



Spring 2025 MCAS Tests: Summary of State Results

November 2025

This document was prepared by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

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I. Introduction

The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) is the Commonwealth’s standards-based student assessment program. This report summarizes the state-level results from the spring 2025 administration of MCAS tests in English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) in grades 5 and 8, Civics in grade 8, and high school science in grades 9 and 10. The report provides trends in state results and changes in academic achievement gaps between demographic groups. For information on school- and district-level MCAS results, please visit the [School and District Profiles website](#).

Which MCAS Tests Were Administered in 2025?

In 2025, Massachusetts administered tests in all grades and subjects. The tests are administered primarily via computer, though the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) offers paper-based tests on an ongoing basis as an accommodation for certain students.

Table 1 shows the MCAS tests that were administered at each grade level in spring 2025.

Table 1: Spring 2025 MCAS Tests Administered, by Grade Level

Content Area	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8	G9	G10
English Language Arts	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Mathematics	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Science and Technology/Engineering			X			X		
Civics						X ^a		
Biology & Introductory Physics							X ^b	X ^b

^a DESE first administered the operational MCAS test in Civics to grade 8 students in 2025. Results are reported alongside other grades and subjects below in this report.

^b Students in grade 9 or 10 were able to take one of the high school science tests in Biology and Introductory Physics. Grade 10 science results are reported based on students’ best performance on any test taken in grade 9 or grade 10; only students continuously enrolled in the state from fall of grade 9 through spring of grade 10 are included in state results.

Who Participated in MCAS in 2025?

All students who are enrolled in the tested grades and who are educated at public expense are required by state and federal law to participate in MCAS testing. In spring 2025, a total of 471,304 students in grades 3–8 and 10 participated in at least one MCAS test and are included in these summaries. On individual tests, the percentage of enrolled students who participated was consistently high, ranging from 96 to 99%.

Section IV of this report provides detailed information about the demographics of the student population that was enrolled and participated in MCAS testing and summarizes changes to the population between 2019 and 2025. For additional information on state-level MCAS participation, go to the [Assessment section of the State Profile](#) on the School and District Profiles website and select “[MCAS Participation Report](#).”

MCAS-Alt Participation

Students with significant cognitive disabilities who are unable to take the standard MCAS tests, even with accommodations, are required to participate in the [MCAS Alternate Assessment](#) (MCAS-Alt). The MCAS-Alt enables these students to submit portfolios of their work that demonstrate their performance on the curriculum framework learning standards.

The numbers of students in grades 3–8 and 10 who participated in the MCAS-Alt in 2025 are as follows:

- ELA: 5,580
- Mathematics: 5,665
- Grades 5 and 8 STE: 1,484
- Grade 8 Civics: 692
- High school science: 703

What Were the Administration Guidelines for the Spring 2025 MCAS Tests?

Table 2 provides information about the spring 2025 test administrations, including administration dates, numbers of sessions, and recommended testing times. All MCAS test administrations are untimed. DESE provides recommended session lengths to assist schools with planning.

Table 2: Spring 2025 MCAS Test Administrations

Test	Administration Dates	Number of Sessions	Recommended Testing Time for Spring 2025
ELA Grades 3–8	March 24–April 18 ^a	2	120–150 minutes per session
ELA Grade 10	March 25–26	2	90–150 minutes per session
Mathematics Grades 3–8	April 28–May 23 ^a	2	90 minutes per session
STE Grades 5 and 8	April 28–May 23 ^a	2	60–90 minutes per session
Civics Grade 8	April 28–June 6	2	60 minutes for the state-level performance task; 60 minutes for the end-of-course (EOC) test
Mathematics Grade 10	May 20–21	2	90–120 minutes per session
High School Science	June 4–5	2	90 minutes per session

^a At grades 3–8, schools scheduled tests within a testing window.

MCAS test sessions are composed of a variety of question types, and the number of questions and score points vary by grade and subject. See the [MCAS test designs](#) for detailed information.

How Are MCAS Results Reported?

Student results on the MCAS tests are reported using scaled scores and achievement levels. Students receive a separate score and attain a separate achievement level in

each subject area. In this report, performance at the state level is summarized using the average scaled score and the percentage of students attaining each achievement level. The sections below provide more information about these metrics.

Achievement Levels

The achievement levels are designed to provide an indication of whether a student is on track to succeed in the subject matter and whether extra academic assistance may be needed for the student.

Table 3 presents the achievement levels and scaled scores for the ELA and Mathematics tests at grades 3–8 and 10; the grades 5 and 8 STE tests; the grade 8 Civics test; and the high school science tests in Biology and Introductory Physics.

Table 3: MCAS Achievement Levels

Achievement Level	Scaled Score Range	Definition
Exceeding Expectations	530–560	A student who performed at this level exceeded grade-level expectations by demonstrating mastery of the subject matter.
Meeting Expectations	500–529	A student who performed at this level met grade-level expectations and is academically on track to succeed in the current grade in this subject.
Partially Meeting Expectations	470–499	A student who performed at this level partially met grade-level expectations in this subject. The school, in consultation with the student's parent/guardian, should consider whether the student needs additional academic assistance to succeed in this subject.
Not Meeting Expectations	440–469	A student who performed at this level did not meet grade-level expectations in this subject. The school, in consultation with the student's parent/guardian, should determine the coordinated academic assistance and/or additional instruction the student needs to succeed in this subject.

Average Scaled Scores

As shown in Table 3, students receive a scaled score between 440 and 560 for each test they take. The scaled scores for a group of students can be used to calculate an average (mean) scaled score, which indicates average performance for the group. Average scaled scores can be calculated at the classroom, school, district, or state level, and for student groups.

In section III of this report, average scaled scores are used to summarize and compare student achievement on the MCAS tests.

How Are MCAS Results Used?

MCAS test results are used for three primary purposes:

- to inform and improve curriculum and instruction

- to evaluate student, school, and district performance according to the Massachusetts curriculum framework content standards and MCAS performance standards
- at the high school level, to determine whether a student has met one of the eligibility requirements for the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship, the Stanley Z. Koplik Certificate of Mastery Award, and the State Seal of Biliteracy

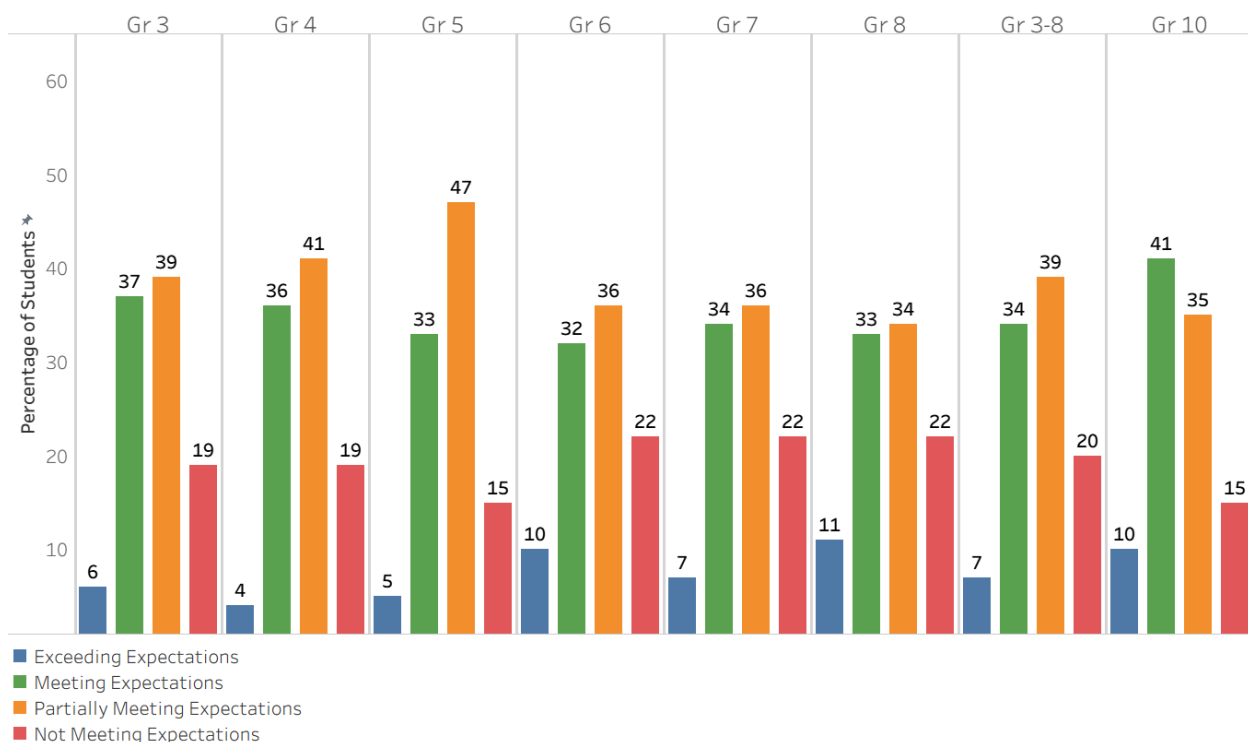
II. Statewide Achievement Level Results

This section reports statewide results from the spring 2025 MCAS tests by achievement level.

Student Achievement on ELA and Mathematics Tests in Grades 3–8 and 10

Figure 1 shows the percentage of students scoring at each achievement level on the 2025 ELA tests.¹ The percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or higher ranged from a high of 51% at grade 10 to a low of 38% at grade 5.

Figure 1: ELA Percentage of Students by Grade and Achievement Level, 2025



¹ Due to rounding at individual achievement levels, the percentages in this figure, and in other figures in this report, may not add up to 100%. For the same reason, when percentages for Meeting Expectations and Exceeding Expectations are aggregated to report the percentage of students at “Meeting or Exceeding Expectations,” the sum of the percentages for the individual achievement levels may not equal the aggregated total.

Table 4 summarizes changes in the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or higher on the ELA tests in 2019, 2024, and 2025. The percentage point change columns illustrate the one- and six-year trends. Results from 2019 are included to establish a baseline for comparing 2025 results to results from before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 4: ELA Percent Meeting and Exceeding Expectations by Grade, 2019 and 2024–2025, with One- and Six-Year Percentage Point Changes

Grade	2019 % M+E	2024 % M+E	2025 % M+E	2024–2025 Percentage Point Change	2019–2025 Percentage Point Change
3	56	42	42	0	-14
4	52	37	40	3	-12
5	52	38	38	0	-14
6	53	40	42	2	-11
7	48	36	42	6	-6
8	52	43	44	1	-8
3–8	52	39	42	3	-10
10	61	57	51	-6	-10

Figure 2 shows the changes in ELA achievement from 2019, 2024, and 2025. Bars represent the percentage of students in the Meeting and Exceeding Expectations achievement levels. The line graph below each grade shows the percentage change from 2019 to 2024 and 2025.

Figure 2: ELA Percentage Point Change in Meeting and Exceeding Expectations by Grade, 2019, 2024, and 2025

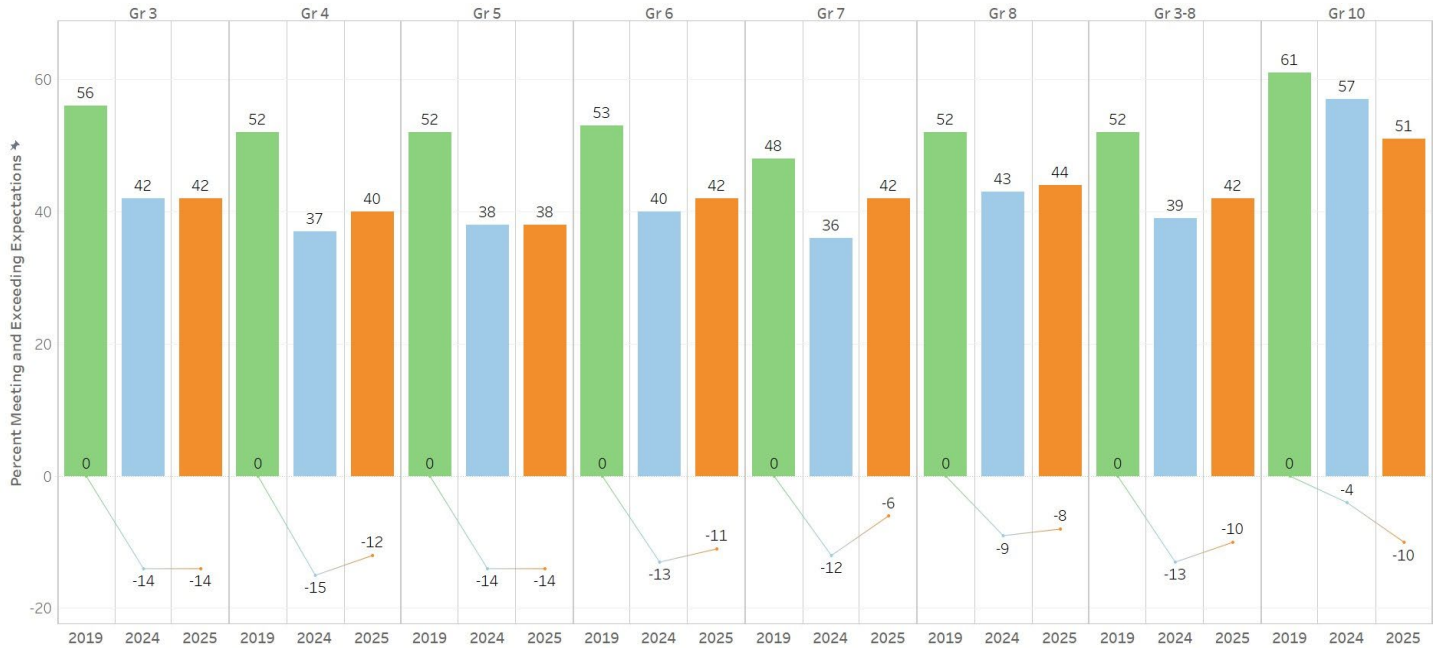


Figure 3 shows the percentage of students scoring at each achievement level on the 2025 Mathematics tests. The percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or higher ranged from a high of 45% at grade 10 to a low of 38% at grade 8.

Figure 3: Mathematics Percentage of Students by Grade and Achievement Level, 2025

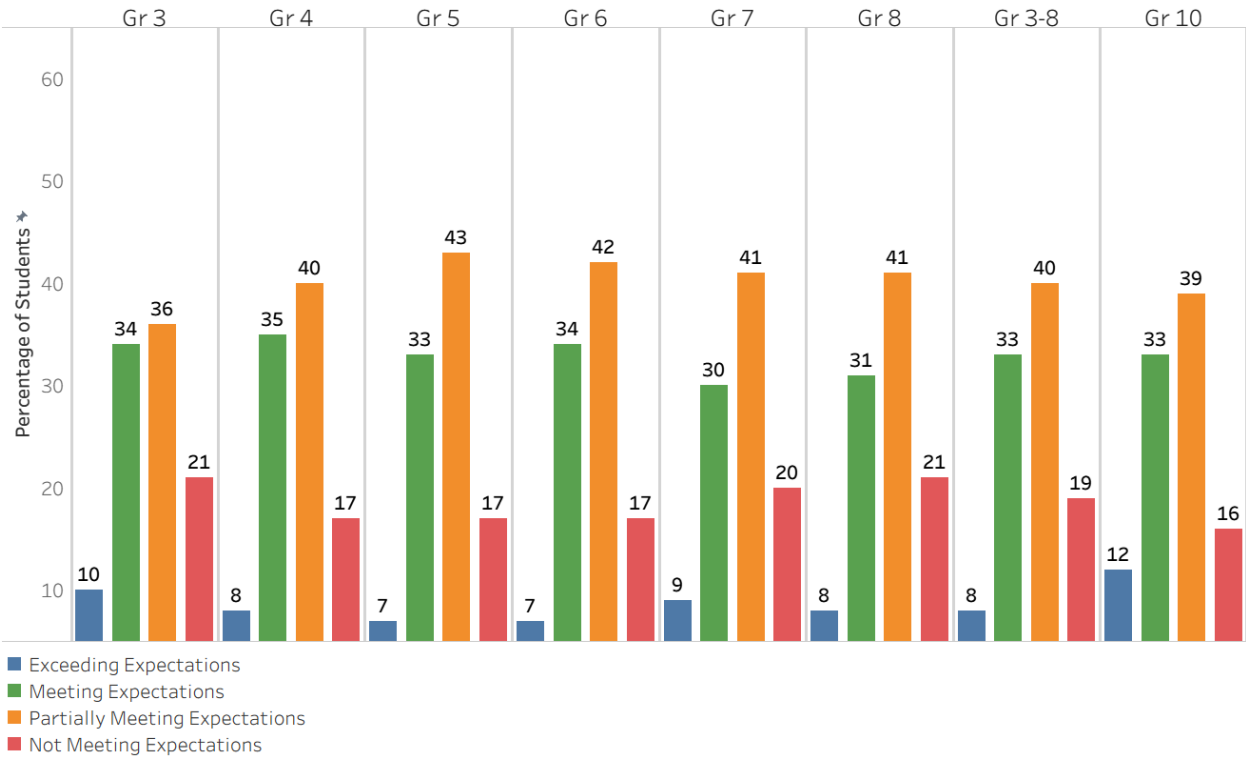


Table 5 summarizes changes in the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or higher on the Mathematics tests in 2019, 2024 and 2025. The percentage point change columns illustrate the one- and six-year trends.

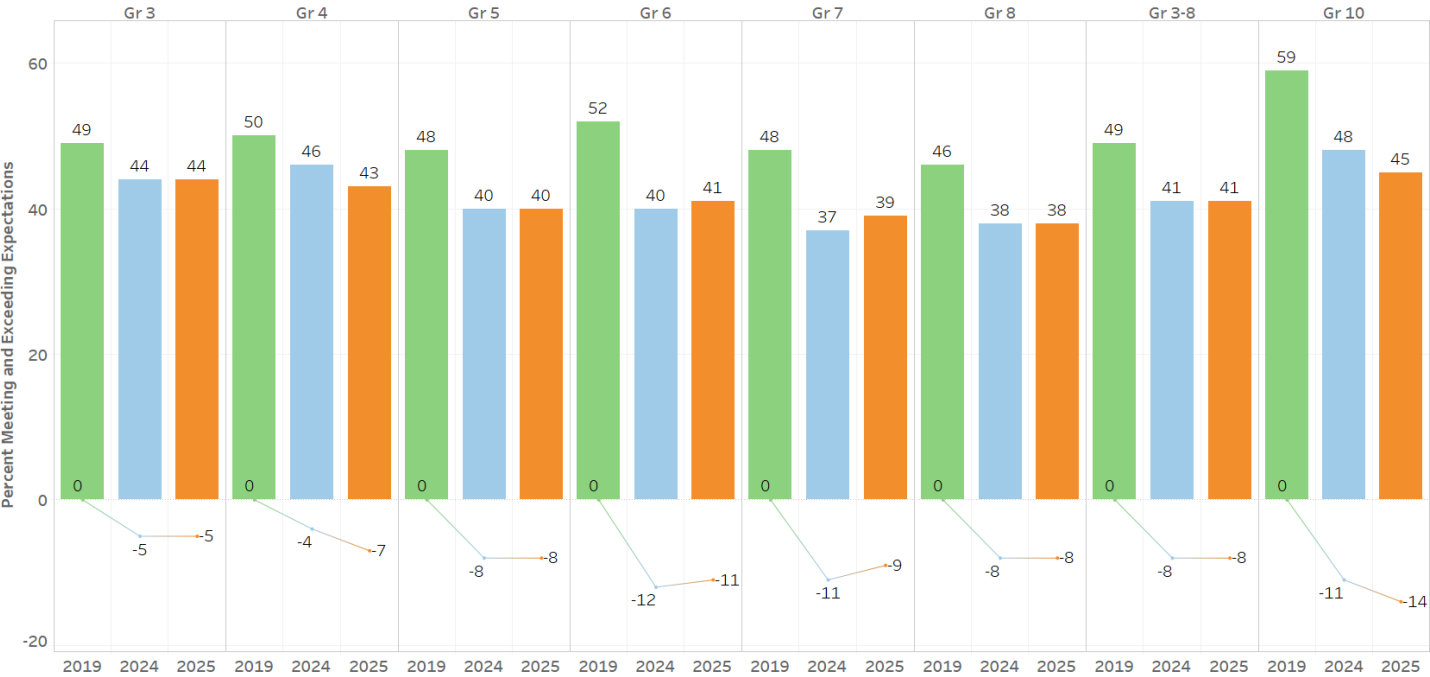
Table 5: Mathematics Percent Meeting and Exceeding Expectations by Grade, 2019 and 2024–2025 with One- and Six-Year Percentage Point Changes

Grade	2019 % M+E	2024 % M+E	2025 % M+E	2024–2025 Percentage Point Change	2019–2025 Percentage Point Change
3	49	44	44	0	-5
4	50	46	43	-3	-7
5	48	40	40	0	-8
6	52	40	41	1	-11
7	48	37	39	2	-9
8	46	38	38	0	-8
3–8	49	41	41	0	-8
10	59	48	45	-3	-14

Figure 4 shows the changes in mathematics achievement from 2019, 2024, and 2025. Bars represent the percentage of students in the Meeting and Exceeding Expectations

achievement levels. The line graph below each grade shows the percentage change from 2019 to 2024 and 2025.

Figure 4: Mathematics Percentage Point Change in Meeting and Exceeding Expectations by Grade, 2019, 2024, and 2025



Student Achievement on STE Tests in Grades 5 and 8, High School Science in Grade 10, and Civics in Grade 8

Figure 5 shows the percentage of students at each achievement level on the science tests. In 2025, 46% of students statewide scored Meeting Expectations or higher on the grade 5 STE test, 37% scored Meeting Expectations or higher on the grade 8 STE test, and 46% scored Meeting Expectations or higher on one of the high school science tests taken by grade 10 students.

Figure 5: Science Percentage of Students by Grade and Achievement Level, 2025

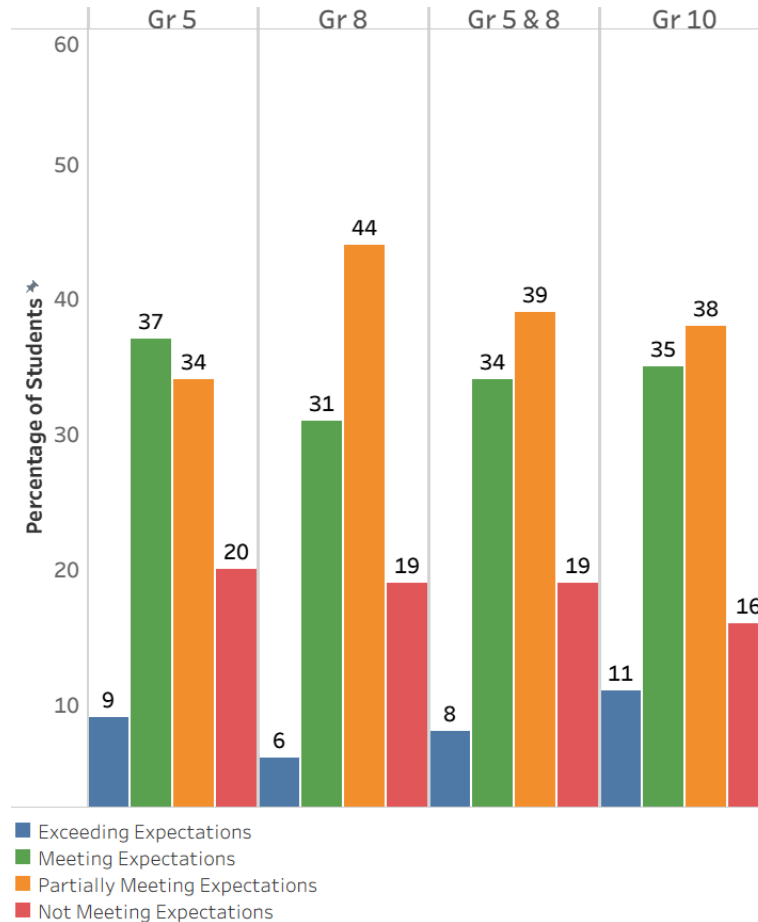


Table 6 summarizes changes in the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or higher on the grades 5 and 8 STE tests and the grade 10 high school science tests in 2019, 2024, and 2025. The percentage point change columns illustrate the one- and six-year trend for grades 5 and 8. Grade 10 figures include students in the class of 2027 who participated in one of the high school tests in grade 9 in 2024 or grade 10 in 2025; only students continuously enrolled in Massachusetts public schools from fall of grade 9 through spring of grade 10 are included in the grade 10 high school science results.

Table 6: Science Percent Meeting and Exceeding Expectations by Grade, 2019 and 2024–2025, with One- and Six-Year Percentage Point Changes

Grade	2019 % M+E	2024 % M+E	2025 % M+E	2024–2025 Percentage Point Change	2019–2025 Percentage Point Change
8	46	39	37	-2	-9

² Grade 10 STE results for 2019 are not provided because grade 10 students participated in legacy MCAS tests, which are reported on a different scale and cannot be summarized with results from the next generation MCAS tests. Information about high school science results in 2019 is available [here](#).

Figure 6 shows the changes in grades 5 and 8 science achievement from 2019, 2024, and 2025. Bars represent the percentage of students in the Meeting and Exceeding Expectations achievement levels. The line graph below each grade shows the percentage change from 2019 to 2024 and 2025.

Figure 6: Science Percentage Point Change in Meeting and Exceeding Expectations, 2019–2025

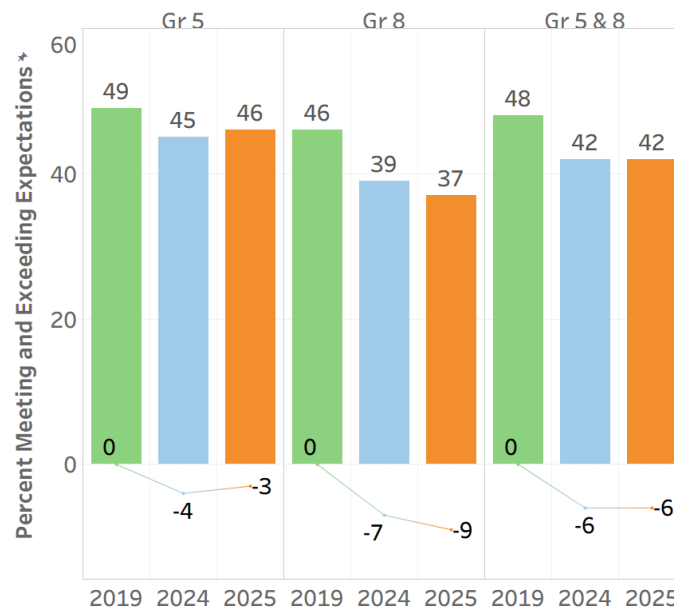
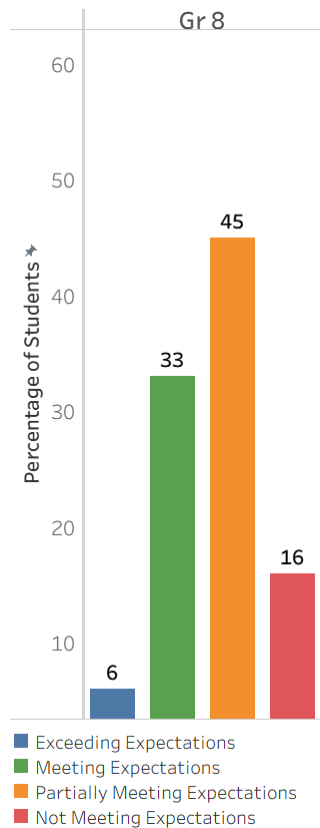


Figure 7 shows the percentage of students at each achievement level on the Civics test beginning in 2025, the first year the Civics test was administered. In 2025, 39% of students statewide scored Meeting Expectations or higher.

Figure 7: Civics Percentage of Students by Achievement Level, 2025



III. Statewide Scaled Score Results

This section reports state-level results from the spring 2025 MCAS tests by average scaled score. As described in table 3, students receive a scaled score between 440 and 560 for each test they take. The scaled scores for a group of students can be used to calculate an average (mean) scaled score, which indicates average performance for the group.² By comparing the average scaled score to the score ranges for the achievement levels, shown in table 7, a determination can be made about whether, on average, the students in the group are meeting grade-level expectations.

² Due to rounding, average scaled scores in this report may differ in some instances by one point from average scaled scores reported in DESE’s online systems.

Table 7: Achievement Levels and Scaled Scores

Achievement Level	Scaled Score Range
Exceeding Expectations	530–560
Meeting Expectations	500–529
Partially Meeting Expectations	470–499
Not Meeting Expectations	440–469

Average Scaled Scores

Tables 8a and 8b show the average scaled score for all students in the state, by grade, in ELA, mathematics, STE, civics, and high school science. The average scaled scores ranged from a low of 493 in ELA grades 4 and 7 and a low of 493 in mathematics at grades 7 and 8, to a high of 499 and 498, in ELA and mathematics, respectively, at grade 10.

Table 8a: 2025 Average ELA and Mathematics State-Level Scaled Scores by Grade

Grade	ELA Average Scaled Score	ELA Number of Students	Math Average Scaled Score	Math Number of Students
3	494	66,312	496	66,361
4	493	64,549	495	64,630
5	494	65,783	494	65,859
6	494	66,414	495	66,404
7	493	66,349	493	66,237
8	494	66,902	493	66,857
3–8	494	396,309	494	396,348
10	499	67,825	498	67,096

Table 8b: 2025 Average STE and Civics State-Level Scaled Scores by Grade

Grade	STE Average Scaled Score	STE Number of Students	Civics Average Scaled Score	Civics Number of Students
5	495	65,656	N/A	N/A
8	492	66,355	495	66,345
5 & 8	494	132,011	N/A	N/A
10	497	64,735 ^a	N/A	N/A

^a Grade 10 high school science results include students in the class of 2027 who participated in the Biology or Introductory Physics tests in grade 9 in 2024 or grade 10 in 2025; only students continuously enrolled in Massachusetts public schools from fall of grade 9 through spring of grade 10 are included.

Average Scaled Scores by Grade for State's Largest Racial/Ethnic Groups

Tables 9a and 9b show the average scaled scores for 2019, 2024, and 2025, by grade, in ELA, mathematics, STE, and Civics, for the state's largest racial/ethnic reporting groups. The data illustrate the change in performance for each group and allow for comparisons between groups and between grade levels. Grades 3–8 and 10 results for other student groups, including grade-level results, are available in the statewide [MCAS Achievement Results Report](#) on DESE's School and District Profiles website.

Table 9a: Average ELA and Math Scaled Score by Grade for Largest Racial/Ethnic Groups, 2019, 2024, and 2025

Grade	Student Group	ELA 2019	ELA 2024	ELA 2025	Math 2019	Math 2024	Math 2025
3	Black or African American	495	487	485	488	483	484
3	Asian	513	505	503	514	513	513
3	Hispanic or Latino	495	483	482	489	482	483
3	White	508	500	499	503	500	501
4	Black or African American	493	484	484	488	485	484
4	Asian	512	503	506	515	515	514
4	Hispanic or Latino	492	481	482	489	484	483
4	White	505	497	498	503	502	500
5	Black or African American	493	486	485	489	485	483
5	Asian	512	506	507	514	512	513
5	Hispanic or Latino	492	483	483	489	484	483
5	White	504	498	499	502	499	499
6	Black or African American	490	483	484	489	484	484
6	Asian	515	510	510	519	515	514
6	Hispanic or Latino	490	478	480	490	483	483
6	White	506	499	499	504	500	500
7	Black or African American	488	482	483	485	482	481
7	Asian	511	507	508	518	515	515
7	Hispanic or Latino	488	478	480	486	480	480
7	White	503	496	498	502	498	498
8	Black or African	489	483	483	488	483	483
8	Asian	513	512	512	518	516	516
8	Hispanic or Latino	487	479	480	487	481	481
8	White	504	499	500	502	498	498
3–8	Black or African American	491	484	484	488	484	483
3–8	Asian	513	507	508	516	514	514
3–8	Hispanic or Latino	491	480	481	488	482	482
3–8	White	505	498	499	503	500	499
10	Black or African	494	495	490	492	488	487
10	Asian	517	519	515	523	523	521
10	Hispanic or Latino	492	490	486	491	486	484
10	White	511	509	504	509	505	502

Table 9b: Average STE and Civics Scaled Score by Grade for Largest Racial/Ethnic Groups, 2019, 2024, 2025

Grade	Student Group	STE 2019	STE 2024	STE 2025	Civics 2025
5	Black or African American	487	483	482	N/A
5	Asian	510	508	508	N/A
5	Hispanic or Latino	487	481	482	N/A
5	White	504	501	501	N/A
8	Black or African American	485	481	481	486
8	Asian	509	507	508	509
8	Hispanic or Latino	485	479	480	483
8	White	503	498	498	499
5 & 8	Black or African American	486	482	482	N/A
5 & 8	Asian	510	507	508	N/A
5 & 8	Hispanic or Latino	486	480	481	N/A
5 & 8	White	503	500	499	N/A
10	Black or African American	N/A	488	486	N/A
10	Asian	N/A	518	516	N/A
10	Hispanic or Latino	N/A	486	483	N/A
10	White	N/A	505	502	N/A

^a Grade 10 high school science results for 2019 are not provided because the legacy MCAS tests administered that year are reported on a different scale and cannot be summarized with MCAS results from next-generation tests.

