

MCAS-Alt

Same Standards • High Expectations for ALL Students

February/March 2014

Volume 11, Issue 5

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.

"Intelligence plus character-
that is the goal of true education."

--Martin Luther King, Jr.

In This Issue

- February/March Portfolios-in-Progress Training Sessions
- Important Assessment Reminders
- Administrator's Corner

February/March Portfolios-in-Progress Training Sessions

Teachers may now register to attend small discussion groups led by MCAS-Alt training specialists who will assist them by answering questions and reviewing their portfolios-in-progress. Teachers should bring their portfolios and their fully-charged laptops or tablets (if available) and use this time to continue compiling, organizing, and labeling their portfolio evidence for submission by the April 4 deadline.

Portfolios-in-Progress review sessions will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the following locations:

- Wednesday, February 26 - Springfield, Sheraton
- Thursday, February 27 - Marlborough, Best Western
- Monday, March 10 - Taunton, Holiday Inn
- Tuesday, March 11 - Danvers, DoubleTree

A copy of the registration flyer was faxed to your school and is posted to www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html Please contact the MCAS Service Center at 800-737-5103 with registration questions.

Important Assessment Reminders

English Language Arts/Literacy:

- The ELA standards and the entry points in the Resource Guide have changed for the 2014 MCAS-Alt! It may not be possible to "*do what you've always done*" to assess a student. Measurable outcomes must be based on entry points in the most current version of the Resource Guide (2013). If not, a score of Incomplete is likely to be given.
- The Language Strand must be assessed within the Vocabulary Acquisition and Use cluster. No other cluster in the Language strand will be scored.
- When identifying a measurable outcome, teachers may make minor changes to the language of the entry point, and only when it does not change the essential meaning of the entry point
- Evidence and data in the Reading Strand must include a reference to, or a copy of, the text used to determine the student's text comprehension.
- The Writing Strand must include evidence of the student expressing or composing opinions/preferences, producing an informative/explanatory text, narrating events, or producing fiction or poetry, using their primary mode of communication. (Example: If the student is "*differentiating opinions from facts in a text*," the student must express this through an open/constructed response.)
- Measurable outcomes may be based either on an entry point or on the actual standard for a student in that grade (provided it measures only one skill in the required strand).
- Teachers are allowed to use entry points from lower grade levels to assess a student, if those at the student's grade are too complex.

Mathematics:

- Even though the cluster heading will likely change, it is acceptable to use entry points from lower grade levels to assess a student, provided you remain within the required domain.
- In some cases, Math entry points in the 2013 Mathematics Resource Guide may include more than one skill. When this occurs, educators may either:
 - Select one of the skills listed in the entry point and create a measurable outcome to assess the single skill;
 - OR
 - Select the entire entry point for the measurable outcome, and assess all the skills listed on every date on which the data and evidence are collected.
- Measurable outcomes may be based either on an entry point or on the actual standard for a student in that grade (provided it measures only one skill in the required domain).

Administrator's Corner

- Students taking the MCAS-Alt will not participate in PARCC field testing.
- We encourage you to register your teachers who are compiling MCAS-Alt portfolios to attend an upcoming February/March Portfolios-in-Progress training session. A flyer was faxed to each school and is available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html>.
- MCAS-Alt submission materials will be received in schools the week of February 24. When the materials arrive, please verify that the correct number of materials has been delivered. If you do not receive your school's shipment by February 28, please call the MCAS Service Center at 800-737-5103.
- We encourage you to keep a photocopy of each student's completed portfolio at the school. Keeping a copy is advisable since scored portfolios will not be returned to your school until the following September; and in the event that an MCAS-Alt score appeal is warranted, you must have maintained a copy.
- Prior to submitting portfolios from your school, please review the MCAS-Alt security requirements and responsibilities on page 6 of the *2014 Educator's Manual*, available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html>.
- The deadline for scheduling a UPS pick-up of completed portfolios at your school is 3:00 p.m. on April 3. Instructions will be included in your materials shipment.

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.

Published during the school year by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt