

# Next-Gen MCAS & Learning Standards Review

The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education unanimously voted to adopt the revised English language arts and Mathematics learning standards. At this morning's meeting, the Board also discussed issues ranging from the state's plan under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act to the next-generation MCAS performance level descriptors.

## Dear District Leaders, Educators, and Community Stakeholders:

Just a reminder that if you are a parent, educator, or community member in the Blackstone Valley area, please be sure to [register online](#) for tomorrow's K–12 education forum from 6–8 p.m. at Nipmuc Regional High School in Upton. Commissioner Chester will discuss the successes and challenges of the state's K–12 school system and how the state and districts work together to support teaching and learning. The event is free and open to the public.

## Why statewide testing is important for educators, parents, and students

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- With the MCAS testing season underway at the high school level and the next-generation MCAS testing window starting in April, it's a good time to reflect on why assessments are important to improving teaching and learning. State test results:
  - help parents gauge whether their children are making academic progress;
  - help educators identify strengths and weaknesses in their curriculum and teaching strategies;
  - provide context to other students in the same school and across the state;
  - help the state target additional resources to underperforming schools; and
  - document the state's progress to the governor and the legislature as we work together to ensure adequate funding for all our schools.

## Board votes to adopt revised learning standards and new MCAS performance descriptors

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- “In short, while many have expressed concern about the role that the Common Core State Standards played in developing our 2010 standards, I want to make it clear that the 2017 standards are the Commonwealth's own. The 2017 standards were developed by Massachusetts educators, draw from the best of prior Massachusetts standards, and represent the input of hundreds of the Commonwealth's PreK–12 and higher education faculty. The 2017 standards present the Commonwealth's commitment to providing all students with a world-class education.” – Commissioner Chester. Read the Commissioner's [full memo](#) to the Board.
- The Board approved four new achievement levels for the next-generation MCAS tests: Exceeding Expectations, Meeting Expectations, Partially Meeting Expectations, and Not Meeting Expectations. [Descriptions](#) of each of the levels are online.

## Information and resources for MCAS-Alt and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

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- The Department has issued [a memo](#) on the ESSA rule that no more than 1 percent of a state's student population should take an alternate assessment. The memo and its attachments outline assessment options and include a training PowerPoint for district Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams.



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[www.doe.mass.edu/candi/standardsreview](http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/standardsreview)

Contact:

**Jass Stewart**

Special Assistant to the  
Chief of Staff

Office of the  
Commissioner

781-338-3105

[jstewart@doe.mass.edu](mailto:jstewart@doe.mass.edu)

School administrators may also find the [Student Assessment Update](#) to be useful. It is sent to principals, test coordinators, special education directors, and ELL directors.

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