Average Scaled Score by Grade for Special Populations

Tables 10a and 10b present the average scaled scores in 2019, 2024, and 2025, by grade, in ELA, mathematics, STE, and civics among English learners (ELs), Former English Learners, students with disabilities, and in 2024 and 2025 among students from low-income families. The data illustrate the change in performance for each group and allow for comparisons between groups and between grade levels. Grades 3–8 and 10 results for other student groups, are available in DESE's statewide [MCAS Achievement Results Report](#).

**Table 10a: Average ELA and Math Scaled Score by Grade for Special Populations
2019, 2024, 2025**

Grade	Student Group	ELA 2019	ELA 2024	ELA 2025	Math 2019	Math 2024	Math 2025
3	English Learners	488	476	474	485	477	477
3	Former English Learners	510	502	501	506	504	506
3	Low Income ^a		484	483		483	483
3	Students with Disabilities	486	478	477	481	477	477
3	All Students	504	495	494	499	495	496
4	English Learners	484	471	470	483	477	475
4	Former English Learners	507	499	500	506	506	503
4	Low Income ^a		482	482		485	484
4	Students with Disabilities	484	476	476	480	478	477
4	All Students	502	492	493	499	497	495
5	English Learners	479	468	468	480	475	472
5	Former English Learners	503	495	496	500	496	497
5	Low Income ^a		484	484		485	483
5	Students with Disabilities	483	476	478	480	479	477
5	All Students	501	494	494	499	495	494
6	English Learners	470	458	458	478	471	470
6	Former English Learners	500	489	491	500	493	493
6	Low Income ^a		479	481		483	484
6	Students with Disabilities	478	470	470	480	477	476
6	All Students	501	493	494	501	495	495
7	English Learners	472	460	460	474	468	468
7	Former English Learners	497	487	489	495	487	488
7	Low Income ^a		479	480		481	480
7	Students with Disabilities	478	470	472	477	474	474
7	All Students	499	491	493	498	493	493
8	English Learners	468	459	458	475	469	469
8	Former English Learners	494	486	487	495	488	488
8	Low Income ^a		480	481		482	481
8	Students with Disabilities	477	471	471	478	475	473
8	All Students	500	494	494	499	494	493
3–8	English Learners	479	467	466	480	474	473
3–8	Former English Learners	501	492	493	500	494	495
3–8	Low Income ^a		482	482		483	483
3–8	Students with Disabilities	481	474	474	480	477	476
3–8	All Students	501	493	494	499	495	494
10	English Learners	468	465	463	476	472	470

10	Former English Learners	496	495	492	497	493	491
10	Low Income ^a		492	487		488	485
10	Students with Disabilities	486	483	479	484	481	478
10	All Students	506	504	499	505	500	498

Table 10b: Average ELA and Math Scaled Score by Grade for Special Populations, 2019 and 2024–2025

Grade	Student Group	STE 2019 ^b	STE 2024	STE 2025	2025 Civics
5	English Learners	474	467	467	N/A
5	Former English Learners	499	494	495	N/A
5	Low Income ^a		483	483	N/A
5	Students with Disabilities	481	477	478	N/A
5	All Students	499	495	495	N/A
8	English Learners	469	464	466	470
8	Former English Learners	490	485	485	488
8	Low Income ^a		481	481	484
8	Students with Disabilities	480	476	475	478
8	All Students	498	493	492	495
5 & 8	English Learners	472	465	466	N/A
5 & 8	Former English Learners	495	490	491	N/A
5 & 8	Low Income ^a		482	482	N/A
5 & 8	Students with Disabilities	481	476	476	N/A
5 & 8	All Students	499	494	494	N/A
10	English Learners		467	465	N/A
10	Former English Learners		491	489	N/A
10	Low Income ^a		488	484	N/A
10	Students with Disabilities		481	478	N/A
10	All Students		500	497	N/A

^a Beginning in 2022, DESE replaced the Economically Disadvantaged student group with the Low Income student group. See [more information about this change](#).

^b Grade 10 high school science results for 2019 are not provided because the legacy MCAS tests administered that year are reported on a different scale and cannot be summarized with MCAS results from next-generation tests.

IV. Student Enrollment and Participation

This section profiles the enrolled student population and summarizes changes to the population between 2024 and 2025 and between 2019 and 2025.

2025 Student Enrollment

Figure 13 shows the 2025 statewide student enrollment in grades 3–8 and 10 by race/ethnicity. Tables 11 and 12 show the two- and six-year enrollment changes in those grades for racial/ethnic groups and other student groups.

