

# MCAS-Alt

Same Standards • High Expectations for ALL Students



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Volume 10, Issue 1

[www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt)



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 is more than filling a child with facts. It starts with posing questions"**

--D.T. Max

## In This Issue

- **What's New**
- **Updates and Reminders**
- **Available Opportunities**
- **Administrator's Corner**

## What's New

### Reporting of MCAS-Alt Results

Principals received preliminary MCAS and MCAS-Alt results last June and will receive final results the week of September 10. The 2012 MCAS-Alt *Parent/Guardian Reports* will be sent to districts, approved private special education schools, and educational collaboratives in mid-September. *Parent/Guardian Reports*, including translations of the report template when necessary, must be sent by the district to each student's home.

**Transition to 2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for students taking the 2013 MCAS-Alt**  
Students designated for the 2013 MCAS-Alt will be assessed on the new **2011 Massachusetts curriculum frameworks** in grades 3–8 mathematics. The 2006 version of the *Resource Guide to the Massachusetts*

Curriculum Frameworks for Students with Disabilities (The "Resource Guide") will continue to be the basis for MCAS-Alt assessment in ELA, Science and Technology/Engineering, and grade 10 Mathematics. An updated version of the grade 3-8 mathematics section of the Resource Guide will be available at state-sponsored educator trainings in October, and will be posted shortly to [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html). Refer to the *2013 Educator's Manual for MCAS-Alt* posted to the same website for additional details on the 2013 MCAS-Alt.

Additional information about the transition to the 2011 Massachusetts curriculum frameworks is available online at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/commoncore>.

**MCAS-Alt Domain (Strand) Requirements for Mathematics in Grades 3-8  
Based on the 2011 Mathematics Curriculum Frameworks**

Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Operations and Algebraic Thinking	Operations and Algebraic Thinking	Number and Operation in Base Ten	Ratio and Proportional Relationships	Ratio and Proportional Relationships	Expressions and Equations
Measurement and Data	Numbers and Operations – Fractions	Numbers and Operations – Fractions	The Number System	Geometry	Geometry

**New Information on Storage and Destruction of Returned Portfolios**

Student portfolios that were submitted and scored in spring 2012 will be returned to the schools from which they were submitted during the week of September 10. Once schools have received the returned portfolios, they become part of each student's temporary record. Temporary records must be kept on file at the school and must follow students to any subsequent placements. Important information about the retention and destruction of returned portfolios has been provided in the *2013 Educator's Manual for MCAS-Alt* (page 5), and is excerpted below:

"...Schools must destroy students' temporary records no later than seven years after the student transfers, graduates, or withdraws from public school (i.e., must be destroyed within seven years after the student exits). However, schools may destroy "misleading, dated, or irrelevant" documents prior to this time by providing written notice to the student and his/her parent of the approximate date of destruction of the record, and their right to receive these materials in whole or in part prior to their destruction." [See the *2013 Educator's Manual for a suggested retention schedule for returned portfolios*]

**Fall Training for Educators**

Department-sponsored MCAS-Alt training sessions will be conducted in October 2012 according to the schedule below. Educators can register for the trainings by visiting [www.mcasservicecenter.com](http://www.mcasservicecenter.com). The training registration flyer and a memo from the Commissioner will be posted to the MCAS-Alt website at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html) and will be faxed to each district, school, and collaborative in early September. MCAS-Alt educator training sessions will include the following presentations:

- **"MCAS-Alt Overview"** for educators who are conducting the MCAS-Alt for the first time
- **"What's New for 2013?"** for educators with previous MCAS-Alt experience
- Optional Sessions: (following "What's New for 2013")
  - Compiling portfolios at grade-level expectations for students in grades 3–8 and competency portfolios for high school students
  - Collecting standards-based portfolio evidence for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities

If you will be conducting the MCAS-Alt with one or more students this year, you are strongly encouraged to attend one of the following sessions, especially if you have not compiled an MCAS-Alt portfolio previously.

<b>Educator Training: Week 1 (8:30 a.m–12:30 p.m.)</b>	
Monday, October 1	Quincy - Marriott
Wednesday, October 3	Danvers - CoCo Key Hotel
Thursday, October 4	Taunton - Holiday Inn
Friday, October 5	Springfield - Marriott

<b>Educator Training: Week 2 (8:30 a.m–12:30 p.m.)</b>	
Monday, October 15	Peabody - Marriott
Tuesday, October 16	Taunton - Holiday Inn
Thursday, October 18	Marlborough - Best Western
Friday, October 19	Springfield - Marriott

## Updates and Reminders

### **2013 Educator's Manual for MCAS-Alt**

The 2013 Educator's Manual for MCAS-Alt will be available shortly at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html). A digital edition of the Educator's Manual and *Resource Guide to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for Students with Disabilities* (2006) will be distributed to participants at the MCAS-Alt training sessions in October.

### **MCAS-Alt Forms and Graphs Online**

MCAS-Alt forms and graphs will soon be available online at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html). This password-protected website allows you to complete, save, and print all required forms for the MCAS-Alt for each student. The MCAS-Alt Forms and Graphs Online program minimizes the time and effort needed to complete the required forms for each student's portfolio and has been used successfully by hundreds of teachers. The download version of Forms and Graphs will no longer be available.

### **Getting Started on this Year's Portfolios**

September is an ideal time to review the results of last year's portfolios and the current academic objectives for your students. Be sure to review the scores and comments provided on the Portfolio Feedback Form(s) which are posted online and available to your principal via the Department's Security Portal. Consider how your students performed at the end of last year, and review their current IEP goals and benchmarks in order to establish goals for the current school year.

In addition, you should:

- Identify which students will participate in the MCAS-Alt this school year
- Organize their folders by subject and strand
- Identify who can support you in compiling MCAS-Alt portfolios
- Talk with other classroom teachers, paraprofessionals, OTs, PTs, and SLP's in gathering evidence for portfolios

- Talk to your principal about the possibility of flexible scheduling, classroom coverage, or release time that would allow you to work on portfolios throughout the year

## Available Opportunities

### **Prospective 2012 MCAS-Alt Training Specialists - Invitation to Apply**

If you are an educator with two or more years' experience conducting the MCAS-Alt, please consider applying to become an MCAS-Alt training specialist for the 2012–2013 school year. Selected training specialists will serve as resources to their schools and districts by training other teachers to conduct the MCAS-Alt. You will be expected to assist at Educators' Overview training in October and at portfolio review sessions in January and March. Prior experience as a training specialist is not required. If chosen, a mandatory orientation will be held September 24. Details and an application are available at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/).

**Completed applications are due by 5:00 p.m., Wednesday, September 12.**

### **Opportunity to Become an MCAS-Alt Teacher Consultant**

Applications are being accepted for the position of MCAS-Alt Teacher Consultant to assist in the planning and operation of the MCAS-Alt. A job description, list of qualifications, and application are available at [www.mcas-alt.org/teacherconsultant.pdf](http://www.mcas-alt.org/teacherconsultant.pdf). Your administrator must approve your application, since it will involve devoting a number of days to MCAS-Alt activities in the coming school year. The deadline to apply is

**October 1.**

## Administrator's Corner

### **Fall Training for Educators**

Flyers and registration information for Department-sponsored MCAS-Alt training sessions will be faxed to each school in early September. It is important for teachers conducting the MCAS-Alt to attend a training session in October, even if they are familiar with the alternate assessment process, since there are minor revisions to the process each year. We encourage you to inform your teachers of this opportunity and to allow them to attend.

### **Supporting Teachers Who Conduct the MCAS-Alt**

Early September is a good time to establish a routine that provides your teachers with opportunities to work on their MCAS-Alt portfolios throughout the year and collaborate with others engaged in similar activities. Teachers report that it is helpful to have consistent release time to do this work. Please consider weekly or monthly release times for teachers to create MCAS-Alt portfolios for their students taking the alternate assessment.

### **Training Specialists Needed**

Do you know a teacher in your school or district who has compiled high-quality MCAS-Alt portfolios for at least two years and could assist other teachers this year? If so, he or she may be an ideal candidate to assume a higher-profile role as an **MCAS-Alt training specialist**. Please encourage this individual to apply to become a training specialist for the 2012–2013 school year. Training specialists receive additional training and can serve as resources to other teachers conducting the MCAS-Alt in their schools and districts. Training specialists make a commitment to attend one-day training sessions in September, October, January, and March to receive training and assist teachers from across the state to construct their students' portfolios. As a result, training specialists will bring back instructional ideas, strategies, and resources to share with others in your school and district.

Details and an application to become an MCAS-Alt training specialist are available online at

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/>. **Applications are due by 5:00 p.m., Wednesday, September 12.**

### **Who Participates in MCAS-Alt?**

Remember that the decision to participate in the MCAS-Alt can only be made by a student's IEP or 504 team. Each year the IEP or 504 team revisits (and revises, if necessary) its decision on how students with disabilities participate in MCAS in each subject. Additional information and participation guidelines can be found in the *2013 Educator's Manual for MCAS-Alt*, and also in the *Requirements for the Participation of Students with Disabilities in MCAS* available at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation/?section=sped](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation/?section=sped).

#### **Was this email forwarded to you?**

Get on our mailing list. [Click here](#) to sign up for the MCAS-Alt News.

#### **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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[www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt)