

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Any child educated with public funds must be assessed once a year. Students in grades 3-8 and high school are assessed in English Language Arts and Mathematics. Students in grades 5, 8, and high school are also assessed in Science and Technology/Engineering.

During your child's IEP team meeting, the assessment guidelines, and the criteria for participating in the alternate assessment were reviewed. Based on evidence it was determined that your child was eligible to participate in the MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt) in the coming year, rather than the standard MCAS test.

Your child's teacher(s) will collect data and work samples of daily instruction throughout the school year and present these materials in an MCAS-Alt binder that shows how well your child met goals in the subjects listed above. Data collected helps to inform instructional decisions and demonstrates student progress in reaching identified goals.

The assessment materials will be sent to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) in late March or early April to be reviewed and scored. Scores will be reported to you and the school in the fall. Although the MCAS-Alt is based on grade level standards, these alternate academic achievement standards are less complex but have been identified as challenging and appropriate for your child.

Each year, the IEP team will review the decision to determine the most meaningful way for your child to participate in statewide assessment: the MCAS-Alt, or the standard MCAS test with accommodations.

We want you to be aware that participation in an alternate assessment will delay or affect your child's ability to complete the state's requirements for a high school diploma because the MCAS-Alt assesses learning standards that are well below the expectations needed to earn the Competency Determination. For more information about graduation requirements go to www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/graduation.html.

Your child's team can answer your questions about MCAS and MCAS-Alt, or you may call the DESE Office of Student Assessment at 781-338-3625.

Thank you for your attention to this important information.

Sincerely,