Figure 13: 2025 Student Enrollment in Grades 3–8 and 10 by Race/Ethnicity

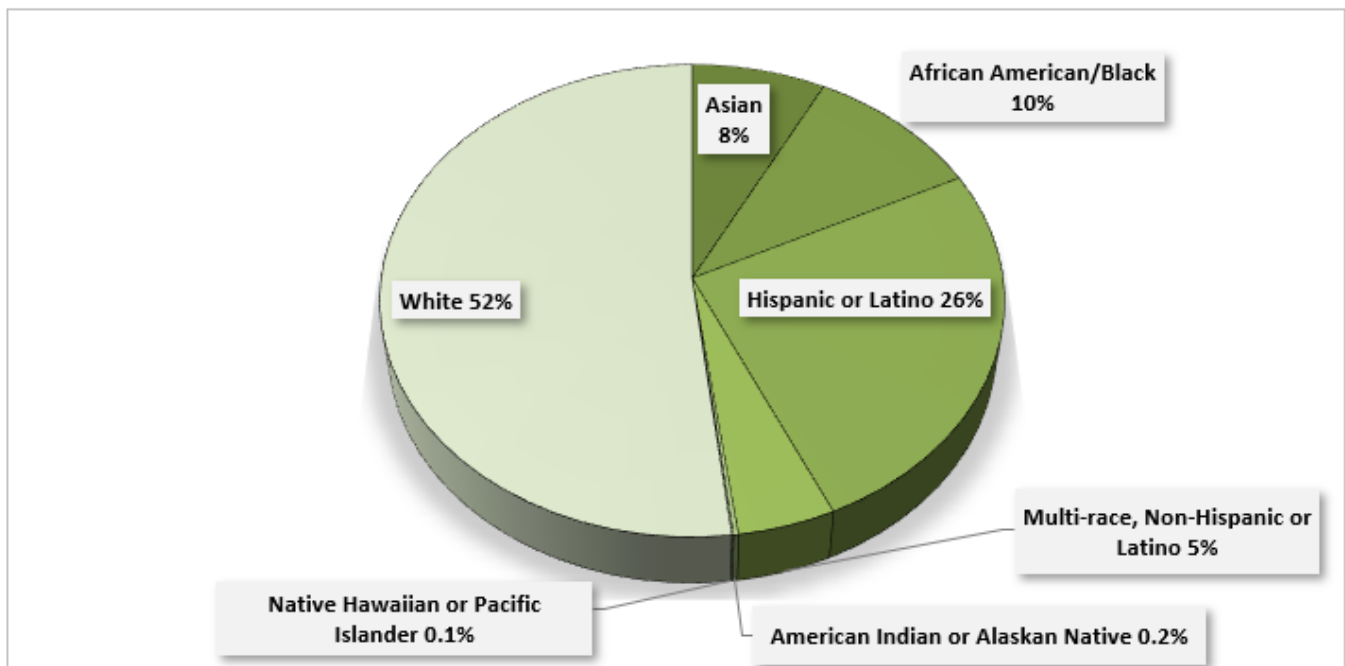


Table 11: Two-Year and Six-Year Enrollment Changes in Grades 3–8 and 10 for Race and Ethnicity Groups

Race/Ethnicity	2019 Enrolled Students	2024 Enrolled Students	2025 Enrolled Students	2024 to 2025 Percent Change	2019 to 2025 Percent Change
Asian	34,938	35,943	36,424	1%	3%
Black or African American	46,239	47,008	48,200	3%	2%
Hispanic or Latino	106,426	121,222	122,507	1%	14%
Multi-race, Non-Hispanic/Latino	19,083	21,550	22,295	3%	13%
American Indian or Alaskan	1,140	1,086	1,099	1%	-5%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific	418	428	420	-2%	2%
White	297,269	254,434	248,594	-2%	-14%
Total	505,513	481,671	479,539	<1%	-5%

Table 12: Two-Year and Five-Year Enrollment Changes in Grades 3–8 and 10 for Other Student Groups

Other Student Groups	2019 Enrolled Students (cont'd)	2024 Enrolled Students (cont'd.)	2025 Enrolled Students (cont'd.)	2024 to 2025 Percent Change	2019 to 2025 Percent Change
Male	259,463	247,029	233,125	-6%	-10%
Female	245,943	233,863	245,773	5%	0%
Non-Binary	107	779	641	-18%	499%
English Learners	46,863	62,862	62,452	-1%	33%
Low Income ^a	n/a	219,799	213,767	-3%	n/a
Students with Disabilities	97,429	104,873	106,348	1%	9%

^a Beginning in 2022, DESE replaced the Economically Disadvantaged student group with the Low Income student group. See [more information about this change](#).

2025 Participation Rates

Tables 13a and 13b present information on the number and percentage of enrolled students who participated in the spring 2025 MCAS tests. The figures include participation rates for students administered the standard MCAS and the MCAS-Alt; enrolled students educated with public funds, including regular education students; students with disabilities; and ELs. Participation rates were high, ranging from 96% to 99%.

Table 13a: ELA and Math Number of Enrolled and Percentage of Tested Students, Spring 2025

Grade	ELA Number	ELA Percent	Math Number	Math Percent
3	68,036	99	67,973	99
4	66,287	99	66,267	99
5	67,474	99	67,480	99
6	68,290	99	68,273	99
7	68,562	98	68,567	98
8	69,381	98	69,382	98
10	71,038	97	70,909	96

Table 13b: STE and Civics Number of Enrolled and Percentage of Tested Students, Spring 2025

Grade	STE Number	STE Percent	Civics Number	Civics Percent
5	67,462	99		
8	69,360	97	69,360	97
10	71,026	98		

How Is Participation Calculated?

In grades 3–8 and 10, participation rates indicate the number of students who participated in standard MCAS tests and the MCAS-Alt divided by the number of students enrolled during the testing window. English learners enrolled in U.S. schools for the first time were not required to take ELA tests; however, they were reported in ELA school and district participation rates based on their participation in the ACCESS tests. DESE used ACCESS for ELLs testing for state and federal accountability purposes, which require that all ELs, except for students for whom an accommodation was not available, participate in the EL assessment.

Students absent during testing, including students not tested for medical reasons, were counted against school and district participation as nonparticipants. Students who transferred out of their school and/or district during the testing window and did not participate in a subject were excluded from participation calculations for that subject.

How Are Absent Students Treated in MCAS Performance Results?

The federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act requires that absent students be counted as nonparticipants for school and district accountability calculations. Schools are placed in a lower accountability level if their participation rates fall below 95% in the aggregate or for a student group over a two-year period.

V. Competency Determination Policy Change

In November 2024, Massachusetts voters approved a ballot question that removed the use of MCAS as the sole basis for meeting the requirements of the state's Competency Determination (CD). In accordance with the legislative changes, in May 2025, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted to amend its [regulations](#) on the Competency Determination (603 CMR 30.00).

More information about graduation requirements and related guidance is available at www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/graduation.