

MCAS-Alt

Same Standards • High Expectations for ALL Students

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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.

"Education costs money, but then so does ignorance."

--Sir Claus Moser

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What's New

- **PowerPoint presentations** from fall 2012 educator training sessions are now available at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html. Teachers who missed the workshops and those who would like a refresher may view the following presentations:
 - **Educator Overview** (for teachers new to the MCAS-Alt)
 - **What's New for 2012** (for teachers with prior MCAS-Alt experience)
 - **Data Collection**
 - **Access Skills**

- **MCAS Enrollment Survey:** Remind your principal to go online at www.mcasservicecenter.com between January 9 and 20 to order MCAS and MEPA test materials, including MCAS-Alt submission materials which will be received in schools by March 1.

Portfolios-in-Progress Training Sessions

Portfolios-in-Progress

Educators are strongly encouraged to bring their students' portfolios to a half-day review session during January and March. These sessions will provide an opportunity for participants to have their portfolios reviewed by experienced teachers. Teachers will also have an opportunity to ask questions and exchange ideas with other teachers. The goal of these sessions is to provide resources that will enable a teacher to compile a "complete" portfolio by the April 2 submission deadline.

MCAS-Alt Overview (January only)

MCAS-Alt Overview training sessions will be targeted to the needs of teachers who are new to the alternate assessment process and did not attend training in October. Teachers will be given an opportunity to write their own measurable outcome and participate in other interactive activities. Print copies of the *2012 MCAS-Alt Educator Manual* and *Resource Guide* (2006) will be available at each training session.

Training Sessions

Training sessions will be held on January 10 –13 and March 6 – 9 from **8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.** at the following locations:

LOCATION	*REGISTER NOW* January Dates:	Register February March Dates:
Taunton, Holiday Inn	Tuesday, January 10	Tuesday, March 6
Marlborough, Best Western	Wednesday, January 11	Wednesday, March 7
Springfield, Marriott	Thursday, January 12	Thursday, March 8
Peabody, Marriott	Friday, January 13	Friday, March 9

Register for January **Portfolios-in-Progress** or **MCAS-Alt Overview** sessions by Tuesday, January 3, 2012.

Register for March **Portfolios-in-Progress** sessions starting February 7, 2012.

Register online at www.mcasservicecenter.com. Choose "MCAS Alternate Assessment" and then "Registration for Training." If you have questions, please contact the MCAS Service Center at 800-737-5103.

Reminders

- Ordering print copies of the MCAS-Alt Educator Manual and Resource Guide: If you have not already received a print copy of the *2012 Educator's Manual for MCAS-Alt* or the *Resource Guide to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for Students with Disabilities* (2006), you can access an online order form at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html.

- **Portfolio submission deadline:** MCAS-Alt portfolios must be postmarked by **Monday, April 2, 2012.**

MCAS-Alt Timeline: Where should you be in the process?

At this point in the school year, you should be:

- completing work description labels and other required forms (see the "Required Forms" section of the *2012 Educator's Manual for MCAS-Alt*);
- collecting, labeling, and organizing evidence for portfolios in the required strands and subjects, including data charts, work samples, and if needed, photographs and/or videos;
- registering to attend a January Portfolios-in-Progress or MCAS-Alt Overview training session.

Tip of the Month

As you review your students' portfolios, look carefully at the **measurable outcomes**. Each measurable outcome should:

- remain consistent throughout the strand and match all evidence submitted in the strand (i.e., all activities on the data chart and in the two additional pieces of primary evidence);
- be based on a learning standard at the grade level of the student;
- address the student's progress in learning one skill across at least eight data points and two additional pieces of primary evidence in each strand (the "core set" of evidence). Look for commas and words like "and" in the measurable outcome that may indicate that multiple skills are being addressed;
- include a brief description (either on the data chart, work description label, or on the piece of evidence) of what the student did, or was asked to do, to address the measurable outcome.

Myth-Buster!

Q. Can I address a weather-related measurable outcome for High School Science and Technology/Engineering?

A. No! Weather may be addressed as part of the Earth and Space Science strand in grades 5 and 8, but does not relate to any high school STE discipline. If you have questions about the "relatedness" of a STE measurable outcome, use the **topic grids** found at the beginning of each STE strand in the Resource Guide. Check the entry points within each topic to find an appropriate targeted skill related to each topic.

Administrators' Corner

During the first week of January you will be asked to order MCAS and MEPA test materials, and MCAS-Alt submission materials, for your school during the MCAS Enrollment Survey from January 9–20, 2012. Additional materials can be ordered after January 21 by contacting the MCAS Service Center at 800-737-

5103. MCAS-Alt materials will be sent to your school by March 1.

Thank you for supporting teachers in your school or program who are participating in the MCAS-Alt process. We encourage you to:

- check with teachers and offer support, as needed, to ensure timely completion and submission of portfolios by **April 2, 2012** (postmark date);
- identify other adults who can assist the lead teacher in collecting data and evidence for each student's portfolio;
- allow teachers to attend either a **Portfolios-in-Progress** review session in January (and again in March) or MCAS-Alt Overview session (January only) so they may have their questions answered and their portfolios reviewed by an experienced teacher.

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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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