

MCAS-Alt

Same Standards · High Expectations for ALL Students

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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.

"The art of teaching is the art of assisting discovery."

--Mark Van Doren

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January Portfolios-in-Progress Training Sessions

A total of 1,260 teachers attended the Department's recent Portfolios-in-Progress sessions. We would like to thank all the MCAS-Alt training specialists who led the discussion groups.

March Portfolios-in-Progress Training Sessions

Beginning on January 31, teachers may 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 laptops (if possible) and use this time to continue compiling, organizing, and labeling their portfolio evidence for submission by the April 1 deadline.

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

- Monday, March 4 -- Springfield Marriott
- Wednesday, March 6 -- Taunton Holiday Inn
- Thursday, March 7 -- Marlborough Best Western
- Friday, March 8 -- Peabody Marriott

A copy of the registration flyer will be faxed to your school January 31 and will be posted to www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html. Online registration will begin on January 31 at www.mcasservicecenter.com. To register, click on MCAS Alternate Assessment, then Registration for Training. Please contact the MCAS Service Center at 800-737-5103 with questions.

Reminders

- If your school recently ordered MCAS-Alt submission materials, these will be shipped during the week of February 25. Materials will include a three-ring binder, Student Identification Booklet (SIB), and a plastic envelope for each student, plus instructions for submission. When the materials arrive, please verify that the correct number of materials has been delivered.
- Make and keep a photocopy of your students' portfolios. In the event that you wish to file an MCAS-Alt score appeal, you must maintain a copy of the student's portfolio at the school. Keeping a copy is advisable because portfolios will not be returned to your school until late September. Making copies as you finish each strand may save you time later.

Frequently Asked Questions About the 2012 Math Resource Guide

Q. May I use an entry point from a lower grade for my student?

A. Yes. If the entry points at the student's grade are inappropriate or too complex, you may select an entry point at an earlier grade level in the required domain. The entry point must be challenging for the student, rather than a skill that the student can already perform.

Q. I want to use an entry point from the 2012 Mathematics Resource Guide, but it appears to include two related skills. Do I assess **both** skills listed in the entry point? Can I modify the entry point to include only **one** of the skills?

A. In some cases, a Math entry point in the 2012 Math Resource Guide may include more than one skill; for example, the following skills are listed in a single entry point:

- "add and subtract numbers..."
- "group objects by 2s, 5s, and 10s..."
- "convert percents, decimals, and fractions..."

In those cases, educators may either:

- Select one of the skills listed in the entry point and create a measurable outcome to assess the single skill (e.g., "group objects by 2s"),

OR

- Select the entire entry point for the measurable outcome, and assess all skills listed on every date on which the data and evidence are collected.

Q. How do I create a measurable outcome from an entry point?

A. To create a measurable outcome, an entry points must be customized for each student by making it measurable. For example, the entry point "**Compare number quantities using the symbols $<$, $>$, $=$** " could be converted to the measurable outcome "**(Student) will compare numbers using the correct symbol ($<$, $>$, $=$) with 80% accuracy and 100% independence.**

Q. Using Forms and Graphs Online, I tried to select 4.NF.3b on the Strand Cover Sheet, but it wasn't listed in the dropdown menu. How should I indicate this standard or others that include a letter after the number?

A. Forms and Graphs Online only lists the 2011 Mathematics standards by whole number, not sub-sections. Select the overall standard number (i.e., 4.NF.3, which includes 4.NF.3a through 4.NF.3d), and develop the measurable outcome based on 4.NF.3b.

Q. Can a measurable outcome be based on the standard as written in the required domain, rather than on an entry point?

A. Yes, the measurable outcome can be based on the actual standard, rather than on an entry point. Please address your questions about entry points and measurable outcomes to the Department at mcas@doe.mass.edu

Q. I would like to assess my student on coin identification and values, yet this skill appears as an entry point only in the Measurement and Data domain which is assessed in grade 3. Can I assess coin identification in other domains and grades?

A. Although coin identification is an important skill that should be taught, it can only be assessed in grade 3 as part of the Measurement and Data domain. However, coins may be used to address other skills in other domains; for example, adding and subtracting with or without decimals, rounding, sorting by attribute, etc.

Did You Know?

The Department has updated its guide to Assistive Technology, entitled **Access to Learning: Assistive Technology and Accessible Instructional Materials**, available at

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/odl/assistive/resources.html>. The updated publication offers guidance on accessibility for various disabilities and includes instructional materials, information about relevant state initiatives, and links to technology applications for students with disabilities.

The Department has invited schools to join in celebrating the Commonwealth's first annual Digital Learning Month in February 2013. This initiative provides an opportunity to increase awareness for digital learning and its importance in preparing students for success in college, career, and lifelong learning. The initiative coincides with the Alliance for Education's National Digital Learning Day (Feb. 6, 2013), a national campaign to celebrate teachers and highlight successful instructional practices and effective uses of technology in classrooms.

For more information, visit <http://www.doe.mass.edu/odl/month.html>.

Administrator's Corner

You were requested to order MCAS test materials and MCAS-Alt submission materials for your school during the recent MCAS Enrollment Survey from January 7–18.

If you do not receive your school's shipment of MCAS-Alt submission materials (three-ring binders, envelopes, and instructions) by February 28, please call the MCAS Service Center at 800-737-5103.

You may order additional MCAS-Alt materials online beginning February 25 at www.mcasservicecenter.com. Click "MCAS Alternate Assessment," then "Order Additional Submission Materials."

Contact the MCAS Service Center to schedule a UPS pick-up no later than March 28. Portfolios must be shipped to the Department's test contractor no later than April 1, 2013.

Please encourage teachers who are submitting MCAS-Alt portfolios to attend an upcoming March Portfolios-in-Progress training session mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter. You will receive a faxed copy of registration information in early February, or you may view this information online at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html>.

We also encourage you to help teachers find time to work on their portfolios throughout the winter and early spring through flexible scheduling and classroom coverage or other strategies.

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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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