# MEMORANDUM

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| **To:** | Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education |
| **From:** | Russell D. Johnston, Acting Commissioner |
| **Date:** | January 21, 2025 |
| **Subject:** | Competency Determination Update |

At the regular meeting of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) on January 28, 2025, we will continue the discussion with the Board on the new statutory provisions relating to the competency determination. In response to the questions raised by the Board during our meeting on December 17, 2024, we will present on the following matters.

1. Amendments to the current regulations: necessary deletions

The current regulations ([603 CMR 30.00](https://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr30.html?section=all)) define the competency determination in relation to the MCAS. These provisions need to be removed because they are not consistent with the new law.

1. Possible amendments to the current regulations: “additional areas determined by the Board” and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) oversight

We will provide an overview of options for possible amendments to current regulations in two areas. First, as discussed during the Board’s December 17th meeting, the statute, as amended by the ballot question, allows the Board to include “additional areas” to the competency determination.[[1]](#footnote-2) These additional areas would be based on the academic standards and curriculum frameworks for tenth graders in the areas of history and social science, and foreign languages.

Second, Department staff will present a plan for oversight of the new district competency determination certification processes and the regulatory approaches that the Board could adopt.

1. Information on MassCore and MyCAP

MassCore and MyCAP are ongoing initiatives to strengthen the high school experience for Massachusetts students. MassCore is a state-recommended program of study that is intended to align high school coursework with college and workforce expectations. It was adopted by the Board in 2007 and amended in 2018. The program of studies includes the successful completion of four units of English, four units of mathematics, three units of a lab-based science, three units of history, two units of the same world language, one unit of the arts, physical education, and five additional “core” courses. A unit represents a full academic year of study or its equivalent in a subject that covers all the standards contained in a specific Curriculum Framework. More information about MassCore is available here: [MassCore - College, Career and Technical Education](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/courses-learning/masscore/default.html)

MyCAP stands for My Career and Academic Plan. The MyCAP process engages students in grades 6-12 in postsecondary planning focused on the individual student's interests, skills and talents. This process allows students to be the drivers of their education and empowers them to connect their course taking with career interests, to seek out career development opportunities such as internships, apprenticeships, and capstone projects, and to identify the personal, social, and behavioral skills needed to be successful in the workplace. More information about MyCAP is available here: [MyCAP (My Career & Academic Plan).](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/sec-design/mycap/default.html)

Rob Curtin, Chief Officer for Data, Assessment, and Accountability; Elizabeth Bennett, Associate Commissioner for College, Career, and Technical Education; and Nicole Smith, Director of College, Career and Technical Education, will join us for the discussion on January 28.

1. G.L. c. 69, s. 1D(i), as amended, provides:

   The ''competency determination'' shall be based on the academic standards and curriculum frameworks for tenth graders in the areas of mathematics, science and technology, history and social science, foreign languages, and English, and shall represent a determination that a particular student has demonstrated mastery of a common core of skills, competencies and knowledge in these areas, by satisfactorily completing coursework that has been certified by the student’s district as showing mastery of the skills, competencies, and knowledge contained in the state academic standards and curriculum frameworks in the areas measured by the MCAS high school tests described in section one I administered in 2023, and in any additional areas determined by the board. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)