Math	Diagnostic assessment (optional) 1 for math; 1 for ELA		1 for math; 1 for ELA (1 opportunity) CD retests Mid-year and end-of-year (2 opportunities)	1 for math; 1 for ELA (1 opportunity) CD retests Mid-year and end-of- year (2 opportunities)
Science	End-of-course CD asse Must take & pass 1 subj February (biology) and J	ect area (4 options)		
		End-of-course CD asse February (biology) and J	essment (4 options) if not une administrations	achieved CD
HSS		US History &/or Civics assessment	(no retakes until part of CD)	(no retakes until part of CD)

^{*} CCR expectation could be met via a supplementary list of state-approved college- and career-focused assessments in lieu of MCAS CCR assessment. These may include assessments already/typically offered in junior or senior years of high school. See explanation above.

Implications for RFR

Option 1: RFR would ask respondents to propose costs for the following assessments (does not account for variable number of forms of each assessment):

- 1 optional grade 9 diagnostic assessment in ELA
- 1 optional grade 9 diagnostic assessment in mathematics
- 1 grade 10 CD assessment in ELA
- 1 grade 10 (or end-of-algebra-and-geometry) CD assessment in mathematics
- 5 grade 9-10 end-of-course science CD assessments (also offered to grade 11-12 students as needed):
 - 2 biology (1 mid-year, 1 end-of-year)
 - o 1 introductory physics (end-of-year)
 - o 1 chemistry (end-of-year)
 - 1 technology/engineering (end-of-year)
- 1 grade 10 assessment in history and/or civics
- 2 grade 11-12 retest assessments in ELA (1 mid-year, 1 end-of-year)
- 2 grade 11-12 retest assessments in mathematics (1 mid-year, 1 end-of-year)
- 1 optional grade 11-12 CCR assessment in ELA
- 1 optional grade 11-12 CCR assessment in mathematics

Total assessments to be developed: **16** (not counting Alt or accommodation versions)

Option 2: 5 years from now, keeping grades 9-10 components and simplifying 11-12

			-	
	9th	10 th	11th	12 th
ELA	Diagnostic	CD assessment (mandatory)	CCR assessment* (optional if achieved CD; mandatory if not)	CCR assessment* (optional if achieved CD; mandatory if not)
Math	assessment (optional) 1 for math; 1 for ELA	ELA: 10 th grade standards Math: integrated algebra and geometry	1 for math; 1 for ELA (2 opportunities) Two scores: for CCR and for CD	1 for math; 1 for ELA (2 opportunities) Two scores: for CCR and for CD
Science	End-of-course CD asse Must take & pass 1 subjection	` ,		
		End-of-course CD asse End-of-year only	essment (4 options) if not	achieved CD
HSS		US History &/or Civics assessment	(no retakes until part of CD)	(no retakes until part of CD)

^{*} CCR expectation could be met via a supplementary list of state-approved college- and career-focused assessments in lieu of MCAS CCR assessment. These may include assessments already/typically offered in junior or senior years of high school. See explanation above.

Implications for RFR

Option 2: RFR would ask respondents to propose costs for the following assessments (does not account for variable number of forms of each assessment):

- 1 optional grade 9 diagnostic assessment in ELA
- 1 optional grade 9 diagnostic assessment in mathematics
- 1 grade 10 CD assessment in ELA
- 1 grade 10 (or end-of-algebra-and-geometry) CD assessment in mathematics
- 4 grade 9-10 end-of-course CD assessments in science (also offered to grade 11-12 students as needed):
 - o 1 biology (end-of-year)
 - 1 introductory physics (end-of-year)
 - o 1 chemistry (end-of-year)
 - 1 technology/engineering (end-of-year)
- 1 grade 10 assessment in history and/or civics
- 2 grade 11-12 CCR/CD assessments in ELA
- 2 grade 11-12 CCR/CD assessments in mathematics

Total assessments to be developed: 13 (not counting Alt or accommodation versions)

Option 3: 5 years from now, dynamic-adaptive ELA and math, simplify grades 11-12

	9th	10 th	11th	12 th		
ELA	Math & ELA assessment					
ELA		1 for math, 1 for	ELA			
Math	Diagnostic results	CD results	CD and CCF	R results		
Science	End-of-course CD asse Must take & pass 1 subj End-of-year only					
	End-of-course CD assessment (4 options) if not achieved CD End-of-year only			achieved CD		
HSS		US History &/or Civics assessment	(no retakes until part of CD)	(no retakes until part of CD)		

Implications for RFR

Option 3: RFR would ask respondents to propose costs for the following assessments (does not account for variable number of forms of each assessment):

- 1 adaptive grade 9-11 diagnostic/CD/CCR assessment in ELA (end-of-year; also offered to grade 12 students as needed)
- 1 adaptive grade 9-11 diagnostic/CD/CCR assessment in mathematics (end-of-year; also offered to grade 12 students as needed)
- 4 grade 9-10 end-of-course CD assessments in science (also offered to grade 11-12 students as needed):
 - 1 biology (end-of-year)
 - o 1 introductory physics (end-of-year)
 - o 1 chemistry (end-of-year)
 - 1 technology/engineering (end-of-year)
- 1 grade 10 assessment in history and/or civics

Total assessments to be developed: **7** (not counting Alt or accommodation versions)

Transition considerations

The HS Testing workgroup recommends that students have at least two experiences with the next-generation operational tests as a <u>minimum</u> to achieve a fair and equitable preparation before they are held to the high-stakes CD requirement in grade 10. Based on the transition chart provided by Student Assessment Services staff, this recommendation can be met in ELA and mathematics for the case for the Class of 2022 and beyond. The challenge is providing sufficient exposure for all students of the Classes of 2020 and 2021. Therefore, for these classes the HS testing workgroup recommends that:

- 1. For the Class of 2020, the state provides both the legacy MCAS test and MCAS 2.0 as CD offerings. With this option, students with exclusive prior exposure to the legacy MCAS, and those who experienced PARCC as 7th and 8th graders, will not have to undergo a testing "transition." Both cohorts of students will have at least two years of exposure to an operational test that is similar to their CD test.
- 2. For the Class of 2021, the state provide a grade 9 MCAS 2.0 diagnostic assessment and made mandatory for students who took the legacy MCAS in grades 6 and 7. The assessment would be optional for all other grade 9 students. Again, both cohorts of students would have at least two years of exposure to an operational test that is similar to their CD test.
- 3. For the Class of 2022, the state provides the grade 9 diagnostic assessment as an option.

MCAS 2.0 Transition Testing Recommendations (for ELA and mathematics)

				esting Year	o (101 ==/10		Minimum
Class of:	2015 (choice year 1)	2016 (choice year 2)	2017	2018	2019	2020	number of opportunities for students to take new MCAS 2.0 test before CD
2019	Grade 8 - MCAS - PARCC	Grade 9 – no test	Grade 10 – legacy	Retests – legacy	Retests – legacy	Retests – legacy	n/a
2020	Grade 7 - MCAS - PARCC	Grade 8 - MCAS - PARCC	Grade 9 – no test	Grade 10 - legacy test for MCAS students - new test for PARCC students	Retakes or Retests – new	Retakes or Retests – new	2
2021	Grade 6 - MCAS - PARCC	Grade 7 – MCAS – PARCC	Grade 8 – new test	Grade 9 - mandatory new diagnostic for MCAS students - optional diagnostic for PARCC students	Grade 10 – new test	Retakes or Retests – new	2
2022	Grade 5 - MCAS - PARCC	Grade 6 - MCAS - PARCC	Grade 7 – new test	Grade 8 – new test	Grade 9 - Optional diagnostic	Grade 10 – new test	2

For the Class of 2020 and 2021 in particular, the HS Testing workgroup **recommends the implementation of additional supports for students and educators to facilitate the transition**, such as professional development for educators and enrichment supports for students to build greater familiarity with test content, question design, and technology features of the new assessment. The chart below outlines recommended supports.

MCAS 2.0 Student and Educator Transition Supports Each Year Through 2017 or 2018

	8th	9th	10th	11th
Student	Administration of grade 8 MCAS operational test with PARCC-like items Administration of grade 8 PARCC operational PBT/CBT tests Use of selected grade 8-level PARCC PBT/CBT practice test items	Use of selected grade 9-level PARCC PBT/CBT practice test items Mandatory use of MCAS 2.0 9 th -grade diagnostic test Option for high-achieving 9 th graders to take grade 10 MCAS 2.0 test (exempt from diagnostic test)	Use of selected grade 10-level PARCC PBT/CBT practice test items Use of selected grade 10-level MCAS 2.0 PBT/CBT practice test items Administration of MCAS 2.0 operational tests (paper or computer)	Use of MCAS 2.0 CCR test for CD retest opportunities and possible achievement of CCR designation (Or, use of MCAS 2.0 CD retests)
Educator	State/local grade 8 PARCC CBT practice test sessions Local use of online grade 8 PARCC PBT/CBT sample test items State/local PD on released items and student work State/local PD on grade 8 ELA, math, and STE standards/ instructional shifts	State/local grade 9 PARCC or MCAS 2.0 CBT practice test sessions Local use of online grade 9 PARCC or MCAS 2.0 PBT/CBT sample test items State/local PD on released items and student work State/local PD on grade 9 ELA, math, and STE standards/ instructional shifts	State/local grade 10 PARCC or MCAS 2.0 CBT practice test sessions Local use of online grade 10 PARCC or MCAS 2.0 PBT/CBT sample test items State/local PD on released items and student work State/local PD on grade 10 MCAS 2.0 test format/design and blueprints State/local PD on grade 10 ELA, math, and STE standards/ instructional shifts Administration of MCAS 2.0 tests	State/local grade 11 PARCC or MCAS 2.0 CBT practice test sessions Local use of online grade 11 PARCC or MCAS 2.0 PBT/CBT sample test items State/local PD on released items and student work State/local PD on grade 11 MCAS 2.0 test format/design and blueprints State/local PD on grade 11 ELA, math, and STE standards/ instructional shifts

And finally, the HS Testing group recommends the Department develop a series of technology readiness supports for educators and students to ensure a fair and equitable transition from pencil and paper testing to system-wide computer-based testing in 2019. The HS Testing workgroup recommends student be provided a minimum of three years of exposure to the CBT interface (or three opportunities to use the interface), which can include practice assessments, before taking a CBT assessment for high-stakes purposes. The table below outlines additional supports that are encouraged to support an effective transition to CBT.

MCAS 2.0 Transition Supports from PBT to CBT

Calendar Year	2016	2017	2018	2019		
Student	Practice tests (with accommodations) that mimic actual test problems Tutorials on the interface Regular access to the tools (with accommodations) – computer and tablets Practice at earlier grades Access and practice for parents					
Educator	Practice tests Professional development Experience (practice) with administration protocols Downloadable access to the tools that can be used in regular classroom activities Tech support and the ability for educators to ask questions					

Summary of Responses to Final Request for Feedback

Of 30 participants, 17 responded to the final email request for edits and preferences regarding the 3 draft options.

Of the 17 respondents:

- 10 identified option 3 as the preferred option
- 2 identified option 2 as the preferred option
- 3 identified option 1 as the preferred option
- 2 did not provide a preference

When asked to take option 3 out of consideration (in case it is too technically challenging to pull off), responses included:

- 1 did not want any option except option 3
- 6 identified option 2 as the preferred option
- 8 identified option 1 as the preferred option
- 2 did not provide a preference

Those supporting option 1 almost universally cited the need to provide the same number of retest opportunities that the state currently provides.

Those supporting option 2 typically cited the value in simplifying the grade 11-12 assessments.

Those supporting option 3 typically cited the simplicity of the system (from the perspectives of student experience when taking the assessments and of schools administering them).

Summary of Key Features of Proposed High School Testing Options

Odininary O	r key reatures of Prop	osca riigii oolloor rest	ing options
	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
	Keep our current HS testing system as is for grades 9-12, and add new assessments	Keep the core of our current grade 9-10 assessment options, but simplify grade 11-12 assessments	Redesign the HS ELA and math assessments and simplify end-of-course science assessments
Number of tests to develop and administer	16	13	7
Reduces HS testing time	×	\checkmark	√ +
Simplifies HS testing administration	×	\checkmark	√ +
Number of opportunities to pass CD requirement	5+	4	3+
Adds a CCR assessment	\checkmark	✓	\checkmark
Purposefully integrates CCR into MCAS system	×	\checkmark	\checkmark
Adds a history/civic assessment	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark
Offers mid-year testing opportunities	\checkmark	Limited	×
Maintains core grade 9-10 CD assessment components	\checkmark	\checkmark	Limited